

RICE S.W.C.D.
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 17, 2010

PRESENT: Bob Borchert, Bob Duban, Wally Hildebrandt, Richard Huston, Steve Pahs, Tom Coffman, and Debbie Skarupa.

ABSENT: Gary Wagenbach

Chairman Robert Borchert called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

APPROVE AGENDA: Motion by Wally Hildebrandt, seconded by Bob Duban to accept the agenda as presented. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Hildebrandt, and Huston. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

MINUTES: Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Dick Huston to approve the February 17, 2010 board meeting minutes. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Hildebrandt, and Huston. All aye -None opposed - Motion carried.

FINANCIAL: Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Bob Duban to approve the January and February Program Summary and Bills Payable subject to audit. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Hildebrandt and Huston. All aye -None opposed - Motion carried. RIM grant cuts and the governor's cuts were discussed.

OLD BUSINESS:

FORESTRY DAY: The Rice, Goodhue, and Dakota Forestry Day was held February 19 from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Culver's in Northfield. Approximately 20 people attended and it was a successful meeting. Tax benefits for woodlands and smaller acreage wood lots were discussed at the meeting. Tom Coffman said USDA through WHIP or EQIP can help people with 2.5 acres or more of woodland and then DNR does the management plans, so a full stewardship plan is not needed.

MASWCD DUES CALCULATION: Tabled from the February 17 board meeting. Bob Borchert said MASWCD dues are calculated on the SWCD county's tax capacity/ability and not on the SWCD dollars. Most SWCDs' annual dues fall between \$1850 and \$2750. All eleven SWCDs in our area pay the \$2750 and MASWCD has not raised dues for five to six years. MASWCD may look into a new formula for dues calculation.

MASWCD DAY AT THE CAPITOL: Bob Borchert, Wally Hildebrandt, Dick Huston, Danielle Waldschmidt and Steve Pahs attended the Day at the Capitol on February 18, and Bob Borchert was also there on the 17th for the Legislative Briefing. They had briefing time with the following legislators: David Bly, Patti Fritz, Mike Parry, and Kevin Dahl. Discussion on funding and the Governor's veto followed.

CONTRACTOR'S 2010 MEETING: A joint contractor's meeting with Rice and Goodhue was held February 25 from 9:00 to 12:00 at the Kenyon City Hall. The topics covered included mulching, sediment basins, wetlands, Gopher One Calls, agency communication and design forms. Twelve contractors attended and staff felt it was a good meeting.

STEWARDSHIP MATERIALS: Item tabled from the February 17th board meeting. Stewardship Week is the last week in April to the first week in May, and inserts have been handed out that will be given to area churches. Bob Borchert said MASWCD was concerned about public money being used in favor of religion. The stewardship inserts make no mention of God or any religion. Extra inserts are still available. Discussion followed.

NEW BUSINESS:

SEMASWCD SPRING MEETING: The spring (Area 7) SEMASWCD meeting will be held April 1 at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch in Stewartville. Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Wally Hildebrandt to approve paying the registration fee for staff who want to attend. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Hildebrandt, and Huston. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

ANNUAL REPORT: The financial portion of the Annual Report was discussed. Motion by Wally Hildebrandt, seconded by Bob Duban to approve the 2009 Annual Report addition. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Hildebrandt and Huston. All aye - None opposed - Motion carried.

NRCS CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT: Rice SWCD may be able to get a NRCS contribution agreement to survey and design terraces and sediment basins. Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Bob Duban to approve a request for a contribution agreement with NRCS pending possible funding. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Hildebrandt and Huston. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

TREE SALE STATUS: Steve Pahs said 26,000 trees have been ordered and 21,000 have been sold. He has added Deer Guard Repellent at \$35 per gallon to the inventory. Sales are going well.

RAIN BARREL PROPOSAL: Rain barrels are not available from Faribault Foods so Steve would like to order ready-made recycled wine barrel rain barrels and ready-made plastic rain barrels available in four colors. Barrels would be pre-sold with one pick-up day. Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Bob Duban to approve the purchase of one rain barrel from each of both types (one plastic and one oak) for samples. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Hildebrandt, and Huston. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

RAIN GARDEN PLANT KIT: Steve Pahs proposed buying native plant kits with 12 different species in a flat of 48 plants. There is a native prairie plant kit and a butterfly garden kit. Orders would be taken with a one-day pickup. Steve said the Master Gardeners felt it would be a good project. Wally suggested promoting the rain garden plants, the rain barrels and the tree sale all at one time on KDHL. Cost of newsletter was discussed. Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Bob Duban to advertise tree sales, rain garden plant kits, and rain barrels. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Hildebrandt, and Huston. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

ATV USE AGREEMENT: Fran Windschitl and Steve Pahs have discussed a \$30 per hour charge for use of the ATV for other district uses. The ATV has a meter on it. Item will be put on the April 21 board meeting agenda.

SUPERVISOR REPORTS: Wally said RC&D meeting will be next Monday with a state president's meeting in St. Cloud on March 25. He will bring the rain barrel Rice SWCD donated for the Agri-News Ag Day and the birdhouses he built. Keith Radel will be contacted about donating bluebird

houses. Dick Huston spoke on bird populations. Bob Borchert encouraged everyone to attend the SEMASWCD Spring Meeting on April 1st in Stewartville. MASWCD has received two requests for payment schedules for annual dues and some hardship requests. Dodge SWCD has been cut 30% from their county.

