



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

Minutes of September 18, 2007

Present: Board Members: Pat Lenihan, Chair; Rudi Hempe, Vice Chair; Harriet Powell, Secretary; Steve DelPozzo, Treasurer; Clark Collins. Associate Directors: Marjorie Weeden, Kelly Fox. Staff: Alicia Lehrer, District Manager; Patty Tanalski, Susan Letendre. NRCS: Kate Giorgi.

Meeting was called to order by Pat Lenihan at 5:55 PM.

Minutes from July 16th Rudi made the motion to accept and Steve seconded. Minutes accepted.

Financial Reports:

Cash Flow Reports. Alicia reported that the organization is solvent. She assumes this situation will exist through February. The new billing structure is finally catching up to our debts. Please note donations from municipalities. Municipalities that are going to give or have already donated include Exeter, North Kingstown, Hopkinton, Narragansett, South Kingstown and Warwick. Coventry is also going to give as is East Greenwich and Hopkinton. Richmond, no.

New projects: NACD did not receive EPA grant re: manure management on livestock farms.

Bostich: We are continuing to work with the Company. The pond is being removed. Deemed a wetland, so an infiltration area will be created to replace the pond. Most geese are expected to leave when pond is removed. Geese Peace strategies were discussed to get rid of resident Canadas and return them to temporary residents.

Narragansett: signing Crooked Brook contract under Stormwater feasibility study design. Narragansett schools will be involved in the project and assist with implementation. SRICD has been asked to look at a drainage swale on Harbor Island that has filled in over years, but not certain whether filling is impacting drainage efficiency or whether area could do better job of filtering water. Asking questions and will recommend changes if needed to improve or whether still adequate to do intended job. Kate Giorgi said that the Phragmites that have colonized the area will probably have to be cleaned out as well as the Phragmites adjacent to drainage area which would re-colonize the drainage area if not removed also.

Discussion of available SARE grants relating to waste veggie oil from USDA CSREES Funds for innovation. Apparently there are two grants available for the same sorts of projects.

Ongoing other projects include the Livestock/ Narragansett/ Cooperative Extension and DOT. Harriet made the motion to accept the financial reports, and Rudi seconded. Motion passed.

Reports:

Conservationist Report: Kate Georgi. Kate introduced herself to the SRICD Board and answered questions about the Conservationist Report. Kate works all over the State, and well as working with Weeden Farm, the Westerly Land Trust, etc. but does a lot of forestry work in the State. Kate also explained the impact of the non-passage of a new Farm Bill. A number of programs are up in the air because of, including FRPP, WRP and WHIP. NRCS is accepting EQIP applications, but states do not know when the money will appear, so are not ranking the applications until it does. Kate said there is no firm date when NRCS will be informed and in the meantime programs may change, and/or have different eligibility before all Washington decides what is in the new Farm Bill.

RI Association of Conservation Districts: Harriet attended the regional North East NACD meeting in August. Business meeting elected officers, and voted to support a Great Lakes task force. One of the themes of the conference was to raise the visibility of NACD regionally and nationally as well as asking members to pledge money for restoration of the NACD building in Washington, DC.

RIRC&D: Big news is the RIRC&D Conference being held in Narragansett on October 18 through 20. . It is the 43rd Annual Fall Conference. There will be workshops and celebrations and raffles and auctions and speeches and field trips, and all are invited. Alicia will be speaking about the Duck Cove Restoration Project on Thursday between 9:30 and 10:15. Contact Chris Modisette at RIRC&D at 822-8877 if you have not received info either by email or snail mail.

RIRDC: There was a general meeting of RD in July and an executive meeting in August. At the general meeting it was emphasized that without monetary support, RD could continue for about 6 months. Gerry Bertrand, Executive Director is actively seeking funds. Other RD projects include the Wood and Energy Expo on Oct 14, the Allan Madison house restoration and continuing to work with the Raised Livestock Association. The Executive Meeting in August was attended by Kristin Sarri of Senator Jack Reed's Washington Office. Tom Sandham emphasized the importance of RI raised food to the Rhode Island economy to her. Tom is signing up owners of preserved, unused land in the Eastern District to encourage them to begin growing vegetable crops for sale in his District and hopes that other districts will also implement a similar plan.

RI Ag Council: Marjorie Weeden. The next Ag Council meeting is in October.

