

**RI STATE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
NRCS CONFERENCE ROOM
60 QUAKER LANE
WARWICK, RI 02886**

MEETING MINUTES

July 31, 2013

8:30 AM

Eric Offenbergl called the meeting to order at 8:37 AM.

Present: RISCC Chair, Eric Offenbergl. NRICD: Gina DeMarco, Paul Dolan. ERICD: Jessica Blackledge, Emerson Wildes. SRICD: J.Eric Scherer, Harriet Powell, Clarkson Collins, Harvey Buford. RISCC: Ramona LeBlanc, Debra Aiello, Jill Osgood. DEM: Ken Ayars. NRCS: Chris Modisette, Eric Boettger. Division of Planning: Paul Gonsalves. RIACD: Dick Went, Jean Lynch.

I. Minutes: A motion was made to accept the minutes of the May and June meetings. Emerson/Harriet: unanimous

II. Financial Report: A motion was made to acknowledge receipt of

the financial report, Harriet/Emerson: unanimous.

III. NRCS Agreements:

A. DEM/Geese:

1. Jessie reported the Geese Agreement has been signed. She is presently scheduling the first round of community educational workshops in each district throughout the state.

2. The first Quarterly report was submitted in June. DEM seemed very pleased with the report.

B. NRCS:

1. Rivers Agreement: Ramona reported that the agreement is nearly complete. A set of plans will be delivered to the Town of Bristol for a project at Mt. Hope High School.

2. Outreach: The program is developing very well; currently in the process of finalizing the last of the fourth round of workshops to take place in September and October.

3. Small Forestry: A series of workshops were held in the spring they were very well attended. Based on the response to that, four hands on educational workshops will be scheduled in fall in the

Northern District.

4. Engineering Agreement: A new Engineering Tech has been hired to complete some of the tasks. Ramona is in the progress of contacting Engineering firms to possibly assign a subcontracted Engineer to help with the more complex tasks. She is currently in discussion on renewing the Engineering and Outreach Agreements by the end of August.

C. DEM/ Traceability:

1. Kate Sayles has been getting a consistent work load through the Division of Agriculture implementing information to the database on animals and tracking horses. It has been going well.

2. The grant with DEM on the North Scituate Storm Water Projects is underway; looking to hire Engineering services to design the rain gardens and dry wells.

IV. Old Business

A. FFOS:

1. Values:

- **Dick Went had a discussion with an Economist at URI concerning the recommended values. The economist will be looking at how the values were decided and give his informed opinion.**

2. Fee Structures:

- **Kate and Jessie provided a draft chart showing an estimate of the amount of hours they are putting into the plans to exchange ideas about the potential of raising rates charged for the plans.**
- **Eric Offenbergs suggested the State Committee come up with a consensus on an amount to charge for the plans. He feels it could be streamlined to cut costs. He also suggested that every person on the committee send their comments to Ramona. Based on the suggestions and comments, accordingly a meeting will follow.**

B. PR Documents/Website:

1. The Fee for Service final document was provided to the board. The services are also listed on the website at riconservation.org. ; should be ready to go live this week.

2. A Staff and Board flyer is in the process of being developed. Each district will have their version. The flyer should be completed by the end of the summer.

C. MOU:

1. A copy of the MOU was handed out to the board. A motion was made to approve the MOU draft document and submit to the DEM state lawyer for review. Harriet/Ken: unanimous.

D. SESC Handbook:

1. Eric Scherer announced that DEM is pleased with the handbook, and would like it to be used as a guidance document. The final edits are being finished; the document should be complete by October. DEM has agreed to have it on their website.

E. Engineering RFP: No Report

F. Board Recruitment Update:

1. Jessie reported that the Eastern District Board has sent out several letters to people who have shown interest. There was one response so far. That person will be attending a board meeting next month.

2. Gina reported that the Northern District has two interested candidates they have attended board meetings and are considering becoming members.

3. Eric Scherer reported that the Southern District has recruited two new members and one interested candidate. The board meetings are being held at area farms. It is a way to look at possible award nominees for the coming year.

G. SCC/ Board Retreat:

• Ramona received a quote from the Barn to schedule a retreat. Clark will go forward in discussing the fees and details of having the retreat, expectantly to be scheduled on a Saturday in October.

H. SCC/ FFOS Appointments:

1. At this time some terms have expired. Dick spoke with Ken Payne; he may be interested in serving. The Districts can submit names to Ramona.

I. Other: No report

V. New Business:

A. Legislative Subcommittee:

1. A sub-committee has not been formed at this point. Each district is asked to appoint a member to possibly form a sub-committee to

put together a list of possible changes to be made in the legislation.

B. Program Development/ Outreach:

1. The State Committee discussed a possibility of distributing reserve funds to each district at the end of the FY; to be used for specifically for program development. This topic was tabled until a cash reserve policy is established.

VI. Reports:

1. RIACD:

- Dick announced that The Marriott in Newport has been reserved for the August 25, 2014 NACD regional meeting. They are looking for sponsors; sponsor letters are being developed.**
- Jean Lynch has taken over as a voting member for NACD; Paul Dolan has agreed to be an alternate. Dick stated it is very important for voting members go to the meetings.**
- The BFR Grant is in the process of being completed.**

2. SRICD:

- **A written report was provided to the Board members. Eric added that the Chipuxet project funding did not go through for 2014. Letters were sent to legislators in an effort to bring it back for discussion.**

3. ERICD:

- **A written report was provided to the Board members. Emerson also acknowledged Jessie's extra efforts and thanked her on behalf of the Eastern Board.**

4. NRICD:

- **A written report was provided to the Board members. Gina reported that the NRICD was awarded a grant to put on a second water festival is scheduled for next year targeting the urban audience.**

5. RC&D:

- **Paul Dolan reported that RC&D request a grant with the F&W foundation. Waiting to hear back.**
- **An Agroforestry workshop on alternative forest products will be held tomorrow night.**

- **RC& D website is up and running.**

6. State Wide Planning:

- **Ongoing projects will be going on throughout the state. Road Map Initiative will take place next week Monday through Thursday.**

NRCS: No report.

Other:

- **Ramona reported that at present time, the Eastern District is in a difficult situation, and are not in a position to pay the State Committee the open invoices for administrative services. A motion was made to forgive the Eastern District for the open balance of 1900.00 effective June 30, 2013. Harriet/ Ken: unanimous. * The Eastern District abstained from voting.**
- **ERICD presented a list of ideas for ways to reduce or eliminate projected budget deficit.**
- **Ken Ayars requested to Paul Dolan that Jo-Anne Pacheco make a presentation at the next meeting.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:20.

**The next State Committee meeting will be held on September 11, 2013
at 8:30 am.**