

DEVILS LAKE BASIN JOINT WATER RESOURCE BOARD

Minutes of the regular monthly meeting held Thursday, December 11th, 2025, in the Sheyenne Meeting Room of the Bismarck Hotel and Conference Center, Bismarck, ND.

Chairman Mike Tweed called the meeting to order at noon. A roll call of the counties was taken. The Towner and Walsh County representatives were absent, but all other representatives were present.

Cavalier County	Bruce Roder
Eddy County	Mike Tweed
Nelson County	Dave Sateren
Pierce County	Floyd Slaubaugh
Ramsey County	Duaine Ash
Towner County	Absent
Walsh County	Absent

Chairman Tweed asked if anyone had any additional items for today's agenda. **Sateren made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Ash, and the motion passed unanimously.**

VISITORS & INTRODUCTIONS:

Chairman Tweed instructed the board members and those in the audience to introduce themselves, where they are from, and the organization they represent. Those in attendance today included: Van Howatt, Ramsey County WRD – Spencer Wheeling, USGS – John Paczkowski, Reice Haase, Sindhuja S.Pillai-Grinolds, Joe Morrisette, Aaron Carranza, Matt Lindsay, Garrett Larson, Alexis Faber, all from the ND DWR – Tomas Demke, Apex Engineering - Trent Keplin, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa – and Ben Holen, ND Game & Fish. A list of attendees will accompany the official minutes.

Chairman Tweed said the November 12th board meeting minutes had been sent out. He asked if everyone had an opportunity to read the minutes and if there were any corrections or additions. **Ash moved to approve the minutes of the November 12th, 2025 meeting, seconded by Slaubaugh, motion passed unanimously.**

The financial report for the month was presented: Sateren moved to approve the financial report as presented, seconded by Ash, and the motion passed unanimously.

December 2025 Bills

The following list of bills was presented for payment:

December 2025 Bills		Amount	Ck #
	Intuit QuickBooks Online Monthly	\$115.00	ACH
	International Water Institute - Map Portal Update	\$7,584.00	5217
	Ramsey County Water Resource District (Office Assistant Services)	\$600.00	5218
	Ramsey County Water Resource District (Copier Rent)	\$125.00	5218
	Ramsey County Auditor - Wages & Withholding Taxes	\$6,176.20	5219
	Ramsey County Auditor - Health Insurance	\$2,377.10	5220
	Ramsey County Auditor: Rent	\$190.00	5221
	Ramsey County Auditor: Telephone	\$55.49	5221
	Leever's Foods North - Meeting Expenses	\$16.88	5222
	NDTC - Website Hosting	\$21.83	5223
	Jeff Frith - Cell Phone Expense	\$101.25	5224
	Jeff Frith - November Travel (Legislative Committee)	\$299.20	5224
	Blue Water Consulting	\$740.90	5225
	ND Irrigation - 2026 Yearly Membership	\$100.00	5226
	Total Admin	\$10,177.95	
	Total General Project	\$8,324.90	
	Total	\$18,502.85	

Ash moved to pay the bills as listed, seconded by Slaubaugh, and the motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE:

Frith distributed the Task Order he had received from Blue Water Consulting and Ackerman-Estvold Engineering for board members to review before January's meeting.

2026 MEETING DATES:

The 2026 meeting dates were presented for final approval. Frith said he kept the dates on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, except for the November meeting, which is scheduled for a week later due to Veterans Day, and the December meeting in Bismarck, again in conjunction with the Annual Convention.

2026 MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

WEDNESDAY, January 14th ... 9 a.m.	Historical Meeting Room, Ramsey County Courthouse (Devils Lake)
WEDNESDAY, February. 11th9 a.m.	Historical Meeting Room, Ramsey County Courthouse (Devils Lake)
WEDNESDAY, March 11th9 a.m.	Historical Meeting Room, Ramsey County Courthouse (Devils Lake)
WEDNESDAY, April 8th.....9 a.m.	Historical Meeting Room, Ramsey County Courthouse (Devils Lake)
WEDNESDAY, May 13th....8a.m.	Historical Meeting Room, Ramsey County Courthouse (Devils Lake)
WEDNESDAY, June 10th....8 a.m.	Historical Meeting Room, Ramsey County Courthouse (Devils Lake)
WEDNESDAY, July 8th....8 a.m.	Historical Meeting Room, Ramsey County Courthouse (Devils Lake)
WEDNESDAY, August 12th...8 a.m.	Historical Meeting Room, Ramsey County Courthouse (Devils Lake)
WEDNESDAY, September 9th....8 a.m.	Historical Meeting Room, Ramsey County Courthouse (Devils Lake)
WEDNESDAY, October 14th....9 a.m.	Historical Meeting Room, Ramsey County Courthouse (Devils Lake)
WEDNESDAY, November 18 ...9 a.m.	Large Lower Level Meeting Room, Ramsey County Courthouse (Devils Lake)
THURSDAY, December 10th12:00 p.m.	Bismarck Hotel – Bismarck, ND, State Convention

Sateren moved to approve the 2026 meeting dates, seconded by Slaubaugh, and the motion passed unanimously.

INTERIM LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

Frith gave a brief update on the most recent Water Topics Overview Interim Legislative Committee meeting and the discussions held.

