

**SOUTHERN RHODE ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD OCTOBER 26, 2015
AT THE URI MASTER GARDENER FIELD HOUSE**

Present: Clark Collins, Chair; Harvey Buford, Treasurer; Carl Sawyer, Secretary; Antonia Bryson, Dir.; Harriet Powell, Assoc. Dir.; Peter Stetson, Assoc. Dir.; Kate Bousquet, District Manager; John Richard, NRCS; Phou Vongkhamdy, State Conservationist, NRCS.

I. Clark called the meeting to order at 4:15 PM.

II. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the September 28, 2015 meeting were approved as written. Carl, Harvey, unanimous.

Discussion with RI NRCS State Conservationist, Phou Vongkhamdy.

Clark welcomed Phou. Phou noted long history of partnership between NRCS and Districts. Phou said that while funding is always short, he would continue to do his best to support Districts through program funds for services. He encouraged the District to consider projects utilizing Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) funding as areas of the Long Island Sound RCPP fall within Southern District bounds. High priority would be given to whole farm management plans that improve soil health and nutrient management. Cover cropping, compost management and riparian buffer establishment and maintenance are additional areas of concern suitable for funding. \$600K is available for LIS RCPP projects. Possibility of 319 funding opportunities was also discussed.

III. Reports

Financial Statement: Harvey submitted the October financial statement. Kate noted that the favorable end balance (\$26,366) was, in large part, due to the receipt of \$18K in State of RI annual funding. Motion to accept approved. Carl, Harvey, unanimous. Report on file.

NRCS Report: John Richard, NRCS, provided a written report summarizing programs underway in the Southern District. To summarize: \$3.3M in funding has been allocated for 108 projects in the Southern District. Staff meeting with 36 land owners in the Southern District to process project applications by the Dec. 18th deadline. The USFWS has removed the New England Cotton Tail from its threatened list. NRCS will continue to provide financial assistance toward increasing the population. John's report is on file.

Envirothon Report: Peter reported that two new advisors and one new school have joined the program. Workshops in forestry and soils are scheduled and there will be an ArcGIS workshop for leaders. The committee continues to look for a site for the 2016 competition and for a sponsor for the program. Feasibility of students using ArcGIS to locate storm drains as an RCPP project was discussed.

Ag Council Report: Peter reported that the next meeting will be in March in Rumford. The cost of meals has been increased to \$15.

RI State Conservation Committee Report: Clark reported that the Committee met Oct 14th. Sarah Churgin will be providing administrative support. A memorandum of agreement between RISCC, each of the Districts, RIACD, RIRC&D and NRCS was signed. The purpose of the MOA is to encourage strong partnerships between the parties to facilitate delivery of conservation assistance to private landowners and others. The MOA is on file.

District Manager's Report: Kate presented a detailed written report which is filed with these minutes. Of note, Kate will be meeting with accountant Alan Hornstein to come up with procedures for a quarterly review of the District's books. Peter asked if there had been any progress with the Story Map. Kate said she had not heard from people at URI who might assist with the map.

IV. Old Business

A. 2015 Annual Dinner: Kate noted that silent auction space would be somewhat limited and that Board members should give thought to auction items. Cost of the dinner would be \$32 and checks should be made out to SRICD and given to Kate. Another dinner committee planning meeting might be necessary to tie up loose ends.

V. New Business None.

Motion to adjourn at 6:23 PM. Harvey, Antonia.

The next Board meeting will be held on November 28th, 2015 at 4:00PM at the Master Gardener Field House.

Minutes submitted by Carl Sawyer, Secretary, SRICD