RICE S.W.C.D.
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
May 15, 2015 - 9:00 AM
(There was no board meeting in April.)

PRESENT: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst, Gary Wagenbach, Steve Pahs, Travis Hirman, Tom Coffman, Nicole Schaffer and Debbie Skarupa.

ABSENT: Dick Peterson

Chairman Gary Wagenbach called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

SOIL HEALTH CLIP: Nicole Schaffer showed “The Science of Soil Health” You-Tube video from Purdue University on soil tillage. Soil health and no-till were discussed.

MINUTES: Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Richard Cook to approve the March 24, 2015 board minutes as presented. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst, and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL/BILLS PAYABLE: Financial statements were reviewed. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the March and April Program Summaries and bills payable subject to audit. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst, and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:
STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING/BUFFERS COMMENTS: Notes from the March 24th Strategic Planning Meeting facilitated by Mary Laeger-Hagemeister were discussed. Main points: Create a social network with stakeholders. Need sustainable funding for staff and programs. (Pattern tiling, ditches, and buffers were discussed.) Will meet with Tony again to discuss buffer plan after legislative session is over. Some landowners ok with 50’ buffer as can then mow it. Steve to ask Skip from Olmsted for summary and check website. Jim Purfeerst wants to take a direction to improve our lakes. White stem pond weed, invasives, Steve Nokomis’ suggestions for Circle Lake, Lake Improvement Districts, CRWP leadership and cormorants on Wells Lake were discussed.

MN CONSERVATION CORPS/AMERICORPS AGREEMENT: Steve said Jarett Spitzack will be starting officially next week and will be in our office for about three months after some initial training.

SOIL HEALTH BUS TRIP: About 40 people are interested so far. Steve is lining up the trip at Bismarck for August 5-7. Tour should be similar to the past trip that Tom Coffman, Bob Duban and Jim Purfeerst attended. A grant has been applied for through SARE. Hoping to have one farmer per one staff member.
UTILITY TRAILER FOR DEW DROP DRILL: Utility trailer has been purchased for the Dew Drop no-till drill and it is being rented out already.

BUFFER MEETING AT DAVE LEGVOLD’S: Richard Cook wrote an editorial. A buffer forum meeting was held on buffers at the Dave Legvold farm in Northfield. Governor Dayton was in attendance. Administration is doing a good job listening to speakers and there is no one size fits all solution.

STEWARDSHIP MATERIALS: Stewardship materials on pollinators were given to area churches.

NEW BUSINESS:

ASHLEY GALLAGHER RESIGNATION: Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Bob Duban to regretfully accept Ashley Gallagher’s resignation effective May 8, 2015. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried

AUTHORIZE HIRING PROCESS: Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to authorize continuing the hiring process for the district technician position. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried

RESOURCE SPECIALIST POSITION (WCA): This position has been temporarily filled by Tim Labs on a contract basis for a year. Steve can’t keep doing it and doing Ashley’s job. If hired, this position could possibly work on buffers. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to authorize starting the hiring process for the Resource Specialist position. Discussion. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

WAGE ADJUSTMENT TRAVIS HIRMAN: Travis’ skills and workload have grown and he is gaining experience in his position. Motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Bob Duban to increase Travis Hirman’s pay, as supported by the Personnel Committee, one range level effective the next pay period. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried

2015 AREA ENVIROTHON: The top three winners at the Area Envirothon in Lewiston were Medford, Rushford-Peterson and Goodhue. Total scores were emailed/mailed to supervisors. State will be at Cloquet May 18.

BWSR FARM BILL ASSISTANCE GRANT: Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Bob Duban to approve the BWSR Farm Bill half-time position from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. Steve previously signed the grant agreement. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

MASWCD RESOLUTIONS: Area Resolution Meeting will be June 17. Gary explained the resolution process. Soil health, pollinator protection and neonicotinoids, were discussed. Supervisors to send any resolution ideas to Steve before the next board meeting.
**TREE SALE AND NATIVE PLANT SALE:** Tree sales were up 2,500 trees and we didn’t have a lot of extras to sell. Went well. Native plant sales are up to 77 trays and will arrive this Friday.

**CTIC TOUR:** MN is hosting this year’s national Conservation Technical Information Center tour. Tour is being planned in Goodhue and Rice County with a 100 mile loop starting in Red Wing up to Northfield and back. Steve encouraged everyone to go on the tour.

**BWSR TOUR:** The BWSR Board tour will be August 26 and 27. The focus will be on state funded practices and more details will be out in July.

**APPROVE FLOOD RELIEF C-S CONTRACT APPLICATION:** Motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Richard Cook to approve the following state cost share flood relief contract:

CSFR13-20 Robert Gill, 9425 Edgebrook Dr, Northfield, BRI 2&3 Sediment Basins and Grade Stabilizer - $32,224.73.

Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Phase 2 & 3 funding will be used.

**APPROVE STATE COST-SHARE VOUCHER PAYMENTS:**

Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the following 2015 C-S Voucher Payments from the 2015 state cost-share grant at 50% cost-share:

CS15-1 – Three Sisters Lakeside Farm LLC-C/O Upper Midwest Management – 19830 30 St NW – Faribault – Wells 17- Sediment Basin 1 - $1199.00

CS15-2 – James Story-200 7th Street-Kenyon-Richland 3-1 Basin - $1320.00.

Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**COOPERATIVE WEED MANAGEMENT AREA APPLICATION:**

Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the following CWMA Contract Application:


Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**SAND CREEK SCOTT WMO CONTRACT APPLICATIONS:**

Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Richard Cook to approve the following Scott WMO Sand Creek contract applications as follows:

WMO 15-14 Ben Bartusek, 305 Sunrise Ave N New Prague Wheatland 3-Sediment Basin and Grass Waterway - $4597.00.
Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. SWCD hours worked on projects are reimbursed from Scott WMO and Scott WMO pays the landowners directly.

OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR: List of candidates was reviewed. Motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Bob Duban to nominate Richard and Robert Sommers as the 2015 Outstanding Conservationists of the Year. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT AWARD: Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to select St. Olaf College as the Wildlife Enhancement Award recipient and Carleton College for the Forest Stewardship Award. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

SUPERVISOR/OTHER REPORTS: Richard Cook said earlier that Greg Barta will make four orange buckthorn removal wrenches and donate them to the Rice SWCD. Picture and article should be done when received. Richard wrote an editorial. Gary said Cannon River Watershed Partnership is in the interviewing process for an executive director. Personnel Committee will do an exist interview with Ashley and have more engagement with employees.

D.C. REPORT by Tom Coffman:

1. Women in Ag – Julie MacSwain, NRCS public affairs specialist, was in our office last week doing stories on Women in Agriculture. One story was on Nikki Schaffer and Ashley Gallagher as women employees. The other story was on women producers in agriculture. Becca Carlson and Lynne Wall and Theresa Reeck. Articles were passed out.

2. EQIP 15- One more contract approved in April, five so far in Rice. We have many more and hoping to get approved. We have diverted two applications to Scott WMO funds.

3. Soil Health –
   A.) CRWP has cost share funds for cover crops in Rice Creek Watershed.
   B.) CRWP is also providing some dollars to perform honey tests on the Salisbury Farm with Mark Bauer.
   C.) Mike Peterson may have a 40’ drop tube interseeder available this June for interseeding cover crops.


DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT by Steve Pahs: New intern starts next week and Steve intends to have him help with the Tillage Survey and maybe a buffer survey. Steve will be on vacation June 11-19. Pay scales for county and metro employees were discussed.
The past month has been busy with a variety of work. Trees were successful this year with 15,600 sold. Ditch work has been low, mainly due to a lack of time to commit to it. I’ve been doing a fair amount of WCA work, as we’ve had a few violations, and several requests for site reviews. I’ve also been working on planning the Soil Health trip to Bismarck, including applying for grant funds to help reduce costs. The Great Plains drill needed considerable repairs, and has continued to have breakdowns this spring. Thanks to Jim Purfeerst for the use of your shop and tools to get it running again.

Other activity this past month:

- Submitted a request for the next round of Farmbill Tech funding
- Attended the governor’s buffer meeting at Legvold’s
- Getting prepared for our new intern
- Repair Great Plains drill
- Tried out new Dew Drop drill
- Read DNR observation wells
- Exit interview with personnel committee and Ashley
- Native plant sales

In the next few weeks, I will be working to hire two replacements, and train our intern. I will be doing some ditch spraying, and preparing all the state cost-share jobs for summer or fall construction. Site inspections will also need to be done on old cost-share and RIM contracts.

There’s also two tours to help with this fall in our area.

FARM BILL TECHNICIAN’S REPORT By Ashley Gallagher:
Past month:
- Lonsdale Arbor Day, presentation and planting
- No-till Drill to many landowners
- Women in Ag article with NRCS State Office
- Construction on Ross, Rohlfsen, Story, Three Sisters
- Sand creek applications for Bartusek, Sticha, Sullivan, Franek
- Tree unloading and sorting
- CRP contracts and planning for many
- Faribault Business Expo on April 23rd
- Clean desk, organize files, review workload with other staff, etc.

Upcoming:
- Last day May 8th. I’m truly thankful for the opportunities that Rice SWCD has provided, and enjoyed my time here. I will miss all the staff and board members.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT UPDATE by Travis Hirman:
- Attended a presentation held by CRWP in Farmington regarding a N BMP tool.
- Completed an MMP update for Micah Dicke (Red Wing).
- Attended spring meeting for Area 7 employees in Rochester.
• Attended cover crop meeting in Zumbrota.
• Assisted with tree sales.
• Calibrated one manure spreader.
• Attended the buffer forum in Northfield.
• Increased time spent on the MDA grant. This includes:
  o Meetings and other correspondence with producers.
  o Ordered and familiarized myself with Nomad handheld (GPS).
  o Another program meeting in Rochester.
  o Getting tax forms and contracts signed.
  o Preparation and installation of side by side plots. 3.5 were installed.
  o Mapping and GPS for plots (as well as assisting others with mapping).

OTHER/CORRESPONDENCE:

ADJOURN: Chairman Wagenbach adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.
.

Respectfully submitted by:

_____________________________
Debbie Skarupa – Admin. Assistant

_____________________________
Richard Cook – Board Secretary