



Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc.

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*John Guszkowski, President
Phil Chester, Vice President
Barbara Kelly, Treasurer
Margot Burns, Secretary*

Eastern Connecticut RC&D Council
Monday, February 28, 2011
Brooklyn Service Center
12:10 pm-2:00 pm
Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Eastern Connecticut RC&D Council, Inc. was called to order at 12:10 p.m. by President John Guszkowski.

Present: John Guszkowski, WLA, President	Wini Olsen, Essex Land Trust
Margot Burns, CRERPA, Secretary	Paula Stahl, GVI
Phil Chester, WINCOG, Vice President	Ben Bowell, American Farmland Trust
Barbara Kelly, NCCD, Treasurer	Norman St. Jean, USDA - RD
Abigail Cadman, USDA - NRCS	Covington, NRCS, SECCOG
Elaine Sych, ERT	Dawn Pindell, USDA - FSA
Amanda Fargo-Johnson, ERT	Judy Rondeau, ECCD
Tom ODell, CRCCD	Jim Larkin, NECCOG

NRCS Update: Joyce Purcell, Assistant State Conservationist

On behalf of Joyce, Abbie Cadman provided feedback from an East Region State Conservationists Teleconference with Leonard Jordan. Leonard praised CT and FL for obligating all of the RC&D Carry-over Funds. Funds that are not obligated will be swept back from those states after March 1st. If NHQ plans to redistribute the money back to states which obligated funds expediently, she would like ECRC&D to be ready with more projects.

- **National Program Funding:**
 - The proposed elimination of funding for RC&D for the current year and FY 2012 was discussed. John proposed those council members who are able to contact their senators and congress people in support of RC&D. It was suggested that in addition to a letter, to send the annual plan and brief sheets.

Contract Updates:

- Stormwater Management Priorities: Roadmap for Rural Towns
 - There will be a meeting on Thursday, March 3rd at 9:00 with the engineering firm, members of the towns and other groups involved.
- AGvocate
 - The AGvocate steering committee meeting will be held at 1:00 March 1st in Danielson at the Last Green Valley.
- Unilever funds – potential
 - Uses for the proposed Unilever funds were discussed. It was discussed that options be presented to Gloria MacQueeney for where this money could be used.

- Putnam Farmers Market
 - The agreement with NRCS has been drafted, waiting on NRCS for signed agreement and to move ahead with the project. Delpha Very of Putnam is not going to be able to work on this project, and Liz Rogers may be organizing this after the agreement has been signed.

Secretary's Report:

Motion: To approve the minutes of 12/13/10 with corrections

Motion Made by: Paula Stahl

Seconded by: Tom ODell

Voted: Motion passed – Phil Chester abstained

Treasurer's Report:

The ECRC&D treasurers report was reviewed by the committee. The financial report for the Environmental Review Team was copied and distributed at the meeting. The ERT budget did not reflect a \$50,000 payment received recently. ERT, the Council on Soil and Water and the conservation districts have been working on their funding coming from the fee bill, as they have been removed from the state of Connecticut's proposed budget. The last part of the budget regarding the Farm Energy Program is not up to date, as the first contract has been completed and the second has had money requested from it.

Motion: To approve the treasurers reports as presented

Motion Made by: Phil Chester

Seconded by: Paula Stahl

Voted: Motion passed

Environmental Review Team:

Elaine handed out a program update and discussed several projects. The towns of Ridgefield, Bolton, Vernon, Tolland and Coventry have reviews which are being scheduled. ERT will be attending the Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources at UConn on Monday, March 7th. The next meeting for ERT will be March 24th at noon in Haddam. If anyone is interested in attending, please let them know.

Committee Reports:

- Agriculture Committee:
 - Phil Chester reported that the next meeting will be on Monday, March 21st at 10:00 in Lebanon. The committee is working on the area plan, and a draft copy was handed out. The first meeting on animal regulations and zoning will be March 11th, and Ben Bowell is working on this through American Farmland Trust. The odor assessment for Brothers Quality was received and it was found that odors were minimal, and mostly from holding pens. CME will be submitting to DEP the remediation suggestions. The AGvocate program is in its third stage, and it was reported that it is looking for towns to include in the program.
- Greenways Committee:
 - Margot Burns reported the committee is working on the area plan. The next meeting will be March 24th at 10:00 in Haddam. Progress is being made on the Storm water Management Priorities project with the Eight Mile River watershed. The committee will be involved in a workshop at the CLCC spring conference. Margot has not heard back about the scholarships for tree wardens.
- Livable Communities Committee:
 - Elaine Sych reported that the committee met January 26th. The Shoreline Best Management Practices project will be interviewing 4 firms on March 17th. They have been involved with the Farm to School program. Elaine and Amanda attended a Farm to Chef meeting, and discussed ERT and Farm Energy. Putnam did not receive an agricultural viability grant for a community kitchen. Barbara mentioned that the

Tolland Agricultural Center has a certified kitchen which is underused, and the TAC board would consider having it be used as a community kitchen. A certified overseer is needed. Elaine and John will pursue this option. The TAC board meets the 1st Wednesday of every month, and Barbara will send John information for this option. The committee is working on their area plan. The committee's next meeting will be March 23rd in Essex at 10:00.

