



Connecticut RC&D

Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development Area, Inc.
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John Guskowski, President
John Weedon, Vice President
Barbara Kelly, Treasurer
Margot Burns, Secretary

RC&D Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 18, 2016
9:30- 11:30am,
South Central Regional Council of Governments – Conference Room
127 Washington Ave. – 4th Floor West
North Haven, CT 06473

Board Members in Attendance: John Guskowski, Jim Costello, Margot Burns, John Weedon, Judy Rondeau, Francis Pickering, James Sipperly, Barbara Kelly, Matt Fulda

Board Members not in attendance: Mark Nielsen. Sal DeCarli, Lois Bruinooge

Other Attendees: Jeanne Davies, Amanda Fargo-Johnson, Sam Gold, Raymond Covino NRCS, Tom Morgart NRCS, Amy Fisher NRCS, Kate Rattan, Stephen Dudley

John Guskowski called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m..
The meeting began with introductions and welcome.

Ct RC&D Business:

Secretaries Report

Motion: To accept the December 15, 2015 meeting minutes as presented.

Motion made by: Jim Costello

Seconded by: Judy Rondeau

Discussion: Include edits to minutes provided by Amanda. Mark Nielsen was not present at the last meeting, Urban Oakes \$3,450, 100% pass through.

Voted: Motion approved. Jim Sipperly abstained.

Financial Reporting

Due to distance from the Haddam RC&D office the new bookkeeping company hired was replaced with a new part time bookkeeper / financial assistant. Reports on cash basis were received this morning and will be forwarded to council members for review and comment.

Motion: To authorize Jeanne Davies, Executive Director, as a signatory for RC&D First Niagara accounts.

Motion made by: Jim Sipperly

Seconded by: Judy Rondeau

Voted: Motion approved unanimously.

Francis Pickering arrived at 9:51.

Agricultural Program:

AGvocate

- Continue to provide assistance to TLGV on RCPP Agreement with NRCS
- Regular emailing of AGvocate newsletter (600 + recipients)
- AGvocate Program Update provided for American Farmland Trust Planning Guide

Regional AG Commission Events:

- Grant Assistance Workshop (Brooklyn, Canterbury, & Thompson) 2/25/16
- Growing Hops & Barley (Bozrah, Franklin, Lebanon) 4/13/16

Grants:

- Waiting to hear about awards for USDA FSA Grant
- CT DoAG grant for “Farm Startup Express” not funded
- Applying for a USDA NRCS CIG Grant to purchase Soil Health Equipment for organic farmers, waiting for due date

Next AGvocate Steering Committee Meeting 5/19/16

CT Farm Energy USDA/RBDG Grant

April 30, 2016 USDA REAP Grant Deadline:

7 Applications for farms located in Fairfield, New Haven, New London, and Litchfield County.

2 Pots of funds: CFEP provided technical assistance in applying for

Restricted (asking for 20k or less) \$30,323.00 was requested in total funds.

Unrestricted (asking for 20k or more in grant funds) \$331,170.00 was requested in total funds.

Next Deadlines: October 30, 2016 & April 30, 2017

CFEP already has a wait list of 8 farms for future deadlines

N. Stonington Economic Development Presentation 4/6/16

CT EEB Board Public Input Session 5/11/16

CFEP Finalist for CT Green Circle Sustainability Award 5/23/16

Applying for USDA RBDG Grant due 5/27/16

CT DEEP/SEP Grant

- Exhibitor at CT NOFA Conference 3/12/16 in Danbury
- Participate in UCONN One on One Advising Sessions 3/14/16 in Haddam and 4/21/16 in Litchfield

- Digester Survey sent to all registered producers due 4/8/16
- Digester Stakeholder Meeting 4/19/16
- Present at New Haven Farm Bureau Workshop 4/25/16
- Applying for CT DEEP/ SEP Grant due 4/30/16
- Energize CT AG Stakeholder Roundtable 5/25/16

Soil Health

Current NRCS Agreement: Requested an extension until 12/31/16

Future NRCS Agreement: Requesting a new Contribution Agreement to continue Soil Health Education and Training into 2017.

- 54 Attended the Healthy Soils Workshop E. Windsor, CT 3/23/16
- Summer Hands On Soils Workshop Woodstock, CT 6/1/16
- Fall Organic Soils Health Workshop Late Fall 2016 Location TBD

Project Updates:

Jeanne:

- Closed up the TAC office.
- We are assessing the laptops.
- CT Ag Day at the Capitol was a huge success.
- We've reached out to update new and potential new members to the CTRC&D board. MetroCOG, CRCOG, SCROG, SCCOG responded positively. Suggested people interested in agriculture, rural economic growth, and environmental.
- Assessment of approved ERT requests (4) and successful meeting with Naugatuck. Next: meetings with Durham and Deep River-Essex.
- Starting to look at creative and affordable options for a new office
- USDA & CTRC&D discussion about funding to work on low income housing assistance (USDA loans) and environmental support assistance for municipal community & non-profit facilities (USDA loans).
- Follow up meeting with USDA yielded more possibilities for CTRC&D to support food hub development and information for farmers, and farmer's markets
- Discussions with CACIWC about partnership on outreach, training, and shared conferences
- Annual meeting scheduled.
- Cooperative reciprocal agreement with Lower CT River Agriculture Commission to help them with AG Viability Grant
- General Administration: Meetings, Outreach to RCPP, Budget Prep, Financial Policies (Federal grant requirement), UConn Conference, NE RC&D Meeting, Grant Research & Applications

