

RI STATE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

2283 Hartford Avenue

Johnston, RI 02919

MEETING MINUTES

August 13, 2014

RIDEM, Room 340 C

235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908

Chair Maria Mack called meeting to order at 9:30.

Present:

RISCC Members: Maria Mack, Paul Dolan, Ken Ayars, Clarkson Collins; RISCC Staff: Ramona LeBlanc;

ERICD: Jessica Blackledge; SRICD: Harriett Powell, Eric Scherer, Kate Bousquet; RIACD: Dick Went, Jean Lynch; RI DEM: Bev Migliore; NRCS: Phou Vongkhamdy;

Absent:

RISCC Member: Emerson Wildes;

I. Minutes: A motion to accept minutes of the July 9, 2014 meeting was made by Paul Dolan and seconded by Clarkson Collins: motion carried unanimously.

II. Financial Reports: A motion that RISCC is in receipt of the financial

reports was made by Paul Dolan and seconded by Ken Ayars: motion carried unanimously.

Benefit expenses associated with program hours will be posted to those programs on a quarterly basis and a final adjusting entry will be made at end of fiscal year.

III. Agreements:

A. Geese: Current agreement with DEM is scheduled to end 9/30/14 but there has been verbal agreement that due to delay in getting contract signed an extension would be necessary. Jessica Blackledge will work with DEM Water Resources to have agreement amended.

Full Narragansett Bay Estuary Program/NEIWPPC grant proposal to fund geese program past current DEM agreement was not completed by submission deadline.

Staff will investigate other funding opportunities as they occur and adapt existing framework accordingly.

B. NRCS: Ag Tech proposals, funded through CTA funds, have been accepted for each District and new agreements will be written. Phou Vongkhamdy reported that he expects that NRCS will fund new Engineering, Outreach and Small Scale Forestry agreements.

A status summary of current NRCS agreements was given by Ramona. Outreach 2014: Planning for last round of workshops is underway and staff continues to attend public events to present information on NRCS Farm Bill programs. Engineering 2014: Work continues on design folders, with an average of one being completed

per month. Discussion of a new agreement is underway. Contractors List: Activity on hold until after construction season at which time workshops will be held to make contractors aware of opportunities to install NRCS practices. Requests for extension of performance period will be made for Engineering and Contractors List agreements.

IV. Old Business

A. FFOS:

1. Registered letters will be sent to all those who did not respond to June letter requesting copy of farm conservation plan. That letter required contact with Districts within 60 days of date of letter. Second letter will clarify that, from date of contact, landowner has 12 months to provide plan or to have one developed. Database will be modified to include plan date. Staff meeting will be held to review FFOS program and process as well as to develop consistent protocol for review of NRCS or landowner developed plans.

2. Briefing paper for soil types for Open Space maps was distributed electronically before meeting. FFOS subcommittee will be convened to review revised Open Space soil types.

B. SESC Handbook: Document was re-paginated and is now ready for posting/publication. A review committee has been established for updates. A 5 year schedule of training sessions will commence this fall. A motion to approve publication was made by Paul Dolan and seconded by Clarkson Collins: motion carried unanimously with the understanding that the document will be modified with necessary updates.

C. ERICD Status: RISCC is exploring opportunities to strengthen and

increase capacity of the District.

D. V. New Business:

A. Technical Subcommittee: Ramona will contact Eric Offenbergl to schedule an initial meeting.

B. Intergovernmental Agreements: Ramona will forward a document template, developed by SRICD, to Ken.

C. Strategic Planning/Organizational Policies: Ramona will forward preliminary outline developed by Eric Scherer to RISCC. A series of planning meetings will be scheduled with a goal of beginning process in October.

E. Other:

1. A meeting with Cathy Sparks will be scheduled to discuss services Districts can provide to RI Division of Fish & Wildlife.

2. NOFA will be invited to attend November meeting to discuss partnership opportunities.

3. A motion was made by Ken Ayars and seconded by Paul Dolan to ask NRCS to add Code 316 , Animal Mortality Units to its list of practices: motion carried unanimously.

VI. Reports:

A. Written reports distributed by the ERICD and SRICD

B. NRICD: Building improvements and search for tenant farmers continues as Snake Den farm. Scituate Reservoir Watershed Education Program projects are ongoing. Annual Report is being developed.

C. RC & D: Greenhouse and Farm Energy workshops scheduled.

D. RIACD:

1) District staff and Board members can audit any of the NACD Regional Conference sessions without cost.

2) NACD plans to address trend towards 50% match requirement on NRCS agreements.

E. NRCS: Written report distributed. Phou also reported that he would like to discuss a small agreement for Districts to assemble an Engineering Handbook. In measuring success of Outreach agreements, Phou reported an increase in number of practices obligated from 97 in 2010 to 611 between 10/1/13 and 7/31/14.

A motion to adjourn was made at 11:36 by Paul Dolan, seconded by Ken Ayars: motion carried unanimously.

Chair Maria Mack opened executive session at 11:40 to discuss personnel/salary issues.

No action was taken.

A motion to adjourn was made by Paul Dolan, seconded by Clarkson Collins: motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:30.