

**SOUTHERN RHODE ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD JULY 27, 2015
AT THE URI MASTER GARDENER FIELD HOUSE**

Present: Clark Collins, Chair; Harvey Buford, Treasurer; Carl Sawyer, Secretary; Rudi Hempe, Dir.; Antonia Bryson, Dir.; Kate Bousquet, District Manager.

I. Clark called the meeting to order at 4:01PM.

II. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Motion made to approve minutes from the June 22, 2015 meeting. Rudy, Harvey, unanimous.

III. Reports

Financial Statement: Harvey submitted Treasurer's Report/Financial Statement for approval. Motion to accept approved. Rudi, Antonia, unanimous. Report on file.

District Manager's Report: Kate presented written report which is filed with minutes. Today's meeting was originally scheduled to be held at Wild Harmony Farm but was switched to the MG Field House due to forecast of inclement weather. It was noted that the Young Farmers Network would be meeting at Wild Harmony on 8/12, and a RIFCO twilight walk would be held on 8/13. Board members were encouraged to attend either if they were interested in seeing the farm.

NRCS Report: John Richard, NRCS, was unable to attend, however Kate noted that he said that 7 new cottontail projects totaling approximately \$80,000 had been approved in the Southern District.

Envirothon Report: Peter Stetson was unable to attend and submitted a written report noting that Narragansett High School would be representing RI at the national competition in Missouri and was seeking funds to defray cost of the trip. The Environmental Issue for the 2016 Envirothon will be Invasive Species. Report filed with minutes.

RI State Conservation Committee Report: Clark reported that the Committee had approved Antonia as a Director. He also noted that none of the applicants who had been offered the administrative assistant position had accepted the job.

IV. Old Business

- A. Report of 2015 Annual Dinner Planning:** Kate provided written notes of meeting held at State NRCS office. It was decided that Nov. 10th was the most desirable of the three dates selected by the planning committee. There was discussion of possible locations. Kate will confirm date with other Districts and RC&D. Once date is determined, venue availability and price can be looked into. It was thought that attendance might be on the order of 100-120 people and that Governor Raimondo would be invited to briefly address the group.
- B. SRICD Small Scale Forestry Outreach:** Rudi reported that he was working on publicity for events with Paul Dolan. The first workshop would be held on August 20th from 4:30-7:00 with additional workshops at different locations in October and November.
- C. SRICD Story Map:** Kate noted that that the story map would be a time-consuming project and that she would approach Pete August about availability of assistance from an ArcGIS skilled student. Rudi suggested that the District might consider looking into the Coastal Fellowship Program run by CELS as a source of student assistance with certain projects.
- D. MOU Between RISCC, RIDEM/Forest Env and NRCS:** RISCC asked that each district review draft MOU designed to strengthen cooperation between parties in providing landowners better

service in forest land, cropland, pasture, and rangeland management. Following discussion, the MOU was approved as written (Antonia, Rudi, unanimous).

V. New Business

A. Educator of the Year Award: Kate reported that Peter Stetson has nominated Eric Zabel, Biology teacher and Envirothon leader at Narragansett High School, for SRICD Educator of the year award.

B. Forester of the Year Award: Antonia nominated Ron and Mary Fasano of Wyoming for the SRICD Forester of the year award, noting their emphasis on low impact forestry. Kate will look into the possibility of holding our next Board meeting at their farm.

C. Upcoming Projects: Kate gave an overview of the following upcoming projects:

1. Soil Health – Project funded by NRCS would provide land owners soil health evaluation using Cornell program. SRICD would have to hire someone to conduct program. A 25% match would be required. A proposal has been submitted by Kate.

2. Long Island Sound Watershed RCPP: Kate attended a meeting in CT regarding the Long Island Sound Regional Conservation Partnership Project (RCPP). There may be opportunities for SRICD water quality initiatives since the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed is within the Long Island Sound impacted area.

3. SRICD Participation in Statewide Outreach and Planning Assistance. SRICD will participate in cooperative agreement with State NRCS Office.

D. Book keeping/Financial Considerations: Kate asked for Board approval to hire a bookkeeper to review books on a quarterly basis. In discussion, it was noted that the State Association is looking into retaining a bookkeeper and would it make sense to have the same person review books of SRICD, the State Association, and possibly other districts.

E. Ag Council Outreach: Kate related for Peter Stetson that Steve Olson was encouraging Ag Council member organizations to have representatives sign up to man the Ag Council booth/building/display at the Washington County Fair Aug. 12-16.

F. Other: Rudi suggested tapping into URI faculty and staff to serve as Associate Directors. People suggested and their areas of expertise included: Art Gold, water quality; Frank Golet, wetland issues; and Andy Radin, agricultural Cooperative Extension. Rudi will discuss with Art and Frank. Carl will discuss with Andy.

Motion to adjourn at 5:52 PM. Harvey, Carl.

The next Board meeting will be held on Aug 24th, hopefully at the Fasano Farm at 3:00PM, otherwise at 4:00PM at the Master Gardener Field House.

Minutes submitted by Carl Sawyer, Secretary, SRICD