RICE S.W.C.D.
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
August 10, 2015 - 9:00 AM

PRESENT: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst, Gary Wagenbach, Steve Pahs, Travis Hirman, Tom Coffman, Nicole Schaffer, Bridget Evers, Colin Williams, Justin Fuchs, Debbie Skarupa and Laurie Svien from Zumbro Watershed Partnership.

ABSENT: None

Chairman Gary Wagenbach called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

INTRODUCE JUSTIN FUCHS: Justin Fuchs, the new resource specialist, was introduced. He went to college at Minnesota State University Mankato and has had classes at the U of MN for watershed programs. Most recently, he has interned at Rice County doing culvert and GIS work. Board welcomed Justin.

SOIL HEATH TOPIC: NRCS Soil Conservation Technician Colin Williams discussed an article he wrote for White Tails Magazine about soil health. He felt non-tenant landowners are becoming more prevalent. Reaching out to absentee landowners targeting issues such as soil health, rental rates, erosion, cover crops, food plots, tiling, etc., could be incorporated into meetings and would be beneficial. Landowners should specify to their renter/operator how they would like their land managed. Colin has written conservation and hunting articles for Outdoor News and other magazines.

HIAWATHA VALLEY RC&D: Hiawatha Valley RC&D Executive Director Laurie Svien attended the Local Work Group Meeting at 8:00 am and spoke about load monitoring sampling. He also stressed the importance of connecting with the people who kayak or canoe the Cannon and Zumbro Rivers. Six canoe landing sites have been funded in Wanamingo, 37th Street Bridge in Rochester, Pine Island, Oronoco, Zumbro Falls and Hammond. More accesses to get on and off the river equals more canoeing. Landing maintenance will be the responsibility of the county or city where they are located. WRAPS (Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies) was also discussed.

MINUTES: Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Dick Peterson to approve the July 8, 2015 board minutes with two corrections. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

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

OLD BUSINESS:
**BISMARCK BUS TRIP AUGUST 5-7:** Steve, Travis, Bridget, and Jarett attended the Bismarck Bus Tour along with 12 other people. A 15 passenger van and the Dodge pickup were driven. Four different sites were toured: First, a cattle operation using “20” year old alfalfa. First crop is cut and baled, then cattle graze on the land starting in the fall and are fed the bales in winter. Second stop was small beef operation using all native grass which had never been plowed. Third was a 17,000 acre beef and row crop operation that also was a ranch guest house setup. The Burleigh County farm receives about 16” of precipitation yearly and was impressive with different crops such as flax and sunflowers and numerous conservation practices.

**CTIC TOUR:** The National Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) Tour will be August 12 in Goodhue and Rice County. Stops include Hmong vegetable farming, Fargaze Peterson Farms in Northfield, the Dave Legvold farm in Northfield, and sites in Goodhue County. Tom Coffman and Jim Purfeerst will speak on cover crops.

**BWSR TOUR AUGUST 26:** The Board of Water and Soil Resources board tour on August 26 will be in Goodhue and Rice County. Gary Wagenbach and Representative Daniels and Representative Bly will attend the entire day. Office staff and Richard Cook are signed up for the Northfield sites (Salisbury structure and the Edgebrook Drive project) and lunch.

**COVER CROP RESOLUTION:** A copy of the revised Rice SWCD Cover Crop resolution that was sent to MASWCD was emailed to the board. MASWCD Convention in December is next step.

**LEGISLATIVE BUFFER/FUNDING:** Steve said there will be a buffer meeting at 10:00 am at the Rice County Government Center. Attorney Kurt Deter from Noonan in St. Cloud will be speaking about the redetermination of ditches/drainage laws. DNR will develop the maps. Tom felt protected waters maps should be updated. What is criteria for a required buffer? Discussion.

**CHAMBER AG FAIR BREAKFAST:** Board felt Ag Breakfast was well done and well attended. Overall a good event. Receiving recognition from Rice SWCD were: Richard and Robert Sommers (Outstanding Conservationists); Nancy Braker from Carleton College (Forest Stewardship Award); and Kathy Shea and Gene Bakko from St. Olaf College (Wildlife Enhancement Award.)

**RICE COUNTY FAIR BOOTH:** Pollinators and Soil Health were topics. A tray of rain garden and a tray of butterfly plants were displayed along with a Blue Thumb root length comparison display board. Conservation Corp MN intern Jarett Spitzack manned the booth several times.

