

Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District

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

ERICD Board Meeting

June 12, 2012

7:00 PM

Chairman Walter Elwell called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Present were: Directors: Walter Elwell, Richard Hart, Ron Mucci; District Manager: Jessica Blackledge, ERICD; State CC: Ramona LeBlanc, Jill Osgood; NRCS: Melissa Hayden.

I. Minutes: Minutes of the May 8, 2012 meeting were declared accepted with 3 corrections:

1. Section V, part D – “Other: No other business” was corrected to “Other: No other Old Business;” 2. Section VI, part B – “A motion was made...” was corrected to “Ron made a motion...”; 3. Section VII, part A – “The Heron Accounting Station...” was corrected to “The Herring Counting Station...” Walter/Dick; unanimous.

II. Financial: Reports were declared approved as presented.

III. Project Update: Jessica submitted a written report.

A. Geese: Field training and fieldwork are complete in the three

districts. Training took place at Green Hill Pond in South Kingstown on 4/7/2012 for the southern district; at Roger Williams Park in Providence on 4/19/2012 for the northern district; and at Silver Creek in Bristol on 4/24/2012 for the eastern district. Oversight and support to other groups in the districts are also complete. Jessica will attend the RWP Pond Restoration Steering Committee on 6/18/2012 at 1:30pm.

B. Outreach: Jessica continues to attend project planning, training and outreach meetings. NRCS directed contract reviews have been fulfilled. The 3rd 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. Publicity for the workshop will be sent out within the week.

C. Water Bodies: Becca Buckler was not present at the meeting but submitted a written report. Becca is working with Matt Deane and Kat Zuromski documenting hydraulic impairments on the Warren and Kickemuit Rivers. The impairments deemed the most pressing will require in-depth surveys by engineers. A final report will include collected data and recommendations.

D. Equipment Bank: Becca was not present at the meeting but submitted a written report. About 170 farmers have participated in the on-line survey; Becca is working on written business plans for equipment sharing ideas, and her next equipment study will focus on a portable egg-washing station.

IV. NRCS Report:

- **Melissa submitted a written report. Melissa has been working at the Eastern District office on Wednesday and Thursday's. She and Jessica are working on obtaining signage for the main road. Melissa is also organizing a Grand Opening Celebration for the field office.**
- **The FY2012 EQIP program funding for the Eastern District Round 2 obligations are complete. R2 included 24 contracts for 730 acres at \$318,000. Round 3 applications total \$952,000 and will require NRCS to request additional funding from the national office. The AMA program obligated \$18,920 and the CSP program obligated 2 contracts.**

V. Old Business:

A. Satellite NRCS Office: NRCS has been using the Eastern District office as a field office on Wednesday and Thursday's.

B. Field Office Committee: Jessie contacted NRCS about needing additional information concerning time commitment and meeting dates for the Field Office of the Future Committee. She is waiting for a response.

C. Other: No other Old Business.

VI. New Business:

A. 2012-2013 Budget: Ramona presented a working budget for the next fiscal year. It is based on the current signed agreements with NRCS and the expected 25% decrease in State Funding. The budget will be updated as new agreements are signed.

B. Bills: A motion was made to pay current bills that included employee expenses of \$392.10, Workers Comp insurance of \$82.00,

and utilities of \$90.36. Ron/Dick; unanimous.

C. FSA Request: Jessica received a letter from Paul Brule, the State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency, requesting use of the district's office for their work on Newport County farmer acreage reports. Paul requested use of the office on 6/12, 6/21, & 6/26/2012 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm each day. Dick made a motion to grant use of the office, Ron seconded; motion passed unanimously. Jessica will contact Paul to follow up.

D. Sakonnet Vineyards: Jessica presented an expired agreement between the current owner of Sakonnet Vineyards, Newport Water and the Eastern District concerning wetland mitigation on Sakonnet Vineyards property. The mitigation work has not been completed and the property is currently listed for sale. Research concerning the Eastern District's responsibility/liability, if any, is needed. Ron made a motion for Jessica to contact the State Committee to obtain the contact for the district's legal counsel. Jessica will then follow up with the board for further guidance. Dick seconded; unanimous.

E. Watershed Based Plans: Jessica attended the DEM Watershed Based Plan Public Meetings for the Kickemuit River and Barrington/Palmer/Warren River Watersheds on May 9 – 10, 2012. DEM will develop the plans and Jessica will review and organize with DEM concerning potential district involvement. Jessica will attend the DEM Impaired Waters meeting at DEM on 6/13/2012.

F. Other:

1. Dick commented on the need for signs prohibiting the feeding of ducks, geese, and other wildlife.

2. Jessica reported that the photocopier does not work and a computer monitor needs to be disposed of. Walter will research the proper disposal of each item.

VII. Reports:

A. District Manager: Jessica submitted a written report.

B. Chair: Walter attended a Little Compton Town Meeting and made a motion requesting \$1,000 in municipal donation to the Eastern District. The motion was not passed. Walter reported that the satellite office is open. A grand Opening is planned for the future.

C. Directors:

1. Emerson Wildes was not present but submitted a written report.

a. Emerson requested clarification of the insurance proposal presented at the May meeting.

b. Emerson's report on the RI State Conservation Committee meeting held on 5/9/2012 included: a (passing) vote for an increase in indirect fees proportional to billable hours for NRCS contracts; the need for each district's assistance on the DEM Land Link project that matches farmers with available land; and Phou's commitment to solve the engineering issues at NRCS and his search for returning veterans to hire as interns.

c. Emerson's report on the RI Association of CD meeting held on 5/14/2012 included: contacting Dick Hart concerning his desire to continue as the eastern district's alternate to the Association. Dick responded that he is not interested in continuing in this position.

Walter requested this issue be included on the next meeting's agenda. Also reported: Ken Payne started his new position as the Director of the Ag. Partnership; Dick Went suggested to the Envirothon Committee that current issues such as "climate change" be included in their program; the Association is researching NACD sign options; and Jean Lynch requested a publicity pamphlet from each district to take to the legislators and agencies.

2. Ron reported that a local resident, Carol Silva, has made prior applications with NRCS and is still awaiting contact from the district and/or NRCS. Ron will arrange a meeting with Melissa from NRCS and the applicant.

D. State Conservation Committee: Ramona reported that the RI State Conservation Committee meeting scheduled for July 11, 2012 at 9:15am at the Johnston office will be postponed. Notices will go out as soon as it is re-scheduled.

Meeting adjourned @ 8:53 pm.