State Committee report from August 15, 2007 meeting: Southern has temporarily taken over from Northern doing minutes, etc for the State Conservation Committee. Alicia reported that NRCS Regional Assistant Chief – East, Richard Coombe attended the State Committee meeting and addressed the group. The appointments for the Farm, Forest and Open Space Committee was one of the main topics discussed.

State Technical Team: No meeting since last report.

Other: A number of events were discussed but no written notices were given to the secretary. Norman Bird Sanctuary mentioned an event and the Wood and Energy Expo on October 14th at the Crowne Plaza was also mentioned.

Program Updates (as time permits):

Duck Cove Monitoring: Alicia. Misunderstanding over payment for Duck Cove project cleared up. NRCS thought they had paid SRICD \$11,000, but they had not. When Joe Bachand explained to NRCS, they realized the error and paid us the money.

Cooperative Extension: Alicia. As mentioned in last month's minutes, SRICD stopped working on this project until outstanding money paid to the District. The money has been paid and work resumed.

Livestock Inventory: Update by Alicia. The program is running out of money, but lots of work left to do. District did not realize how many livestock owners were in the Southern District. There were 20 in the Saugatucket, and used that as a model for the other watersheds, but found 100 livestock owners in just the upper Pawcatuck, so numbers far higher than the model estimated. District has been discussing with Mike Kenyon and NRCS not averse to putting money into, so District will continue with the project and submit a variety of scenarios to NRCS with figures attached and see what happens. Identifying these livestock owners means more potential NRCS clients, so NRCS is interested in having us continue. Potential pollution can be identified by this project as well as identifying livestock owners in case of disease spread; so valuable information could be gathered in whatever sub watershed is selected. May be case of doing sub-watershed by sub-watershed, selecting the one with the most information potential.

CIG Program: Alicia. NRCS is happy with the Conservation Districts running the program. There have been 4 awards so far. Workshop is being held to inform how to implement program which Alicia will develop workshop.

Committees:

Marketing (Harriet, Susan, Clark, Rudi and Paul). Art and the Natural World Art Show: About 40 artists signed up for the program, but Harriet worried that since she received few replies to her queries to them about submitting pictures, that submissions may be low. She proposed that along with the Art Show and Sale that we have exhibit of

Rhody Warm blankets, and possibly some sheep growers and wool sellers to explain the program to the public and people can also examine 2006 blankets on display and put in an order the 2007 blankets which are currently being woven, etc. The upcoming article about Rhody Warm in the Projo should help create interest. Also, it was proposed that Susan, who has been working to raise the standard of living of Guatemalan villagers by importing their goods, also have an exhibit. Her items will be able to be purchased with a percentage going to the District. Currently, artists are continuing to be signed up, but we will have 3 separate exhibits, which should ensure a healthy attendance. The District will send out postcards announcing the event. Both Rudi and Clark said they could transport that art stands from Gilbert Stuart to South County Museum, depending on the time and date.

Events: Annual Dinner, Wednesday, Nov. 7th, 2007. Johnson and Wales is on board to serve local food at the Southern Rhode Island Annual Dinner. Lots of ideas about food, whether it will be donated or purchased or both. Many suggestions, cider, winter greens, turkey, goat cheese, fish stew, etc. Lots of enthusiasms on part of food growers, Johnson and Wales and the District, Suggestions made for awards, Peter Stetson, for Teacher of the Year, Donna Walsh for Legislator of the Year, Mr. Records as Farmer of the Year.

Rudi reported on the upcoming **Greenshare Day at URI** on Saturday, September 22. Event has an energy conservation component.

Also Rudi announced an all-day seminar on September 24th at 9:00am to do with journalism and **Metcalf Institute Journalism prize of \$75,000.**

Board of Director elections, appointments, etc. Harriet and Rudi brought in their signatures. Pat will have ready for annual dinner and Clark submitted his when he came on board. Steve will give forms back to Alicia before State Committee Meeting on October 10th. Will act on whatever needs acting on at next meeting when situation (tardiness in collecting and submitting signatures) is clearer, as Pat wished.

Office Situation: Shortly, we will no longer be able to use large room at 10 High Street for Board meetings, is being partitioned and rented out. Can have meetings at 60 Quaker Lane, maybe at new Farm Bureau building. We must find an alternative.

Next meeting, Monday, October 15th. Meeting was adjourned at 7:37pm
Respectfully submitted, Harriet Powell, Sec, SRICD.