D.C. REPORT by Tom Coffman:

1. EQIP 2010 – Thirty-one applications were received by the deadline. Apparently, statewide interest in EQIP is high with \$40 million plus in applications, and the state has 22 million to work with. We have five applications for High Tunnel, four for Compost Buildings, four for No-tills, one Well-Sealing, two for Nutrient Management, and the remainder for Ephemeral Gully Erosion. Our initial allocation is \$195,000. I anticipate approximately \$100,000 plus in contract approval from statewide pools.
2. CSP Streamlining Ideas. NRCS is anticipating another sign-up this summer. Please get me any comments you have on streamlining this program.
3. NRCS Fish Committee has organized a food drive in Area 7. Our office donated 905 pounds to the Northfield Food Shelf.
4. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack's Garden Initiative will be carried out this year at the Faribault Service Center. We plan on establishing native grasses and forbes west of the building. The existing prairie north of the building will be abandoned.

DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT:

Ditch work and upcoming meetings were discussed. The Master Gardener's Vegetable workshop will be April 15 at 6:30 PM at the extension office. Rice COLA meeting will be Tuesday at 7:00 PM. Rochester Farm Show and Owatonna Farm Shows are coming up. The recently purchased weed wrench was demonstrated and Buckthorn removal was discussed.

This past month has been busy with a variety of things. Tree sales have been steady and it looks like we will do a little better than last year. I've been doing a few classroom visits and am scheduling many others for the next two months. The most recent legislative report shows some very bad news. The governor's proposed budget all but eliminates a long list of programs that we administer. The impact could be very severe, if approved. Hopefully, a compromise will be reached to save some of the programs. Now is the time to write letters to legislators and the governor.

Other activity this month:

- Attended the Day at the Capitol and met with all our legislators
- Attended the Rice/Goodhue/Dakota Forestry meeting
- Working on the Schmidtke group project to try to get it moving forward
- Participated in a Rice/Goodhue contractors meeting
- Attended County Board meeting regarding CD 9 work
- Participated in a Working Lands Initiative meeting in Jordan (one project in Rice County)
- Went to SEMACDE employees annual meeting in Stewartville
- Working on budget issues, NRCS contribution agreement, ATV for ditch program, hydrology training update, possible rain barrel and raingarden plant sale, etc.

The next few weeks will be very busy as we are able to get back into the fields to do some surveying, preparing for the tree sale, and working with the ditch inspection. I will also keep a close eye on the budget as it changes. Rice County also asked all agencies to prepare for a possible 5% reduction of county funds this year. I'll keep you posted.

DISTRICT PROGRAM MANAGER'S REPORT:

- ☼ Out on several windbreak tree planting plans.
- ☼ Continued RIM, RIM/WRP and CREP easement processing.
- ☼ Attended monthly Plat Review Meeting at the Planning & Zoning office.
- ☼ Attended the Area 7 Employee Meeting.
- ☼ Wetland Conservation Act Activities:
 - Review of preliminary proposal by the City of Northfield to build a trail system on the east side of the Cannon River. Project could have wetland impact, so a delineation will need to be done in the spring.
 - Review of a proposal from the City of Faribault to install a stormwater system and road rebuilding and black topping on Western Avenue by County Club.
 - Review of Rice County CUP applications for any wetland impacts.
 - Review a CSAH#1 realignment project for the County Highway Department.
 - Attended WCA administrative training in Mankato
 - Various other ongoing WCA activities

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST REPORT:

- Assisted with office remodel, moving furniture, etc.
- Helped Deb find pictures for the annual plan and reviewed nutrient management plans and goals.
- Attended monthly board meeting.
- Attended Nutrient Management Initiative conference in Mankato. This was held in conjunction with the CTIC group that I have been participating in.
- Site visit to Charles Wagner feedlot, looking at possible pollution fixes.
- Attended Area meeting in Stewartville.
- Attended Rice County feedlot meeting on current issues affecting local farmers along with some new regulations.

Nutrient Plans Started, Revised, or Completed Last Month:

- Alan Malecha- Rice
- Jon Huseth- Goodhue
- Anthony Tuma- Rice
- Dale Spindler- Steele
- Bill Sexton- Wabasha
- Scott Thompson- Freeborn
- Paul Duban- Rice
- Steve Jerdee- Freeborn
- Gary Lehnertz- Wabasha
- Jerry Kelm- Rice
- Mark Estrem- Rice
- Shane Wagner- Steele

February Ditch Services:

- Took ATV to Sette's Sports Center in Owatonna for price quote to trade the Kawasaki Mule in.
- Attended a meeting with the commissioners about current ditch issues where the public was allowed to voice their concerns.
- Took old sprayer off the ATV. Will try to sell.

FARM BILL TECHNICIAN’S REPORT:

I have identified locations for CRP and have send out several proposals for CRP. I have been working with these landowners to answer any questions and have been contacting others for follow up.

Letters were sent out to landowners who have potential RIM sites. Landowners have been contacting the office about RIM and I have been following up with other landowners. I have completed an additional two applications for RIM, one in Steele County and the other in Waseca County. These landowners will be placed on a waiting list because the money has been allocated for this signup. I’m working with a few other landowners that have expressed interest in RIM.

I am working on completing the requirements for the CWMA. I organized a volunteer day to remove buckthorn. I’m also working with the County to complete the removal activities.

Accomplishments Include:

- Completed proposals for CRP
- Worked with landowners that are interested in CRP
- Worked with landowners who have an interest in the RIM Reserve sign-up
- Completed RIM applications for Sonnek (Waseca County) and Nelson (Steele County)
- Attended Area 7 Employees Annual Meeting in Stewartville
- Lead conservation education sessions for 2nd and 5th graders at St Dominic School in Northfield
- Attended MASWCD Day at the Capitol; met with local representatives
- Organized CWMA Volunteer Buckthorn Removal Day

OTHER: The Day at the Capitol news release was in the Agri-News and some area newspapers.

ADJOURN: Chairman Robert Borchert adjourned the meeting at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Debbie Skarupa – Admin. Assistant

Robert Duban – Board Secretary