

Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District

2490 Main Road - Tiverton, RI 02878 - Phone (401) 816-5667

ERICD Board Meeting

May 8, 2012

7:00 PM

Chairman Walter Elwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present were: Directors - Walter Elwell, Emerson Wildes, Richard Hart, Ron Mucci; Associate Director - Steve Horowitz; District Manager - Jessica Blackledge, ERICD; Ramona LeBlanc, Jill Osgood, State Conservation Committee.

I. Minutes: Minutes of the April 10, 2012 meeting were declared accepted as presented.

II. Financial: Reports were declared approved as presented.

III. Project Update: Jessie included updates in her written report.

A. Geese: Field training and fieldwork is on-going. Several nests were located and eggs oiled in all three districts. In the Northern district APHIS is also involved in egg oiling.

B. Outreach: Jessica continues to attend project planning meetings and training. Ag Day was a success; Jessica made several new

contacts. She will also meet with Kate Sayles from the Northern district for training on NRCS contract reviews. The Third Round NRCS Workshop is scheduled for July 18th at 5:30 pm at Watson Farm. Don Minto will lead a farm tour that will focus on NRCS practices.

C. Water Bodies: No Report.

D. Equipment Bank: No Report.

IV. NRCS Report: Melissa was not present. Please refer to her written report.

V. Old Business:

A. Board Status: Ron Mucci was re-elected as District Director at the last meeting. He has accepted. The vote will be presented to the State Committee on May 9th for final acceptance.

B. April 24th SCC Meeting:

1. Proposed Health Insurance coverage for the districts was discussed (see below – New Business, part A).

2. 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.

3. A MOU between the State Committee and the districts outlining the nature of the partnerships is under review. If the districts have any concerns or edits to be considered, please submit them to Ramona before May 24th.

C. Satellite NRCS Office: There has been no progress from last month's meeting.

D. Other: No other Old Business.

VI. 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.

Emerson made a motion to offer health insurance to their employees as recommended. The motion was seconded by Ron. The motion was opposed.

A motion was made to continue the health insurance discussion in the future when more information is available. The motion was seconded by Ron. Motion passed; unanimous.

B. Field Office Committee: Phou asked each district to appoint 1 board member and 1 employee 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). A motion was made for Jessica to fill the employee position for Eastern. Emerson seconded; unanimous.

Ron made a motion for the Chair to fill the board member position. The motion was declined. The board member position remains unfilled.

C. Office Sign: The Eastern district would like a sign posted at the driveway entrance to advertise their district office as well as the NRCS Field Office location. Discussion was postponed to a different time.

D. Bills: Emerson made a motion that all current bills be paid. Current bills include NACD dues, and fringe & expense reimbursement for Jessica and Becca. Richard seconded; unanimous.

E. Other: Emerson made a motion to pay Ag Council dues of \$30.00 per year. Richard seconded; unanimous. Jessie will attend the Ag Council meeting and dinner. Emerson will also attend at his own cost.

VII. Reports:

A. Project Manager: Walter has been watching two flocks of geese; he observed a total of 9 hatched eggs. They are no young at the golf course or Bridges Marsh. The Herring Counting Station is very heavy and at Sakonnet Point the herring are being eaten by bass.

B. Chair: Walter put up a sign at the Pond stating that felt waders were prohibited. The City of Newport asked that the sign be removed as it erroneously suggests that fishing is allowed.

C. Directors:

1. Richard reported the heron population has been heavy at the Nonquit Fish Ladder but have lightened up. Richard continues to attend classes at RWU and CRMC.

2. Jessie will attend the State Technical Team Meeting and training on general changes to the Farm Bill, NRCS updates, design review delivery, etc.

D. SCC: Emerson reported that the State Committee needs written district reports for their May 9th and July 11th meetings.

Meeting adjourned @ 9:05 pm.