

**Southern Rhode Island Conservation District
Board of Directors Meeting**

Minutes of May 8th, 2006

Present: Board Members; Pat Lenihan, Chair; Harriet Powell, Secretary; Steve DelPozzo, Treasurer; Rudi Hempe; Clarke Collins. Associate Members: Marjorie Weeden, Kelly Fox; Staff: Alicia Lehrer, District Manager; Patty Tanalski, Kris Stuart, Patty Gambarini, Susan Letendre.

The meeting was called to order at 6:05.

Minutes: Rudi moved, Steve seconded. Harriet asked that reports be submitted by email, and Rudi urged that a deadline be set for their submission.

MOU with RC&D: Rudi moved to accept and Steve seconded.

Financial Reports: No financial report. Alicia said that the last financial report was looking better and that it would help when URI Cooperative Extension signs its contract with SRICD. Several questions were asked about the DEM money. Not getting mostly because of Warwick not living up to contract with DEM. Warwick needs to live up to approving and contributing its share to the \$26,000 grant and have not done. Alicia was urged to continue to push DEM for money owed.

Reports

Conservationist Report: No Conservationist report as Mike is sick

RIACD: No meeting tonight.

RC&D: Work continues on Dry Hydrant program and Rhody Warm (with RDC). Soil and Sediment Handbook now has tristate status, the Coverts program is continuing, and a new initiative, a Forest Stewardship Pilot Program for forest owners in northern part of State is in initial stages. Reforesting of Black Ash and Walnut for Narragansett Tribe is also continuing.

RI Ag Council: (Report from Steve Del Pozzo re May 18, Ag Council Meeting.)

The food was excellent , the meeting was long , and the chairs were hard.

Highlights: Currently 900 small farms in Rhode Island covering about every aspect of agriculture.

There are about 140 organic farms in R,I.

Farm Link: is a new program being started to link students with actual farmers working in their business.

Farmers Markets: Continue to be a popular draw. Emphasizing home grown produce.

New market at Casey Farms, plus South Kingstown Farmers market plus the market at URI.

The market at Casey Farm is being called Beef and Lamb Coastal Market and will feature fresh lamb and beef products from RI.

Rhody Fresh is doing well, Jim Hines announced that Rhody Fresh is now available in Quarts and half and half containers. There is quite a bit of price difference from market to market as consumers buy Rhody Fresh milk. Milk served at grange dinner was Rhody Fresh.

Al Bettencout is sponsoring a show called RI Farm Watch and is looking for guests. This may be a place for us to gain an audience for services offered.

Ag Council has put in for a Champlain Grant to build a new building at Washinton County Fair. This will have a classroom feature and current plans call for it to be used for educational programs during the year.

Bird Flu training will be held at URI for interested persons.

Al Bettencourt circulated two bills to go before the house and senate regarding greenhouses, tax break for building materials for farmers and estate taxes on farms.

Ag at the State House was a success with over 30 vendors and groups explaining what they do as part of the AG Business community.

4-H Foundation Golf Tournament is Aug. 26 at Wood River Golf Course. Tee Sponsors for \$100.00 are needed as well as golfers. Last year tournament drew over 100 golfers. Wood River Golf Course is located on the former Chickadee Poultry Farm.

FFA gave a report and Greg Breene reported that enrollment is up at all the schools and several schools will be adding new teachers next year to handle the enrollment increase.

They are running a state wide raffle this year which includes two hand made cedar arbors and two 12 foot picnic tables. Raffle is continuous and winning tickets will be drawn at Washington County Fair on Sunday.

FFA Members showed an excellent video production of the National FFA Convention held in Louisville Kentucky this past year.