**BANK SIGNATURE CARD:** Gary, Bob and Dick to sign Reliance Bank signature cards.

**MASWCD GOVERNANCE 101 TRAINING:** MASWCD SWCD Governance Training 101 will be in St. Cloud September 16 and 17. No-one plans on attending.
NEW BUSINESS:
SE SWCD JPB REPORT: Steve said they went over the Joint Powers Board financials and money looks good for next year and then will need to seek additional grants. Few in attendance.

NO-TILL FARMER MAGAZINE: Steve felt it would be good for staff to read the No-Till Farmer magazine for a $26.85 subscription rate. Jim Purfeerst will renew his subscription and pass it on to the staff.

2016 BUDGET UPDATE: Steve said he is expecting $100,000 from the state this year in increments of 50%, 40% and 10%. He felt it would be wise to ask Rice County for the same amount of money as last year. Discussion. Counties are not allowed to cut money from district allocations because of the buffer funds. Should half of the money be used to fund a new position? Unmet needs, projects in the wings, splitting a position with a surrounding county, maps, additional county funding, etc., were discussed. A meeting to discuss further will be scheduled. Bob, Gary, Richard, and Jim will attend tomorrow’s meeting. Discussion. Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Bob Duban to present a 2% increase in the 2016 budget to Rice County. Budget motion was already done at a previous meeting and not needed. Dick Peterson withdrew his motion and Bob Duban withdrew his second. Motion withdrawn. Legislature says Rice County can’t decrease county funding because of buffer funding. Budget to be left as submitted.

COMPUTER PURCHASE: Justin’s computer is too slow. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the purchase of a laptop PC for approximately $1,300.00.

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

2016 PREFERRED ONE INSURANCE RENEWAL: Medical insurance has increased less than 1% and renews September 1. Steve Pahs and Bridget are on the plan. Discussion on offering $350/month up to $1750.00 into a H.S.A. for the deductible. Discussion. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Dick Peterson to approve a Health Savings Plan paying approximately $350 per month, up to $1,750 one time, equal to the monthly health insurance premium or deductible for the employee. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst, and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

APPROVE C-S CONTRACT VOUCHER: Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the following 2014 state cost share voucher payment:

CS14-001–Eldon Turek-15765 LeRoy Ave-Kilkenny, Shieldsville Section 6–2 terraces- $5465.13

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

SCOTT WMO SAND CREEK CONTRACT: Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the following Scott WMO contract applications:

WMO 15- 46 Ralph Sullivan-30095 151 Ave-New Prague-Wht 8- 2 terraces - $8381.25
Scott WMO pays the landowner and SWCD gets T&A expenses.
Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst, and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried

**MN AG WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM:** Steve explained what he heard at the JPB meeting. Five year grant for 11 counties in SE MN for approximately $234,000 coordinated by Winona SWCD. Bridget said every field needs to be addressed. Difficult to spend dollars if all fields need to be compliant. More information coming in the next few months.

**LCCMR SE MN COVER CROP AND SOIL HEALTH INITIATIVE:** Dean Thomas from Fillmore SWCD will lead the effort. Goal is for 700 acres of cover crops for $100,000 which includes six workshops and nine field days. Hoping to develop a cost effective approach and not promote cover crops as expensive. Maybe 10-15 seed varieties is not necessary in the mix. Cover crops, old High Boy sprayer, equipment rental, hydro seeder, organic matter, and compaction were discussed.

**LOWER MISSISSIPPI FEEDLOT MGMT GRANT APPLICATION:** Steve Pahs explained the Lower Mississippi River Feedlot Management in MN application. RCPP application submitted and will know in September if selected for full proposal. Requested 2 million from EQIP, 1.3 million BWSR feedlot dollars, $500,000 of BWSR Clean Water Fund, and $200,000 ($40,000/year) NPEA base grant dollars.

**SUPERVISOR OTHER REPORTS:** Jim Purfeerst had a landowner call about how economic benefits were determined on ditches (high ground vs low ground). Ditch viewers must follow state guidelines and will be at Rice County Board Meeting tomorrow at 9:00 am. Hiawatha Valley RC&D met at River Bend Nature Center and saw how the goats were being used to eat invasive plants. Mainly trying to control garlic mustard, buckthorn and wild parsnip. Dick Peterson said Emerald Ash Borer was negative in Rice County, but confirmed cases are in Eagan and Rochester. Symptoms appear three years after infestation. Richard Cook commented on cover crops on hills as suitable place with less erosion after the rains. Gary bought a PWMA 200 wireless amplifier loudspeaker and donated it to the Rice SWCD. Thank you to Gary. Loundspeaker can also be plugged into a 12 volt on a truck. Gary passed around a Star and Tribune article about water quality and weeds by lake docks. A 160 acre farm by Nerstrand has been donated to the DNR for a Wildlife Management Area. Bob Duban mentioned Tri-lakes Sportsman’s Club’s funding for food plots.

