

**SOUTHERN RHODE ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 28, 2015
AT THE URI MASTER GARDENER FIELD HOUSE**

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

I. Clark called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

II. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the August 24, 2015 meeting were approved as written. Carl, Rudi, unanimous.

III. Reports

Financial Statement: Harvey submitted Treasurer's Report/Financial Statement. Kate noted that the End Balance was low because the District has not received payment for projects with NRCS and the Town of North Kingstown. Kate also presented a new monthly spreadsheet she developed to illustrate status and progression of project funds. Motion to accept approved. Carl, Rudi, unanimous. Report on file.

NRCS Report: John Richard, NRCS, provided a written report summarizing programs underway in the Southern District. Items of note: 113 active EQUIP/WHIP/AMA/CSP projects totaling \$3.3 million; application deadline for 2016 projects is December 18; seven 2015 oyster projects are underway. There was discussion of how the District Board could be more involved in developing/prioritizing NRCS project ranking questions. John's report is on file. John noted that the Narragansett Tribe is interested in developing a conservation plan for the Chapman Farm in Westerly, and that Kate would be participating as part of the Ag. Tech. Agreement.

Envirothon Report: Kate provided a written report for Peter Stetson, who was unable to attend. Of note, there were two new advisors and one new school represented at the Sept. 22 orientation get-together. Higher Grounds Coffee Shop, Richmond, donated almost \$660 of their August tips in support of the Envirothon. The Organization continues to search for a major sponsor.

Ag Council Report: Kate provided a written report for Peter Stetson, who was unable to attend. The October Ag Council meeting will be at the Richmond Grange.

RI State Conservation Committee Report: Clark reported that there was discussion of ways to reinvigorate the Eastern District, which recently hired Sara Churgin as District Manager. There was discussion of legislative funding for Districts. Maria Mack, RISCC Chair, would like each District to prepare a justification for funding report to present to Sen. Sue Sosnowski. Kate and Clark will prepare a report.

Rudi had to leave early to attend another meeting so it was decided to vote on nominations (from previous meetings) for 2015 SRICD annual awards at this point. It was voted to approve Wild Harmony Farm as Conservation Farm of the year, Fasano Tree Farm as Forester of the year, and Eric Zabel, Narragansett High School, as Educator of the year. Rudi, Clark, unanimous.

District Manager's Report: Kate presented a detailed written report which is filed with these minutes. Kate also presented a spreadsheet she prepared which summarized current SRICD projects, the anticipated weekly hours needed for these projects, and employees responsible for carrying out the projects. There was a lengthy discussion of concerns regarding supervision, partitioning of effort, and billing as Districts cooperate on statewide initiatives. Kate also noted that Kat Zuromski would not be moving to a position with NRCS in Vermont, and would be continuing, for the time being, with District and URI projects.

IV. Old Business

- A. 2015 Annual Dinner Planning:** After discussion, it was decided that, rather than have a single silent auction basket for each District, it might be better to have a table for each District so that a number of silent auction items, or groups of items, representative of each District, might be offered. Kate will discuss this idea with other Districts before we proceed.
- B. Discussion Topics for October Meeting with NRCS State Conservationist:** Phou Vongkhmdy, State Conservationist will be invited to our October meeting. John Richard will provide Kate with draft Working Group ranking questions. Kate will forward questions to Board members as food for thought for discussion topics at meeting. Board members will be asked to provide suggestions via email prior to the October meeting.

V. New Business None.

Motion to adjourn at 6:07 PM. Harvey, Carl.

The next Board meeting will be held on October 26th, 2015 at 4:00PM at the Master Gardener Field House.

Minutes submitted by Carl Sawyer, Secretary, SRICD