

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 11, 2007

9:15 AM

USDA NRCS Conference Room

Eric called the meeting to order at 9: am.

In attendance were:

Members – Eric Offenbergs-Governor’s Appointee, Gregg Cassidy-RI DEM Representative, Ted Comerford-Eastern District Representative and Harriet Powell-Southern District Representative.

Advisors – Rob Swanson-USDA Farm Service Agency, Eric Scherer and Mike Moorman-NRCS.

Alicia Lehrer-Southern District, Tom Sandham-Eastern District, Gina DeMarco and Wendy Hoyle-Northern District

I. Minutes

Motion was made to accept the February 14th meeting minutes as read,

Gregg/Harriet. Vote was unanimous.

II. Financial Report

The financial report was distributed.

The Northern District had the 'Living on a Waterfront' workshops that was

paid in part by the State Committee challenge grant. The Committee asked the

Eastern District if they could put together their workshop funded by the challenge

grant before the end of the fiscal year.

Eric asked for insurance information on the State Committee and the association.

Motion was made to accept the financial report as presented, Harriet/Gregg.

Vote was unanimous.

III. Reports

a. Chair

Eric continues to be frustrated by the lack of appointees to the Farm, Forest and

Open Space subcommittee. A letter went out to the Governor and we have yet

to receive a response. Alicia will check with Mike Lenihan regarding

appointments. Eric will contact June Gibbs.

Eric feels it is important that the districts set up bi-monthly

meetings with NRCS staff

for PR and have information published in NRCS' report under 'district highlights of the month'. Eric is happy with the detail of the districts meeting reports.

b. Districts/Advisors

Southern District

-The district is working on a 319 grant on design and feasibility study on the Narrow River and landscape alterations at Bostitch.

-Southern will be holding 'Art and the Natural World' art show showcasing local artists, photographers, etc depicting local landscapes. This will be held October 28th at the Peacedale Guild.

-Their open house is tomorrow and the district is looking for funding to assist in moving in the future.

Eastern District

-They have been working with 5 landowners regarding wetland issues and have been working with DEM on writing management plans for wetlands on farmland.

-The district is also working with several landowners on invasives.

Northern District

-The district thanked the State Committee for the challenge grant. They were able to serve

2 communities not usually served. Cindy Gianfrancesco, master gardener, volunteered her services to this outreach.

-They received \$12,000 from RI DEM Water Quality Protection and Restoration Grant for the stormwater project in the Village of Scituate.

-The district will be holding their 'Dancing for Conservation' fund raiser on Friday, May 18th at the Knights of Columbus hall in North Providence.

USDA Farm Service Agency

-They are working on the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) for those who are available for funding in case of a natural disaster.

-Farm Service is looking into the best way to communicate with farmers.

-\$250,000 under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) went out.

DEM

-The wildlife restoration grant to restore wildlife to its natural condition is due May 1st. There is \$900,000 available with a 50% match.

NRCS

-Eric highlighted projects reported in their conservation report.

-Mike Moorman was introduced as the new Assistant State Conservationist for Programs

-The committee discussed how the monthly performance report can include work done in each district. A quarterly report goes to the national office.

-Eric Scherer recommended that the Committee invite all the advisors to an informational meeting and discuss funding that is available.

IV. Old Business

a. CIG Agreement

Mike Moorman is continuing to work on the final draft. 5% of EQIP funds are being used to fund the CIG. The districts and NRCS are meeting to work out the details.

b. RIACD Strategic Planning

This was tabled until next meeting.

V. New Business

a. Districts Reports Schedule

Wendy distributed a schedule for the districts to follow so that the districts can get their reports for the State Committee's annual report, reports for legislators and meeting reports to Wendy in a timely fashion.

**Motion was made to adjourn at 10:45 am, Harriet/Ted.
Vote-unanimous.**