



Southern Rhode Island Conservation District

10 High Street, Suite I-8 - Wakefield, RI 02879 - Phone (401) 284-1885 - Fax (401) 284-1889 - <http://sricd.org>

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

Minutes of May 21, 2007

Present: Board Members: Pat Lenihan, Chair; Harriet Powell, Secretary; Steve DelPozzo, Treasurer; Members: Rudi Hempe, Clarkson Collins.. Associate Members: Marjorie Weeden and Kelly Fox. Staff: Alicia Lehrer, District Manager, Susan Letendre, NRCS: John Richard

Meeting was called to order by Pat Lenihan at 5:51pm. Election of a vice-chair for the organization was added to the agenda.

Minutes from April 23: The minutes were approved including correcting the spelling of the new Narragansett Town Manager's name from Ceasarine to Ceasrine. Rudi made the motion to approve and Steve seconded.

Financial Reports: (no financial reports submitted.). Alicia will submit financial reports at the May meeting. She reported that everything seemed to be going OK and that the bills were being paid.

Reports: John Richard from NRCS gave the report (see RI NRCS Conservationist Report accompanying these minutes). John said he was putting together a written report. John discussed the WHIP and EQIP programs and their status, in particular as to how they relate to fish passage as described in the Stream Continuity study NRCS is engaged in. Both the Town of Hopkinton and the State are involved in prospective fish passage in Arcadia. Grants being given only for bricks and mortar in Wood-Pawcatuck.

RIACD: All RIACD board members (Pat, Rudi, Harriet) said they had agreed by email with the Conflict of Interest statement that Jean Lynch, Sec. of RIACD had sent for their approval.

RC&D: Alicia gave a short run-down of the partnership SRICD and RC&D agreed upon to deal with the waste veggie oil grant application. It was suggested that SRICD involve RC&D because SRICD does not have the business expertise that RC&D has. Alicia also



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said that currently there is a large supply of waste vegetable oil in the foreseeable future available for the asking since the generators must currently pay to have it taken away. At some point private enterprise may offer alternatives, but opportunity exists now. Harriet reported on the success of the Rhody Warm project and its future, the Stream Continuity Project, the Forest and Wood Expo, and RC&D involvement in GLCI and Rhode Island Blueways.

RI Ag. Council: Farm Bureau looking for new headquarters. Have a site south of Allie's Doughnuts in NK. Plan is that new building would be erected on the site within two years. Question asked, could this be a possible office site for SRICD? Alicia will talk to Al Bettancourt. Please see additional issues discussed at RI Ag Council in Kelly's report accompanying these minutes.

RI Rural Development Council: Meeting of Board on April 27 reported on a number of RD concerns. Capacity building; Wood and Energy Expo, a partnership between RD, RC&D (wood) and State of RI (Energy) slated for October; the Allan-Madison House project; RI Raised Beef Livestock Association and the impact of having to truck animals to Vermont for slaughtering, a business plan for this project is being developed by Eastern District; RI Ag Council grant received for local marketing program for RI quahogs and a potential for a USDA-RBEG feasibility study grant for Rhody Fresh.

State Committee: Next meeting is June 13. NRCS offer puts districts together with CIG grants. Only have one application to do outreach so far. The program needs tuning up. Dissemination of information about the program will be the responsibility of the SRICD and other districts.

State Technical Team: No meeting.

Other: Comments on Land and Water Conference, NK Environmental Fair and SRICD's Open House.

Program Updates:

Phase II Implementation Narragansett–Alicia. Year 4 going smoothly. Huge % of Great Island, Harbor Island and Salt Pond residents are interested in environmental issues. District working on proposal for pumping out boats, and dry weather surveys for 3 outfalls in Narragansett. Alicia referred to Harbor Island garden group, and discussion ensued on lawn watering and the best type of grass for lawns. Pat commented that the RI Senate is looking at water use and is coming out with proposals that will impact well drilling. Also discussed the use of cisterns for lawn watering.

Dot Phase II-Alicia. Have done TR-55 workshops; Joel Schmitt of NRCS helped. Not as satisfactory as would have like. The workshops were computer-driven but people were not told what to do clearly enough.

