



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

Minutes of June 18, 2007

Present: Board Members: Rudi Hempe, Vice Chair; Harriet Powell, Secretary; Steve DelPozzo, Treasurer. Associate Directors: Marjorie Weeden, and Kelly Fox. Staff: Alicia Lehrer, District Manager; Kris Stuart, Susan Letendre, Patty Tanalski, Heather Place, Kristan Reed, Clare Stone. NRCS: Mike Kenyon.

Meeting was called to order by Rudi Hempe at 6:01pm.

Agenda item added: vote to give the Vice-Chair document-signing authority.

Minutes from May 21, 2007: The minutes were approved. Steve made the motion and Harriet seconded.

Financial Reports: Alicia commented that the District would ask Michigan Bulb for a refund on plants not delivered in time for seedling sale. Alicia said the financial prediction for the District looked decent until December 2007. Finances depend on whether we get contracts we have bid for, i.e., Stanley Bostich and Narragansett Storm Water Feasibility and Design Study (2 separate contracts). The District has not received an answer from NRCS about the national grant. The RI State appropriation is safe according to Eric Offenber, Chair of the State Conservation Committee. Everyone will be employed. Livestock inventory interns will be paid out of livestock inventory program as fee for services. Looking at financial handout: top 1/3 is income, and bottom 2/3rds are expenses. Beginning in January, figures are actual through May, and the rest are forward looking. Steve moved to accept the financial report and Harriet seconded. Motion passed.

Reports:

NRCS: Mike Kenyon from NRCS gave the report on past's month's activity. Mike reported that there were 1249 acres in Southern District EQIP contracts. NRCS has a new Assistant State Conservationist for Programs – Mike Moorman. Mike also reported that the deadlines for next Fiscal Year's program funding ranking were moved up because they lost seven contracts this year at the last minute and had to send money back to the national office. Very bad. Consensus is that a hard lesson was learned; deadlines need to be earlier than previously thought, and should be adjusted. Next year NRCS staff will do better. Mike also described the Stream Continuity study NRCS is engaged in.

RIACD: Alicia is working with a national team headed up by NACD to submit a proposal to EPA to develop comprehensive environmental assessments and nutrient management plans for livestock operations nationwide. This national proposal is for \$7.9 million. NACD decided to apply for the funding with Alicia's prompting to Krysta Harden, NACD Executive Director, and consensus from other Conservation Districts across the country. Rich Duesterhaus at NACD is heading up the proposal team. If the project is funded, it means that RI Conservation Districts would gear up to produce these assessments and reports and could possibly leverage additional funding for such work from the RI office of NRCS. Alicia will be convening a local team to put together ideas of how RI could contribute to this project.

RC&D. Harriet reported on RC&D. Rhody Warm continues to be a stand-out. Rhode Island Monthly is doing a blurb on the project in July. RC&D has taken over Vicky Drew's Water Use Optimization project in the Pawcatuck, and continues to be very active in working with the Narragansett Tribe, the RI River's Council and the Forest and Wood expo which has joined with the Governor's Office on Energy to put on an event in October.

RI Ag. Council: Next meeting is in October.

RI Rural Development Council: Executive meeting was postponed and next meeting is TBA. The entire Board meets quarterly.

State Committee: Alicia. Chip Young, a PR and Marketing expert who works for 11 environmental organizations, was invited to the June 13 meeting by Eric Offenber. Eric asked Chip to work with the districts in developing a single statement about what they do that would resonate with the public. Chip and districts could also collaborate in putting together a cohesive media campaign, if grant monies could be obtained. A discussion followed about the District's mission, which is difficult to define particularly since water quality/quantity issues have been added to original mission. Chip suggested that the District's boards discuss this project.

Alicia announced that Jean Lynch will no longer be the Legislative Contact for RIACD, which involves going to Washington once a year to speak to legislators on the districts' behalf. Alicia asked if anyone was interested in filling her shoes. Alicia also announced that the Annual NACD meeting is scheduled for February 2008, and is open to all District staff and Board members. The Regional NACD Conference is August 5-8 in Connecticut. If anyone is interested in attending, Roylene has said she will provide a van to and from the conference.

Alicia also announced that the three RI Conservation Districts have an agreement through the State Conservation Committee with NRCS to conduct the RI CIG program. The first RFP for the state CIG program ended producing only one incomplete proposal. The second RFP round was announced and will run through July 6, 2007.

Wendy Hoyle is retiring as the Secretary for the Committee, and the Committee voted to give her a retirement gift of \$25. Harriet made the motion and Steve seconded it. Next meeting of the State Committee is August 15.

