RICE S.W.C.D.
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday – June 14, 2017 - 9:00 AM

PRESENT: Richard Cook, Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, Jim Purfeerst, Steve Pahs, Travis Hirman, Bridget Evers, Justin Fuchs, Teresa DeMars, Debbie Skarupa, NRCS Acting DC Leslie Diaz-Alvarez, Rice County Commissioner Jeff Docken, BWSR Board Conservationist Jenny Mocol-Johnson, Alan Kraus from CRWP and Faribault resident Lynda Boudreau.

ABSENT: None

Board reviewed pictures of cover crops prior to the meeting starting. Chairman Jim Purfeerst called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Introductions were made.

MINUTES: Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Mike Ludwig to approve the May 10, 2017 board minutes. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL/BILLS PAYABLE: Steve reviewed the financial statements. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Dick Peterson to approve the May Program Record and June bills payable subject to audit. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

BUFFER UPDATE - RICE CO. JURISDICTION AND AID: Steve and Travis met with Rice County a few weeks ago and county will discuss jurisdiction and funding at their meeting-of-the-whole and vote the last legislation in June. Recent legislation gave counties 8 million statewide for enforcement. Jeff Docken said no-one is on staff yet, may only have 20 or 30 people with issues, and will also need to consider attorney’s office time. SWCD wants Rice County as a partner. Option may be to share a position with a nearby county. Travis felt a lot of farmers were waiting to see what legislative changes and alternative practices came about. Seed must now be certified. Can now seed next spring instead of this fall. Jenny Mocol-Johnson said landowners must apply for a waiver at a reasonable time for district to approve the time extension waiver. Also discussed was Rice County opting in for funding, so won’t have any delays. Rice County will receive about $72,000 for enforcement and expenses.

SOIL EROSION: Soil erosion ordinance was discussed. Rice SWCD has received two complaints this year. Hoping to resolve issues before contacting county attorney’s office. Soil Ordinance Law was officially approved statewide in 2015 and we had two complaints this year and maybe one last year.

DITCH 25 CONCERNS: Brian Pieper did get a DNR permit and used equipment to chop the cattails. Water is moving quicker. Tim Little talked to Tim Pieper. Phelps Lake is still two feet higher, but it is moving. Mike Ludwig talked to LeSueur County residents who were upset. Dick
Peterson said area hydrologists have moved to watershed basis and person in charge now is in Hutchinson. Difficult to farm swampland especially if water is coming fast. Six beaver dams were found underwater. Jeff Docken received calls also and was told by Kurt Deter that we don’t have the authority to do that. Rice County is not diversified farming any more, with fewer pastures on highly erodible land. He commends our guys for doing experiments. Could promote rolling before planting. Goodhue does advertising on radio. Jerry and Gordy from KDHL talk positively about cover crops.

**AREA RESOLUTIONS MEETING JUNE 29 - STEWARTVILLE:** Area Resolutions Meeting will be held on June 29 in Stewartville. Jim, Mike and Steve plan on attending.

**75th ANNIVERSARY - AUGUST 25, 1942:** Teresa showed a display panel she made to hang at the fair. She signed up to have the Dew Drop in the parade and Steve will drive it. Anniversary Tour will be in August. Has info on blog and Facebook. Every Thursday she does a photo from the past. Richard Cook asked who uses Facebook. Maybe we should concentrate on radio and newspaper. Upcoming generations are more computer oriented.

**COMPUTER NETWORK:** Steve said computer network is on schedule. NRCS will have an Operational Agreement which will be entirely different than past agreements. Goal is to balance expenses with services. All NRCS phones will be computer based, so if we want to be able to access the phones, we may need to get new a phone line.

**RIM EASEMENT BOUNDARY ALTERATION REQUEST:** Justin showed aerial photos of Mr. R. Barnes RIM property in Webster Township. Some of the RIM land has been planted into a grape vineyard. Tim Fredbo said it’s ok to redo the boundary if Mr. Barnes will pay for the cost for the changes to the boundary easement. Justin sent forms months ago with no response from Mr. Barnes. He is original owner, easements are noted on property deeds, boundaries weren’t marked and land has been re-surveyed. Justin is looking for guidance. Discussion. Proceed with corrective requirements.

