

**RI State Conservation Committee**

**2283 Hartford Ave, Johnston, RI 02919**

**January 30, 2014**

**The meeting was called to order at 9:06 am**

**Present: Harriet Powell, Kate Bousquet, Clarkson Collins, Eric Scherer, SRICD; Pooh Vongkhandy, NRCS; Eric Offenber, Ramona LeBlanc, SCC; Jessica Blackledge, Emerson Wildes, ERICD; Paul Dolan, Gina DeMarco , Michelle Place, NRICD.**

**1. Minutes: A motion was made to accept the minutes of November 13, 2013: Emerson/Harriet: unanimous.**

**2. Financial Report: A motion was made to accept the financial report of July-Dec 31, 2013: Harriet/Emerson: unanimous.**

**Motion was made that SRICD will allocate \$2000 of this year's State funding to each of the other 2 districts. Paul/Harriet: unanimous.**

**3. Agreements:**

**Geese Project:**

**DEM has 3 sites that they want to concentrate on.**

**Field season is ramping up; sites include: Northern- Roger Williams and Southern-Green Hill Pond.**

**Aphis needs to sign off.**

**NRCS Agreements:**

**2013 Engineering: Amendment to extend performance period has been signed.**

**2014 Engineering : Work will be assigned as 2013 agreement is nearing completion.**

**Small Scale Forestry: Kate finishing up in next few months. The workshops have been well attended to date and two additional workshops are scheduled for spring..**

**Outreach 2014: There is a RFP for a media consultant and currently there are 3 responses. Subcommittee will review. Plan for workshops and other events has been submitted to NRCS for approval. Plans for second round of workshops underway.**

**Contractors List: Mailing list of contractors to perform NRCS construction practices is been developed. 75 names have been added to date. Invitation to NRCS training session will be sent and event will be held in late spring.**

**4. Old Business:**

**Farm Forest Open Space**

**A. Tom Sproul indicated cursory look indicated that values are consistent with other states. Formula is correct. SCC will ask for a scope of work narrative and cost estimate from him to examine more closely. Ag Partnership had money reserved for this purpose several years ago. Not clear if money is still available.**

**B. Farm Plan Fee Structure: Came up with several options for farm owners for Conservation Plan (Farm Plan).**

**1. Farmer can write the plan themselves (or have an outside consultant write plan) and pay only a \$50.00 administrative fee. District will provide required maps if requested at an additional \$325.00.**

**2. Conservation Districts can write full plan for a fee of \$950.00 for up to 50 acres. Graduated fee structure for over 50 acres established .**

**The Conservation District has to review and approve plans.**

**Planners will track time in next year to see if fee structure viable.**

**Each district will have 1 staff person or Board member that is certified that can sign off. State committee will maintain final, approved plan.**

**Motion: The fee structure is acceptable. Paul/Harriet; unanimous**

**Motion: On the district level, the Board will sign off on the application if the district completed plan. Staff member to review plans developed by farmer, consultant of NRCS and make recommendation to Board for approval: Harriet/Paul; unanimous.**

**Motion: Funding (up to \$400) will be provided for Cat to get training for FFOS. Harriet/Emerson: unanimous.**

**C. Open Space Mapping- \$120 fee adopted for soil maps required for Open Space designation.**

**SESC Handbook- Soil Erosion**

**Handbook is in peer review. Eric Scherer would like to post final copy on Districts websites and possibly sell subscription for updates.**

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## **Engineering RFP:**

**This will be going out next week. Engineering firm will carry their own liability insurance.**

## **SCC/FFOS Appointments**

**Letters of resignation from Eric Offenbergs and Harriet Powell and request for appointments for vacant SCC and FFOS seats will be delivered to Governor's office.**

**Leg Subcommittee Report- Tabled.**

## **New Business:**

**A. Organic Certification Program: Tabled.**

**B. Interview results: Cheryl Commendatore hired to take some of Ramona's work.**

**C. Reports:**

**1. NRCS: Current budget is less than 2013 but may increase with new Farm Bill. Currently no 2014 funds for Engineering of Outreach but they are a priority. Phou also prioritizes Ag Tech, Small Scale Forestry and Coverts agreements.**

**2. Southern:**

**Current projects include Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook and**

**mapping projects in Westerly and Hopkinton.**

### **3. ERICD**

**4 Farm Plans completed since November**

**Mt Hope Farm Program**

**Sweetberry Farm hosting state wide program on Feb 19**

**1 potential candidate for Associate Director.**

### **5. NRICD**

**New office administrator hired.**

**Seedling Sale being organized. Pick-up will be at Snake Den Farm in conjunction with Arbor Day event.**

**Farm manager for Snake Den Farm has been hired and RFP for tenant farmers being developed.**

### **6. RC&D**

**No more grants. Farm energy grant possible.**

**Other business:**

**Motion: to give a \$50 donation to Envirothon. Harriet/Emerson; unanimous.**

**Motion: Dick Went to be reappointed to NRICD Board. Harriet/ Paul; unanimous.**

**Motion to adjourn at 11:45am: Harriet/Clark; unanimous.**