

# **RI STATE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

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**17 Smith Avenue, Greenville, RI 02828**

**949-1480**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, February 18, 2009**

**8:45 AM**

**USDA NRCS Conference Room**

**The Open Space recommended values are based on a percentage of the current assessment and will remain the same.**

**The subcommittee will meet prior to the March 11 SCC meeting in order to vote on newly calculated values. In the meantime, a letter will be sent to DOA requesting and extension of the deadline.**

## **II) Report from Chip Young**

**Chip has met several times with Eric and proposes submitting a grant application to the RI Foundation for \$7500 on behalf of the SCC. The grant will be used to fund a reorganization process. An outline of the proposed changes will be submitted. Chip will forward a copy of the application to Ramona to circulate to the full SCC for**

**review/comment. A motion was made to submit the application by the end of February: Harriet/Paul, unanimous.**

**If the grant is obtained, Chip has agreed to develop a reorganization study within 6-8 weeks. Likely to be included are efforts to streamline administrative functions at a single office (most likely NRICD). Having an office and phones that are manned will make the districts and their programs more readily accessible to landowners. Consolidating bookkeeping and record keeping will also be addressed.**

**Three areas of expertise will be emphasized: 1) technical assistance to landowners, 2) education and outreach, and 3) the districts' role in the FFOS process. Centralization of services will be implemented, with one person responsible for a task statewide (i.e. Tom will do landowner assistance, while Gina will do education and outreach).**

**Programs will likely be administered through the RIACD. Funding opportunities to be pursued are:**

**NRCS funds to assist landowners, expansion of education/outreach within the natural resource sector, more involvement in the FFOS process (possible fee to districts as part of application process, or districts being paid to perform conservation plans). The programs will be required to support themselves and income/expenses will be tracked by project.**

**The opening of satellite offices at existing organizations will increase visibility and keep local contact available.**

**The organization study will be presented to the three districts, the SCC and the RIACD and, if accepted, additional funding will be solicited for expansion of programs.**

### **III) Van Buren Foundation Grant**

**Tom has been working with a steering committee to develop a proposal to the Van Buren Foundation for funding to promote and support the agricultural community in RI. The emphasis would be coordination of various agencies/organizations to maximize results, the establishment of an agricultural center in the State, food security. The funding would pass through the RIACD with a provision for an administrative fee. The conservation districts would play a leading role by providing technical assistance to farmers. A motion was made to support submitting a grant proposal to the Van Buren Foundation: Paul/Harriet, unanimous. Tom was asked to forward a draft proposal by the 1st week in March for review and/or comment. The SCC will vote via email to accept/reject the draft.**

### **IV) Other**

**Eric will meet with the new State Conservationist.**

**Meeting adjourned at 10:35.**