**WCA FLOODING ISSUE - JIM AND LYNDA BOUDREAU:** Justin put aerial photos on the big screen of the Jim and Lynda Boudreau property on Ames Way in Cannon City Township Section 7. Lynda said they have a flooding issue and trees are flooded and falling over. She is wondering why they can’t maintain the private drainage system that was in place for more than 50 years. She passed around pictures and showed pictures that were on her cell phone. Justin said he has been on-site with Jim and Lynda and has explained the types of wetlands and WCA rules. Lynda felt the cause of flooding is lack of maintenance beyond the Boudreau’s property and needs to be retrenched. Tile lines outlet onto Boudreau property. Previous owner made a berm about eight years ago without their knowledge. Justin said they can remove the berm and he had recommended a Hick and Bottom with setback for ditching or perforated tile in a letter. Can’t allow draining a wetland. Recommend removing berm to restore hydrology. A lot of water funnels into the narrow channel. Lynda asked Justin to email her a letter and CC her supervisor on it. She thanked board for their time and understanding the challenge they have. Railroad culvert (36”) is filled with debris and blocked uphill so has no flowage.

Jenny Mocol-Johnson recommended having a BSWR wetland specialist come out. SWCD Board does not have this authority. Culvert probably had a ditch system at one time. Old aerials didn’t show existing ditch. Railroad wouldn’t have liked a washout. Township board said its private property. Justin didn’t survey it. GPS couldn’t get accurate and would need to do it the old way because of the trees. Ok to move the earth that is in the berm.
Deminimus Exemptions may be allowed that could permit permanent impact up to an amount. Jim suggested cleaning berm to railroad crossing first, then get more people to check. Justin will follow what BWSR says. Can go ahead and take sediment out of culvert.

**RICE COUNTY FAIR BREAKFAST:** FYI. Will be July 19 with Best of the Best Program following breakfast.

**RIM BIXLER PROPERTY WHEATLAND TWP:** Justin explained a RIM easement in Wheatland Township. One owner in Lonsdale sold to development company and land now has about 20 homes on it. Justin took two acres off with BWSR approval. One owner is mowing like it is a backyard and he needs to re-establish native vegetation by not mowing. Justin put a marker out there and looking for the board’s direction. Easement is in legal papers. Discussion.

Before and after aerial photos were viewed. Mike Malling from US Fish and Wildlife did a pond within the easement. A gravel trail was put in to access this pond. Could simply remove the fill and let native vegetation return. Owners are allowed to mow some trails on RIM land to a point, but not excessive. Justin will inspect this summer. Alternative options, conservation officer, putting on notice, clear violation, pollinator habitat, buying back easement, etc., and next steps were discussed.

**MASWCD GOVERNANCE 101 TRAINING:** SWCD Governance 101 training will be held September 14 and 15 in Bloomington. Mike Ludwig plans to attend and maybe Tim. Deadline to register is August 28.

**MASWCD LEADERSHIP TRAINING:** MASWCD Leadership Training is available for $2,850.00 per person. Registration deadline is July 14, 2017.

**2016 STATE COST SHARE VOUCHER:** Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Richard Cook to approve the following 2016 regular state cost-share contract voucher:

CS16-03  Dean Schwake - 12220 E 190 St - Nerstrand Wheeling Sec 23-24 - Waterway-$3250.00.

Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**DNR OBSERVATION WELL AGREEMENT 2018:** Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Dick Peterson to approve the DNR Observation Well 2018 Agreement. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**2018 FARM BILL GRANT:** Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Tim Little to authorize Steve Pahs to sign the 2018 Farm Bill grant when received. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**2018 BUDGET:** Rice County needs a budget by July 5 and board was encouraged to attend the commissioner’s meeting when they approve our budget. Steve reviewed the proposed 2018 budget. Buffer grant money was also discussed. We are also doing soil erosion ordinance now. Discussion. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Dick Peterson to approve the preliminary 2018 budget to be presented to the county commissioners. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Ask Dennis Luebbe to speak on ditch sediment at one of our board meetings.
HEALTH INSURANCE RENEWAL BCBS: Renewal rates starting September 1, 2017 have been received and have increased about 15%. District pays 100% coverage for employee and 50% family coverage with a $2000 and $4000 respectfully deductible. We are not part of a larger group. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Mike Ludwig to renew the Blue Cross Blue Shield medical insurance program starting September 1, 2017. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

COVER CROP APPLICATIONS: Travis Hirman explained the three-year cover crop program. Three years are paid for all at once with $30/acre for single species and $35/acre for multi species. Cap is $2500.00 per year for three years with a maximum of $7500.00.

Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Tim Little to approve the following two cover crop applications coming from a $20,000 portion of the 2017 District Capacity Grant Funds:

CC17-01 Mark Legvold - 5101 315 St. W. - Northfield - Bridgewater Sec 24 - 74.3 acres - $35/acre multispecies - $7500.00.