State Technical Team: Kris reported on a new Farm Service Agency initiative. Private organizations such as land trusts are eligible to apply for funding to restore wildlife habitat on eligible farmland, with emphasis on endangered species. The Team also discusses strategies to control geese, deer and coyotes. For geese, that might be planting a different cover crop. A new committee is being formed to review options for goose control. The first meeting will be in August; Ken Ayars of Division of Ag will chair.

Other: Apieron Sustainable Living Festival workshop presented by Susan and Alicia was very well attended. Much interest in sustainability today and in future. Emphasis on increasing the availability of local and organic food, especially for low-income folks.

Program Updates:

Phase II Implementation Narragansett – Kris will meet tomorrow with John Lawless, engineer in charge of Phase II, to discuss Phase II plan for the year and review training needs for site inspections. Kris also submitted an article on reducing runoff at home for the consumer confidence report that went out to all Town residents. Veronica Berounsky and Rosemary from the Narrow River Preservation Association, along with Susan Letendre, presented information on watershed importance and protection to entire 3rd and 4th grades at Narragansett Elementary School – more than 200 children! Alicia conducted dry weather testing of outfalls but has not yet received results. She will report when she receives them. John and Kris have to do construction inspection that is quite easy in Narragansett as few sites meet inspection criteria of 1 acre or more.

DOT Phase II - Kris. Kris is completing workshop outlines for Train the Trainers on “Public Works Facilities Operation and Maintenance” and “Stormwater System Operation and Maintenance.”

Livestock Inventory – Alicia. District has hired three new interns who will do the inventory. Prior to hiring interns, SRICD completed inventories the Saugatucket and the Queen’s River subwatershed of the Pawcatuck. Will do Beaver, Chipuxet, Chickasheen, Upper and Lower Pawcatuck, and the Wood this summer. Alicia and whole livestock crew (minus Susan) met with the new state vet, Scott Marshall, who told her how valuable our livestock inventory is for his work. Scott gave entire field staff guidelines on safe practices at each farm.

NRCS RI CIG program- See entry under State Committee.

North Kingstown Water Conservation Workshop for Wickford Point – Alicia. Workshop work progresses. Sue Licardi, NK Water, will be submitting a proposal to the Town Council later this month to change the outdoor watering ordinance from odd/even to once per week. Depending on results of that meeting, we may change the focus of the

workshop to announce how the changes will affect watering but still keep lawns green. Workshop will be rescheduled from June 27 to another date after Town Council meeting.

Duck Cove: A glitch. All the work is complete and the summary is on our website. However, NRCS contract was not officially extended, so funding is closed out. Alicia will meet with Joe Bachand of NRCS to rectify situation. Roylene is upset about contract problems and has assured that SRICD will get the money since the district is not at fault.

A short discussion followed about Laura Meyerson and invasive plants and their offspring.

Item added to Agenda. Giving Vice Chair authority to sign documents in the absence of the Chair. Harriet moved and Steve seconded and the motion carried.

Committees

Art Show – Members Paul Boisvert, Clark Collins, Harriet Powell, Susan Letendre. Harriet reported that we couldn't use the South Kingstown Land Trust Barn. Alternatives suggested: Washington County Fair building, Kettle Pond Center, and the South County Museum. Harriet said she would get in touch with all of them and report back. She has asked Alicia for 100 flyers to be passed out at the Narragansett Art Festival. Patty suggested that the Art Show be conducted in conjunction with the Annual Dinner, but the Board felt that after last year at the Grange, and not knowing if the District would return there, that it might be too complicated for both events to be at the same venue and time.

Seedling Sale NRICD's total profit was \$3600. We still don't know what ours was. Rudi suggested that the SRICD website include a survey of plants customers would like to see offered. He also suggested that order forms be posted on the website in January, as that is when gardeners do their planning. A possibility that buyers could pick up earlier than Seedling Sale event was also discussed, as were changes that might occur to the event.

Annual Dinner It was suggested that the District might consider having its Annual Dinner at the Johnson & Wales Airport Hotel. Johnson and Wales is interested in buying local produce and its mission seems to mirror some of the District's regarding food security. Mike has a contact and will get back to us. Suggested for awards: Teachers, Dan Potts from Chariho and Peter Stetson from Coventry, the Town of North Kingstown if their water ordinance goes through. Hall of Fame framers from Ag Day should be considered. Event and awards will be publicized by Rudi.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02pm

Next meeting is July 16.

Respectfully submitted,
Harriet Powell, SRICD Board Secretary