NEW BUSINESS:

ANS 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW:

ND Game & Fish ANS Coordinator Ben Holen was in attendance and gave a presentation on his department's activities over the past year. Ben gave an in-depth presentation regarding the Game & Fish Department's ANS prevention efforts around the state and in the Devils Lake Basin. They had a record number of inspections this year, with over eleven-thousand statewide, including over thirty-three-hundred watercraft inspections at Devils Lake. Ben mentioned that they caught a record eight zebra mussel-fouled boats attempting to launch at Devils Lake. Ben also mentioned that the Aquatic Invasive Species Committee approved adding Golden mussels to the invasive species list, as they were recently discovered in California, and are very similar to Zebra and Quagga mussels, as they can rapidly reproduce, are difficult, if not impossible, to eradicate once established, and can severely disrupt an ecosystem. Ben gave an update on the discovery of Zebra mussels in Smishek Lake, which is located in the Northwestern corner of the state, and what steps the Game and Fish, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Water Quality, and local officials took to try to eradicate the Zebra mussels from the lake and stop the spread to downstream bodies of water. Ben also discussed the discovery of Curly-leaf pondweed in Horseshoe Lake in the Southeastern part of the state, and the downstream expansion of Eurasian watermilfoil into the upper Missouri River system from the Fort Peck area.

USGS – Devils Lake Basin 2025 Year in Review:

Spencer Wheeling, Ph.D., Hydrologist with the Bismarck office of the US Geological Survey Dakota Water Science Center, was filling in for Lauren Castillo and was in attendance. Here is a summary of Mr. Wheeling's presentation. USGS stations monitoring Morrison Lake, Dry Lake, Devils Lake, and Stump Lake all recorded a rise in lake level from mid-March to a peak in late April or early May, after which they declined gradually from evaporation and the operation of the state-owned outlets. Summer rain events slowed the decline and produced a September rise across all four lakes that persisted through September 30, which marks the end of the 2025 Water Year (North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network, 2025a and U.S. Geological Survey, 2025). Morrison Lake showed an increase of approximately 1.00 feet (ft.) from levels in mid-March to the peak on April 21. After falling from the peak at the end of April, the lake level rose again by approximately 1.70 ft. from its lowest level in August to a peak in mid-November before falling again. The current lake level is approximately 0.44 ft. higher than elevations

The 2024–2025 winter in the Devils Lake Basin experienced above-normal temperatures in December and January, followed by a colder February with below-normal precipitation. March temperatures were above average, but a slow melt from minimal snowpack delayed significant spring flow increases. Most inflow peaks in the Devils Lake Basin coulee systems occurred due to rainfall in September – October 2025, with Mauvais Coulee Trib No. 3 peaking in June 2025 and Mauvais Coulee in July 2025. Drought conditions persisted from late April to late August, particularly in the northern basin. Yet, flows remained above zero for most coulees from April to September, with some showing flow into October. USGS monitoring stations reported varying lake level changes, with Morrison Lake peaking in late April and showing a notable rise in November, while Dry Lake and Devils Lake experienced fluctuations influenced by evaporation and pumping. The east and west-end outlets were operated, with significant flow recorded at Tolna Coulee during the summer months.

USGS – Devils Lake Basin 2025 Year in Review Continued:

Future Plans: In FY2026, USGS plans to install a camera at a stream gaging site in the Devils Lake Basin to enhance data collection efficiency. Continuous water quality monitors will be upgraded to include additional parameters, and the monitoring location for Mauvais Coulee will be relocated upstream for improved data accuracy.

Chairman Tweed, Frith, and board members thanked Mr. Wheeling for his presentation. A copy of the presentation will accompany the official minutes.

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES:

Devils Lake Project Manager Alexis Faber gave the Department of Water Resources Agency Report. Alexis' report provided an overview of the agency, including a flowchart outlining its divisions and their respective services.

Alexis also reported on the levels of Devils Lake, currently at 1448.8, about a half a foot lower than a year ago. She also gave an overview of Outlet Operations, stating that the West outlet began on May 5th and shut down on August 31st, with a discharge of 38,500 acre-feet. The East outlet started on May 14th and shut down on August 29th, with a discharge of 27,900 acre-feet and a total discharge of 66,400 acre-feet. Operations at the outlets were shut down earlier than usual due to high sulfate levels in the Sheyenne River below Bald Hill Dam.

Alexis gave an update on the projects that were completed in 2025. The DWR did an onsite inspection of all motors and pumps. Motor #4 at the Josephine pump location was reconditioned, and the Josephine tank overflow issues were thoroughly investigated. The ongoing projects included: preventive maintenance of all motors and pumps. On the West End outlet, the Josephine tank overflow issue continues to be investigated. Round Lake pump priming system improvements were completed, and the flow meter regarding abnormal readings, Round Lake Low Water issues were analyzed, and the Round Lake Pump #4 electrical damage was repaired. The East End Outlet: They continue to work on sedimentation removal in the Pump #1 intake area.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS:

ELECTION of 2026 OFFICERS:

Chairman Tweed stated that his time as chairman has run its course, and it was time to elect officers for 2026 so that new officers could be seated at the January meeting. Frith mentioned that Jallo is the current vice-chairman, and even though he isn't in attendance today he is willing to serve as chairman. **Ash made a motion to nominate Jallo as chairman, that nominations cease, and a unanimous ballot be cast, seconded by Slaubaugh. Jallo was elected as the 2026 Chairman. Tweed then opened the floor for nominations for the 2026 Vice-Chairman. Sateren made a motion to nominate Duaine Ash as 2026 Vice-Chairman, that nominations cease, and a unanimous ballot is cast, seconded by Slaubaugh, and the motion passed. Tweed then asked for nominations for Secretary/Treasurer. Ash nominated Frith, and that a unanimous ballot be cast, seconded by Roder. Frith was re-elected to serve as Secretary/Treasurer. Tweed congratulated the new officers. Frith thanked Tweed for his leadership throughout this past year.**

Frith reminded everyone that the next Joint Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 14th, at 9 a.m. in the Ramsey County Courthouse.

Date approved: **January 14^h, 2026**



Albin Jallo, Chairman



Jeff W. Frith, Manager