

Northern Rhode Island Conservation District

**17 Smith Avenue - Greenville, RI 02828 - Phone (401) 949-1480 - Fax
(401) 949-4436**

MEETING MINUTES

May 2, 2012

Chair Paul Dolan called the meeting to order at 7:08.

**Present: Directors: Paul Dolan, Dick Went, Jean Lynch. Associate
Directors: Marc Tremblay, Norm Hammond. District Manager: Gina
DeMarco; NRCS: Justin Tuthill; State Conservation Committee:
Ramona LeBlanc, Jill Osgood; Visitor: Mark Laroche, Esq.**

**I. Minutes: Minutes and notes of previous meeting were accepted as
on file. Dick/Jean; unanimous.**

**II. Financial Reports: A motion was made that the Board is in receipt
of the Financial Reports. Dick/Jean; unanimous.**

III. Old Business

- SRWEP:**
- The Water Festival is scheduled for May 8th.**
- Gina reported that the awards for the Poster Contest will be held**

from 11:30 – 12:00. An invitation was issued but the Lt. Governor will not attend.

The classroom presentations are starting to wrap up. Becca is now in the classroom teaching and is doing very well.

A. NRCS Agreements:

- **Ag Inventory:** Surveys are ready to begin in Bristol and Warren.
- **Outreach:** 3 rounds of workshops are about to begin. Breene Hollow Farm is scheduled for May 2nd and Confreda Farm is scheduled for May 19th at 10:00 am.
- **Geese:** Jessie did egg-oiling field training for the Northern District at Roger William's Park. There were no nests on the banks but found numerous nests on the island in the pond (7 nests and 150 eggs).
- **Rivers:** The emphasis will be on hydraulic impairments and prior flooding issues. A field plan is due on May 15th. The first phase will be a on the ground assessment of the Warren and Kickemuit Rivers and their tributaries to locate impairments. From the data collected, a few sites will be chosen for inspection by NRCS. Depending on remaining funding, one or more sites will be selected for an more in depth survey with recommendations for solutions to existing problems. Funding sources for the repairs will also be investigated and included in the final report.
- **EWP Pocasset:** Cranston and Johnston have signed MOU's and sites are being selected.

B. Building Walkway: No new business to report.

C. Seedling Sale: There appears to be less profit from the sale than prior years. Orders were lower than previous years yielding less profit.

D. PASA Grant: Becca is working on a grant that fund after school programs for Providence middle school students. The grant will fund Becca's time to prepare and present a 1 hour program but it will not include overhead. There was discussion about the district's potential liability for this grant.

IV. New Business:

A. Health Insurance: The State Committee met with an insurance advisor to investigate the possibility of offering health insurance to the State Committee and district employees. The State Committee recommends that each entity offer a minimum of 50% premium coverage to those employees who work a minimum of 25 hours per week. There will be no contribution in lieu of coverage. The State Committee will receive updated premium costs for July 1st enrollment. This will be an interim program because the federal government is expected to change health insurance programs by January 2014. Each district will need to decide if they want to offer health insurance to their employees and if so, do they want changes to the proposed plan. A motion was made to explore the matter further as recommended. Dick/Jean; unanimous.

B. NRCS Field Office: Gina reported that the district needs to appoint one staff member and one board member to sit on a sub-committee to develop a written plan for the development of each field office. The sub-committee is called the “Field Office of the Future” (FOOF).

V. Reports:

- **Chair:** Paul Dolan reported that he may step-down from his current position as Chair of the Northern District. He has taken a new position as Executive Director for RC&D (Resource, Conservation & Development) effective mid-May. The Arbor Day programs held in North Scituate, Clayville and Hope were a big success. Kate’s assistance was very valuable.

A. SCC: Ramona reported that the State Committee held a meeting on April 24th. The issues discussed are:

- Proposed Health Insurance coverage for the districts was discussed (see above New Business item A).
- An MOU between the State Committee and the Southern district outlining the nature of the partnerships is under review. After recommendations are submitted there will be a follow up meeting to discuss further.
- A Resource Library/Fee for Service portfolio is in process. The report will provide information about each district and will include a short biography of each member and staff, photos, skills, services, talents, projects, etc. that the district has to offer. It will also provide

a list of affiliated agencies.

B. NRCS: Justin submitted 2 reports.

- **There are mostly forest contracts in the Northern District.**
- **There are currently 48 Round 3 application submissions. June 1st is the R-3 Application deadline.**
- **Burrillville is the only place in the Northern District where the RI Cottontail has been identified.**
- **On May 1st the NRCS Associated Chief visited RI. NRCS was updated on Conservation Compliance, the section of the future Farm Bill that applies to RI.**
- **An Oversight and Evaluation Review is scheduled for the week of August 6th.**
- **The field staff acquired a laser level and subsequent training.**

C. RC&D: No new business to report.

D. RDC: No new business to report.

E. RIFCO: The Annual Spring Program and tour is scheduled for May 5th at 8:30 am at the Woodlot in Foster.

F. RIACD:

- **Dick Went attended Ag Day.**
- **Tom Sandham retired from the Ag Partnership. Ken Payne has taken his position.**
- **The Farm Bill should pass before the end of the year.**
- **Dick attended the Senator Whitehouse Conference.**
- **The Association did not receive additional funding for the Beginner**

Farmer Grant. Becca will no longer be working on the program after September.

- The NACD Legislative Conference is scheduled for July 14th -17th in Washington, DC. There will be a Whitehouse tour and briefing.**
- The New York/New England Initiative has Clean Water funds available. The district will pursue how to acquire some of the available funds.**
- The Long Island Sound Partnership includes a small section of RI. The district will pursue how to acquire some of the available funds.**

G. RIRLA: Louis is having a show at Addieville.

H. Envirothon: The Environthon is scheduled for May 18th at Goddard Park. 10 – 12 teams are expected to compete.

I. District Manager: Gina reported that Harvard Forest held a one hour social media networking for new farmers.

J. Other: Mark Laroche, a local attorney, updated the board about on his progress to produce a Legal Guide to Farming in Rhode Island Reference Manual. He reported about a social media event in Vermont that uses social networking to market products and services. Ken Payne has done some work on Ag Laws. Mark is looking for a fiscal sponsor. He will attend the RI Food Policy

meeting.

Motion to adjourn at 8:50. Dick/Jean; unanimous.