**D.C. REPORT by Tom Coffman:**

1. Local Work Group: We held our Local Work Group Meeting this morning. Priority resource concerns in Rice County are: #1. Soil Erosion and #2 Soil Quality. One of our geographic focus areas this next year will be the Zumbro River Watershed.

2. New State Conservationist Cathy Pullman visited our field office on July 24. Meet and greet session lasted an hour or so.

**DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT by Steve Pahs:**
Steve said this is Jarett Spitzack’s last week as the Conservation Corp intern for the summer. This was a great learning experience. Thank you Jarett.
The past month has been extremely busy. We started not one, but two new employees, which is
great, but requires quite a bit of time to work with them and get them familiarized with their
roles and responsibilities. Our intern, Jarett Spitzack, has been a good help to the office. He’s
been assisting all staff with a wide variety of work, and we’re glad to have had him this summer.
My workload has included ditch spraying, WCA duties, RIM inspections, budgeting, and much
more.

Specific items I’ve done this month are:

- Set up Soil Health Trip to Bismarck
- Edgebrook Drive project coordination
- Water Plan Technical Committee meeting
- Forestry award review with Nancy Braker
- Wildlife Enhancement award review with Kathy Shea
- SE MN JPB Finance Committee meeting
- SE MN JPB annual meeting
- Office FAC meeting
- UPRR TEP meeting
- Ditch system project planning for several systems
- Blue Thumb meeting at CRWP office
- CTIC Tour prep
- BWSR Tour prep
- Ag Certification program meeting

In the coming weeks, we’ll complete all three tours. Priority will continue to be on training staff,
preparing for fall projects including several ditch system repairs, and looking at all the new
programs coming our way. There are also several ditch meetings scheduled for redetermination
of benefits.

DISTRICT TECHNCIAN’S REPORT by Bridget Evers:

- Needs with Tom
- Worked with Colin on a design survey for CRP waterways
- Working on a RIM project
- Working on CRP checks for eligibility
- RIM Checks
- Water Plan Meeting
- Cannon River Meeting
- Working on new contracts for Scott WMO projects
- Attended the manure application rate in Blooming Prairie
- RC&D meeting at River Bend Nature Center
- DRAP contract for BWSR
- Toolkit training

Upcoming:

- CTIC tour
- Ground water training
• BWSR Conservation Tour
• Continue CRP eligibility checks

**NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT REPORT by Travis Hirman:**

• I am currently working on two new MMP’s in Rice County.
• Site visits to NMI plots kept me busy, and they have now been finished. I will now be done with fieldwork for the MDA program until basal stalk tests, which will be performed after corn reaches black layer. That will likely occur in late September/early October.
• Attended the land use expo in Blooming Prairie. Manure application and conservation tillage equipment was exhibited. A panel of legislators also hosted a Q&A.
• Attended a saturated buffer demo in Kasson.
• Assisted in the interview of our conservation farmers of the year.
• Attended the field school for ag professionals in St. Paul. This was a two day hands on training module hosted by UM-Extension. Topics centered on agronomy, crop development, and crop diagnostics.

**RESOURCE SPECIALIST REPORT by Justin Fuchs**

**Wetland Conservation Act**

• Review C. Ennis Wetland Violation pertaining to filling in wetland, still need to validate.
• Wetland determination for Faribault Foods relocation and expansion.
• Review application for the City of Northfield Woodley Street wetland creation. Waiting for comment period to end for decision.
• Field visit for potential wetland drainage for I. E. Horesji Trust. Working with BWSR to determine eligibility.
• Delineator meeting with Union Pacific Railroad pertaining to railroad creation with minimal wetlands being affected. Still waiting for application.

**RIM Easements**

• RIM Easement violations in Lonsdale with multiple landowners being in possible violation of easement. Currently working with landowners for solutions and boundary lines.

**OTHER/CORRESPONDENCE:** None

**ADJOURN:** Chairman Gary Wagenbach adjourned the meeting at 11:04 am.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Debbie Skarupa – Admin. Assistant

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Richard Cook – Board Secretary