

**Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.**  
**Agriculture Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**May 15, 2025**  
**Golden Sands RC&D Office/Online**

**Attendees:** Brent Tessmer (Taylor); Tracy Arnold (Portage); Andy Richardson (NRCS); Jennifer Glad (Golden Sands RC&D); Denise Hilgart (Golden Sands RC&D); Brooke Patrick (Golden Sands RC&D); Asher Maliepaard (Golden Sands RC&D); Adam Skadsen (Golden Sands RC&D); Kristin McAdow (Golden Sands RC&D); Robert Bauer (Golden Sands RC&D).

**CALL TO ORDER:** Tessmer called the meeting to order at 10:17 a.m.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Everyone introduced themselves.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion was made by Arnold, which was seconded by Tessmer, to approve the January and March minutes. Motion carried.

**STAFF & COUNTY MEMBER UPDATES:**

**Tessmer (Taylor):** Tessmer gave updates on recent county activities and the effects of weather conditions: Taylor County had a tree sale last week and was able to sell all of their extra trees. Weather was wet until a week and a half ago. No-till drills have been out but not a lot of interseeding acres. People will wait until after first grazing or first crop because fields are too wet. Chris Hammerla helped the county to dig and pot some purple loosestrife to grow beetles to control the invasive species. Some projects that received cost-share are starting soon.

**Arnold (Portage):** Arnold gave updates on recent county activities. Portage County is finally fully staffed. Three of four staff recently retired but the county is onboarding three new people now and the staff are figuring out a lot.

**Richardson:** 2025 funding has been released for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). EQIP is fully contracted. Staff is still working through contracting CSP. There will likely be more money coming out later but there aren't any details yet. He anticipates having one EQIP sign-up per year in the future. In 2026, EQIP will operate with an application deadline in November and the applications being looked at in the winter. Richardson provided his suggestion for producers for working with NRCS: they can apply anytime; if they do not have an application yet, they would be looking at getting funded in 2026.

**Patrick:** She worked on a beef marketing workshop in Shawano County, which was attended by 15 people. She wants to duplicate the event in Columbia County in the fall. She is facilitating a pasture walk series in four counties including: Adams, Waushara, Green Lake, and Marquette. The first one is tomorrow. She completed one grazing plan, and is working on 6 or 7 other grazing plans that she hopes to finish in the next month or two.

**McAdow:** She is working on grazing plans in Green Lake and Columbia Counties. She finished facilitating the Managing Your Green workshop series, made a resource library, and uploaded the videos to Youtube. She is working on a bison pasture walk. She is also underway with lots of follow-ups with grazing plan participants.

**Maliepaard:** About 7 grazing plans are in progress. Several have been paused or cancelled and he has received several more since he completed his staff report. The busiest county is Columbia County this year. He requested help spreading the word about upcoming events. The Save Our Great Lakes (SOGL) grant was extended to the end of the calendar year, originally it was to end in August; this change gives more flexibility to complete grazing plans and he is on track to complete those grazing plans by the original end date of the grant. He gave an update on solar grazing work: lots of solar development in occurring in Portage County and statewide. Golden Sands RC&D has been keeping it on the radar and engaging with graziers who are providing a vegetation control service for solar development, as well as developers.

**Bauer:** He described the new NFWF Partners in Regenerative Agriculture project goals, project areas, efforts so far with meeting partners and participants, and the positivity of recent outreach and solidarity with field staff who have been laid off or reassigned.

**Glad:** She described layoffs and reassignments of affiliate staff. She described efforts to proposition our counties to offer cost-share funding for grazing practices. Glad attended a cattle grazing webinar with Maliepaard. She described looking at the possibility of bringing cattle into the Vista Sands development. She mentioned that she will be attending the Solar Farm summit in Chicago, with Maliepaard, in August. Jacob Abrahamson transitioned to urban conservation work. Katelyn Schott took a deferred resignation and so Rafael is the last person involved in urban conservation and he is on the engineering side of it. Larson added that he does not have an update or news on the direction that NRCS will go with urban conservation in the future. Glad added that Golden Sands RC&D is partnering with Wild Ones to install a rain garden at a low, soggy spot in the garden. She also described efforts to partner with the Community Foundation of Portage County. She explained that Golden Sands RC&D is looking for private sources of funding. She expressed appreciation to Skadsen for getting the community garden program up and running quickly, and her gratitude to our city partners for letting us utilize these spaces for these projects.

**Skadsen:** He reported that he is now the neighborhood field manager for the community gardens. He just turned in a grant. His recent work has involved fixing gates/fences and weeding. He invited attendees to an event at 1 pm today that is a free tree and Arbor Day dedication, which will include the mayor and some alderpeople from Stevens Point, planting 6 to 8 fruit trees on the outside of the community garden. He added that they are putting in 6 new beds starting on Monday. His last day working on the project is Tuesday, since he will be moving on to Waupaca County.

**NEW PROJECTS:** The NACD TA 2024 and Partners in Regenerative Agriculture projects were presented and discussed. Motion was made by Arnold, which was seconded by Tessmer, to approve the projects and send them on to the full council. Motion carried.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Glad mentioned that Portage County has a new grazing plan writer on staff, who is working on getting certified as a Technical Service Provider (TSP). There is no shortage of demand for plan writing. McAdow described that through the Farmland Navigator program at Golden Sands RC&D, they have identified three producers who are looking for land in the Wisconsin Rapids area: some are looking to own, some are looking to rent.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion was made by Arnold, which was seconded by Tessmer, to adjourn.  
Meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Minutes by: Robert Bauer