I gave a report on SRICD activities , plant sales and services offered by district. I gave out email address so people can contact us on line if they desire Meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

RIRDC: Meat products grant still going forward. Don Bosquet is doing logo for RI Quahogs. A mussels study of Narragansett Bay which will result in marketing of the product in RI. Made a Department of Labor training grant application; acted as a funding sponsor of the Wood Expo; South County Tourism initiative moving forward and 60,000 copies of South County events and tourist opportunities, etc will be distributed. Also working on expanding the Richmond Pomona Grange at the Washington County Fairgrounds locations

RI State Committee: Two big issues, grant for District projects; have about \$4500 for a project or projects that Districts can apply for. Southern will probably try to get Calvin Weatherwax, an ethno-botanist to come to RI with its share, if approved. The other issue is whether NRCS and associated organizations will be moving to a new building. If that happens, Rudi has been talking to Rich Schartner about finding space for SRICD at his new Bald Hill location.

RI State Technical Team: Steve reported on two new farmer's markets, incorporation of beef growers, \$100,000 grant for aquaculture and three people added at NRCS to handle

EQIP applications, Discussion of feed bunkers and use of as non-permanent structures in heavy use areas. \$500,000 for Conservation Innovation Grants. A final 3.8 mil for Farm and Ranch Protection to purchase development rights. On application, states that farm has to work with local land trusts. Also discussion on how much land worth before and after selling development rights. Deadline for all funds, May 11. Important aspects—scoring system, soils, ag land location. Frequently applications hung up because no appraisal. Committee also discussed terminating an EQIP contract, and how to try to prevent. Rudi talked about the fate of farms after farmers sell the development rights

Other: See scrap book for article on Animal Welfare. Power of Place Summit on May 12th.

Program Updates where needed

Growing a Future/Three Sisters 16 enthusiastic kids involved. Ages 6-19. Older kids are working with the younger ones. All compost donated which DOT transported (at no charge).

Project Wet

Duck Cove Monitoring Salinity monitoring done in April. All will work well as long as culvert does not get plugged up.

Greenwich Bay Storm Water See financial reports.

Stormwater Center, Phase II Implementation Narragansett Lawn care a big issue in RI. Marblehead horticulturist is going to consult on solutions to over watering, pesticide and herbicide use. Marblehead, Mass has passed an ordinance forbidding use of chemical pesticides and fertilizer. Patty is setting up meeting with Narragansett folks before end of June to discuss workshop for Parks and Open Space personnel.

DOT Phase II District supposed to oversee meetings that include reps from Towns, EPA, engineers, etc and is supposed to be in the process of organizing and taking minutes.

Stanton Avenue temporarily on hold while Narragansett engineer does a topo survey. Also hoping that NRCS will do bathymetry of pond. Topo survey will get elevations and clarify options. A flood-proof flood station is one option. Over history of structure, spill way has gone on to beach when opened or overfilled. Need to put together lots of pieces of information to find a solution,

Discouraging Waterfowl final report is in works

Livestock Inventory: Survey is almost complete in Saugatucket. We know numbers of animals and location of farms. NRCS's Vicky Drew pleased with our

progress. Need more funding to complete which can be done with partnership with Department of Agriculture. Have hired one intern, and Clark thinks he might know of another possible candidate.

NK Saw Mill Dam Project: Not discussed

Farm Bill Work for NRCS: Finished

Camp Jori: finished

NK Workshops: Doing site plan review workshops in Narragansett. In NK doing Phase II Overview Workshop. Pat suggested that District create pamphlets to explain the benefits and give to municipalities.

Seedling Sale Update: Will take place on May 13, probably rain or shine. May 14th is Mother's Day, and attendance falls way off when postponed. Rudi told volunteers what the work plan consisted of and what days might be required to finish getting ready for sale.

Old Business:

SRICD Committees

Finance Committee. Next meeting is June 8 at 2:00pm.

ERT and Marketing Committees Will set dates after the seedling sale

Meeting was adjourned at 7:40

Addenda: Film "Thirst" was shown at 5:00pm.

Respectfully submitted, Harriet Powell, SRICD Board Secretary.