CC17-02 Wheeling Grain Partnership-2251 90 St. E. – Northfield - Wheeling-Sec 2 - 156 acres- $30/acre single species - $7500.00

Discussion on residue, nitrogen tie up, high carbon and recommended timings. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

SUPERVISOR REPORTS: Some items have already been covered. Dick Peterson said Gary Wagenbach had about a dozen people at a tour of his property. Richard Cook said he’s seeing brown water and erosion with rain events and will try to get neighbors interested in cover crops. Signage was discussed. Jim asked if all board could receive Ed McNamara’s email updates. Board took a group picture at 11:45 a.m.

ACTING D.C. REPORT by Leslie Diaz-Alvarez

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP-EQIP)
- No activity

Conservation Compliance/Planning (plans, tract splits, 1026’s)
- Received 5 AD-1026 requests this month and addressed 1 previous/current AD-1026 request
  o Completed 1 - Maintenance Request
  o Completed 0- Small Area Exception (open land into production)
Client Gateway

- We would like to keep promoting the Client Gateway. This is a secure NRCS website which provides online access to conservation assistance for farmers and ranchers 24/7.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- NRCS accepts CSP applications on a continuous basis.
- The CSP helps you build on your existing conservation efforts while strengthening your operation, whether you are looking to improve grazing conditions, increase crop yields, implement no-till to reduce erosion or develop wildlife habitat by adopting CSP enhancements to achieve a higher level of conservation.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- NRCS accepts EQIP applications on a continuous basis. Application acceptance deadline for FY 2018 funding will be on Friday, August 18 2017.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

- NRCS was conducting annual easement monitoring. The monitoring/evaluation included site conditions, nesting cover, easement boundaries and signs.

DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT by Steve Pahs: No written report.

Steve mentioned next Tuesday’s demonstration at Jim Purfleet’s and encouraged everyone to attend. He will drive the Dew Drop drill in the Heritage Days Parade to promote our “75” Anniversary. Teresa is doing the signage. Teresa and Steve spoke on AM Minnesota on KDHL two weeks ago.

RESOURCE SPECIALIST REPORT by Justin Fuchs: Rain garden surveys have been sent to Pete Fryer. Has one shoreline restoration application.

- Faribault Foods Discharge RIM Easement with City of Faribault.
- CREP Meeting online.
- Meet with landowner about wetland discharge and overflow Wells Lake.
- Nitrate kits with RMB Labs were sent out to township landowners.
- Sammon wetland replacement scoping document and TEP meeting.
- CREP meeting with landowner.
- NRCS filter strip training.
- Another CREP webinar.
- Meeting with technician about server.
- Ag BMP Loan with local landowner.
- Rain Garden Surveys.
- PTM App Training in Rochester.

DISTRICT TECHNCIAN’S REPORT by Bridget Evers:

- New CRP contracts
- Re-enroll CRP contracts
- CRP Site visits for re-enrolls
- State Cost Share projects Survey and Designs
- EQIP projects
- Scott WMO projects
- RCPP Projects
• Rain Garden surveys

Upcoming:
• Continue New CRP Sign ups
• Survey and designs for cost share items and CRP program (wetland restorations)
• EQIP survey and designs with Colin
• Feedlot project installation with JPB engineer
• Soil health training June 19th
• State Cost share Engineering Site visits (1, 5 and 9th year in 10 year life span)

**NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT REPORT by Travis Hirman:**

• Updated a MMP for Dan Ryan (Goodhue, beef, 651 acres). Wrote a new MMP for Mark Dicke (Goodhue, dairy, 137 acres). Wrote a new MMP for Mark Chamberlain (Goodhue, dairy, 266 acres).
• Signed up two producers for the cover crop cost share program.
• Participated in a webinar to review the updated NRCS filter strip standard.
• Completed the other waters resolution.
• Continued to work with producers on the buffer law. This included some site visits.
• Looking ahead: continued buffer implementation, soil health training from NRCS, and work with producers on their cover crop contracts.

**OTHER:** Jenny Mocol-Johnson from BWSR gave some MASWCD, legislative and grant funding updates. BWSR is closing the New Ulm office and personnel will be moving to new office in Mankato. She said buffer bill language states landowners should file by November 2017 to be granted a waiver until July 1, 2018. Governor’s goal of 25% reduction by 2025 and other programs/grants were mentioned. Alan Kraus said he is looking forward to Purfeerst demo. He mentioned current CRWP information, a field day in Goodhue County, and grant funding. How can we prove that it pays for landowners to do cover crops? Will have signage up to get exposure.

**SOIL HEALTH TOPIC VIDEO:** Nothing available today.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:** Jim Purfeerst demonstrations are next Tuesday.

**ADJOURN:** Chairman Purfeerst adjourned the meeting at 12:15 pm.

Submitted by:

Debbie Skarupa – Admin. Assistant

Board Secretary - Timothy J. Little