Farm Energy:

Motion: to include the Farm Energy Program in the minutes

Motion Made by: Paula Stahl

Seconded by: Barbara Kelly

Voted: Motion passed

Amanda handed out a report for the Farm Energy Program. She had to order more BMP booklets, and has more available if anyone wants them. The programs in January and February were a success, and she has received many requests for information from people who were not able to attend. She is finishing up working with Stonington Vineyards. In the spring she is hoping to hold an energy fair for agricultural producers where there will be vendors and information on funding opportunities.

New Business

- **New England RC&D Business Meeting, March 26**
 - The meeting is a half day event in South Portland, ME. Anyone who is interested in going can have their travel, hotel and registration expenses covered by the council. Abbie will be attending.
- **Annual Meeting Committee**
 - Phil, Margot, Elaine, Amanda and Abbie will be on the committee.
 - Annual Meeting will be June 27th.
 - Norma O'Leary will be honored for her work on the committee.
- **Liz Rogers Luncheon - Committee**
 - It was decided to have the National Coordinator of the Year award presented to her at the annual meeting, and to have festivities celebrating her work after the annual meeting.
 - It was suggested that a legislator present the award to her.

Old business

- **Soil Health Workshop Report-Ray Covino**
 - Ray Covino was unable to attend the meeting. He passed along a report that the two day workshop was well attended – with approx. 50 people in attendance both days. The feedback mainly consisted of a desire for more workshops. He would like to partner with RC&D with future workshops. One idea is for a week-long series of workshops tailored towards different agricultural producers. It was discussed that future soil health workshops will be included in the Agricultural Committees plan.
- **NRCS “Give Back” Funds Approval**
 - Per a conference call on January 31st, \$8,730 was obligated to fund 4 projects (purchasing GPS equipment, 2 seminars on form based codes from GVI, scholarships for town tree warden training and funding CRERPA to hold two fall meetings of the Land Trust Exchange). The funds are reimbursable.
 - At the conference call a motion was made to approve these four projects for the available funds. Tom Odell made the motion, Lois Bruinooge seconded and the motion passed.
 - Motion: to ratify the decision made at the teleconference on 1/31/2011
 - Motion Made by: Wini Olsen
 - Seconded by: Barbara Kelly
 - Voted: Motion passed (Margot and Tom Seidel abstained)

- Margot has not heard back from the CT Tree Warden Association
- John is waiting to hear back from Trimble. The software will be from Tech Soup. A sign-out policy and insurance will need to be established. The sign-out policy will follow TLGV's policy.
- **Letters of Appointment**
 - Each council member needs to make sure their letters are in
 - John will contact those who do not have a letter submitted
- **Area/Annual Plan Progress**
 - A draft annual plan will need to be put together before the next committee meeting and finalized at the annual meeting
 - Each committee needs to have a draft plan by their sub-committee meetings, and work with Abbie on their plan
 - Goals which could use funding should be highlighted
 - The area plan needs to be ratified in August or September
 - Committees need to work on their submission
 - SMART goals

Partner Updates

GVI – Paula Stahl:

Paula reported that “Protecting Dark Skies” is this evening, February 28th. GVI has had funding cut, as well as the heritage corridor's funding. Paula asked that committee members advocate if possible, and to contact Lois Bruinooge for who to contact.

USDA FSA – Dawn Pindell:

Dawn passed around the flyer for the AGvocate workshop in Canterbury on March 30th. She reported that if people hear of agricultural buildings having their roofs collapse, to contact her to document their losses. There is no money available at this point, but documentation is needed in case funding does become available.

ECCD – Judy Rondeau:

Judy passed around ECCD's winter newsletter and seedling sale information.

NCCD – Barbara Kelly:

Barbara reported that the NCCD is also having a seedling sale, and all district websites are hosted on the same site if anyone is looking at specific information for each district. She reported that the storm-water program is going out for public comment.

RD – Norman St. Jean:

Norman reported that REAP is going out in March.

CRCCD - Tom Odell:

Tom shared a few fact sheets developed by the CRCCD with the council.

The next Council meeting was set for Monday, April 25th at 12:00 noon, at a location to be determined.

Meeting was adjourned (Paula Stahl motion/Margot Burns second) at 2:00 p.m.