Livestock Inventory. Need to hire several interns to accomplish, have already interviewed 7-8 candidates and picked 2, Need one more and Susan part of team. Claire, who is only part time, will be coordinator. Need two by June 1st and the other two by second week in June. Goal is to complete Rapid Watershed Assessment of Saugatucket and Pawcatuck. End result will be the amount of phosphorus—where too much and what need to adopt as a target to protect those areas as well as inform DEM Dept of Ag, where animals are located. Programs are available for owners whose land shows high phosphorus. District is GPSing each site and providing info NRCS and Dem, Dept of Ag. Also could be involved in helping finish up continuity study of water in that watershed begun by Vicky Drew of NRCS which would dovetail with water optimization study.

NRCS RI CIG program-Alicia. See entry under RC&D,

NK Water Conservation Workshop for Wickford Point-Alicia. Patty G. is going to develop a slide presentation for residents. Only area in NK where can accurately calculate outdoor water use, and although lots are small, the amount of water used on lawns during spring and summer is huge. Will ask concerned residents to sign pledge to restrain water use. This has been found to be a good way to cut down on lawn watering as when resident actually signs a pledge to diminish water use, the rate of compliance is high. Point person for Wickford Point will be a Master Gardner. Suggestions will include retrofitting sprinkler systems (Rudi suggested a specific type of sprinkler head might be considered). John said NRCS could help. Holly and Allison will work with sprinkler people, and Larry Ehrhardt, RI District 32 Representative is getting the instructions for the 3 most used sprinkler systems so they can be retrofitted. The Board was very interested in this endeavor and will help where they can.

Item added to Agenda. SRICD Vice-Chair: Pat cited the need for a vice-chair for SRICD to run meetings when she was unavailable. Harriet nominated Rudi, Steve seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Committees

Art Show – Members Paul Boisvert, Clark Collins, Harriet Powell, Susan Letendre. Harriet discussed farm applications (7) and artist's interest. Photographer's group suggested. Pat will give Harriet the address. Important to get the venue for the art show pinned down before asking for sponsors, etc. Clark will find out about using the SKLT Barn.

Website –website is up and running and looks wonderful. Alicia said that artists may submit pictures they have painted for Art and the Natural World and they will be posted on website.

Logo – The Board chose the #1 submission (3 cat tails). Alicia will get onto letterheads, etc.

Events Seedling Sale: Alicia said that seedling sale not over yet. Some companies did not come through as expected, and some plants did not arrive in time for seedling sale. Must not repeat next time. Rudi suggested that we mail out Seedling Sale list in January. Also, need feedback about the types of plants that seem to be popular., especially the blueberries and spruce, and maybe need someone at Farm on Friday before the seedling sale, where orders could be picked up a day early. Rudi said the URI Dean was really enthusiastic about East Farm event and wants to expand. Problem is the parking. SRICD members will probably have to park elsewhere at future events. Consensus is more food vendors, to encourage more attendees. A shuttle from the main campus to East Farm may be a possibility to increase numbers. It was discussed that seedlings might be ordered to arrive a week early rather than a day or two. Alicia said analysis of income/outgo for the event is not yet complete.

Apieron Sustainability Festival. June 9th. A workshop in conjunction with local food suppliers. Goal; to enhance local food supplying mission. Colleges, for example, are interested in getting local food to serve. One idea, go to local land trusts and find out if they have any land that could be used for growing food. Problem: local food not readily available in the amounts needed, and much is not affordable in urban areas for those on food stamps, for example. Need to develop a program that puts kids on farms to intern. By doing so, they would find out about food sources as well as helping to increase supply of locally grown food. A lot of enthusiasm. Kids First, Farmfresh RI and Kurt Van Dexter all would play part and a CEES grant could be applied for next year. Steve suggested a garden at every school might be an option. (It was also mentioned that it was tricky to do so in communities where folks made their living growing food.)In urban areas, vouchers are given out for \$1500/year, like food stamps, for locally grown food. Pat McNiff's idea is farms on urban edges, to provide food for urban areas.. Pat Lenihan brought up the delivery system problem where local food is available but needs to get to its market. Say grow in South County, who pays to get to Providence? Alicia said those funds would be included in grant, and it would be doable to get fresh produce to its market with systematic plan. Might be an idea to do a local food tour in the Southern District. Let Alicia know if anyone knows anyone with connections to local Food Banks. Rudi told group that Master Gardners grew 25000 cabbages for local food bank, and that 80 volunteers were needed to do care and packing of cabbages prior to getting to Food Bank where needed. Youth in Action was suggested as a leadership group that could teach other youths. Goal: to increase programs that grew local food and got to destination Food Banks.

Next meeting is June 18.

The meeting was adjourned at 814 pm

Respectfully submitted: Harriet Powell, SRICD Board Secretary.