Environmental Program:

ERT

- Andrew Mountain Road Open Space – Naugatuck: active and passive recreation. ERT focus on conditions and best practices for planned passive open space use. – in progress – Met with City Officials – scheduled for June – August 2016
- Canfield Woods – Deep River/Essex: an update to 1977 ERT to reassess the management plan for the preserve. Setting up meeting with town officials– awaiting timetable
- Curtis Woodland – Durham: looking take the 2006 ERT through an update and design a comprehensive management plan – setting up meeting with town officials to determine extent of deliverable.
- Lake Wononscopomuc – Salisbury: awaiting response from town officials. Need to ensure expectations are fully scoped to determine whether this is a preliminary assessment toward a watershed management plan or a full scale watershed management plan

CACIWC

CACIWC and CTRC&D share a similar vision of providing environmental education and technical support to municipalities. CACIWC through their training, publications, and conferences, and CTRC&D through our technical environmental review program for municipalities and their commissions. We can leverage each other's resources to provide better environmental services to the towns, and create a focused source of information and training for municipalities and their commissions

2016 Database of ERT Specialists

- March survey of 40 interested specialists on 2014 list
- 10 Responded with active interest
- Further outreach yielded 8 new specialists
- 13 Volunteers with mileage stipend (\$100)
- 5 Contractors (\$500 - \$1500)
- Preliminary survey of large consulting firms
- \$5000- \$8000 to complete a Basic ERT Report: rough estimates were based on Bloomfield Evan ERT Report (does not include archaeological services)
- Archaeological consultant - \$1300 estimate

2014 ERT Project Recommendations

- Andrew Mountain Road Open Space – Perform in house- utilize volunteer specialists to extent possible and limited contractors to supplement (estimated cost: \$1600) – Completion: August 2016*
- Canfield Woods Open Space Management – Perform in house – utilize volunteer specialists to extent possible and limited contractors to supplement (estimated cost: \$1600) – Completion: October 2016*
- Curtis Woodlands – Hire a consultant to provide continuity of recommendations for open space management plan (estimated cost: \$8000) – Completion August 2016*
- Lake Wononscopomuc - waiting for town to respond and need to determine scope of review for watershed management
- Completion timeframe is contingent on municipal officials availability- time may be extended at town's discretion.

Recommended Action

- For Environmental Reviews which require quick service and continuity of recommendation:
- Create an on-call list of qualified consulting firms to complete ERT reports as needed for negotiated price:
- Issue an RFQ for consultants for on-call work as needed
- Establish a CT RC&D list of 2-3 qualified consulting firms at a negotiated rate to quickly complete ERT reports
- CT RC&D Environmental Committee or Executive Committee would be able to spend up to \$6500 on special ERT projects as needed (up to 2 per year) without full board approval. Estimated costs over \$6500 would require board review and approval
- For future ERT requests, there could be a town match of 10-30%

Motion: To develop a draft RFQ for multidisciplinary ERT Reports for May meeting.

Motion made by: Jim Sipperly

Seconded by: Judy Rondeau

Discussion: We should be reinventing the volunteer ERT Program- this would be another tool for the organization to use. ERT's have been a nonbiased review. We need to look at underserved areas. We need to think about what would initiate using a consultant.

Voted: Motion approved unanimously.

Grants:

FMPP (Farmers Market Promotion Program)

Increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and to develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets by developing, improving, expanding, and providing outreach, training, and technical assistance to, or assisting in the development, improvement, and expansion of, domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities.

CT RC&D FMPP Proposal (Due May 12, 2016)

Develop a statewide CT Farmers Market Association to provide support and training to Farmers, Market Masters & Vendors and the Shoppers. With the concept of having us having our own website where both consumer, vendors and market masters could go as a "one stop shop" for information. Helping markets with programs, grants, coupons, marketing, the list is endless. In New England, CT is atypical.

Massachusetts <https://www.massfarmersmarkets.org/>

Maine <http://www.maine farmersmarkets.org/>

Vermont <http://www.vtfma.org/>

New Hampshire <http://www.nh fma.net/>

Rhode Island <http://www.farmfreshri.org/>

Connecticut is the only state that is in New England that doesn't. The signature element of our proposal creating efficiency with state and federal stakeholders to create a geospatial database compatible with state geospatial standards using parcel data from COGs. This would ultimately generate an interactive statewide map of farmers markets in the state as a hub for shoppers.

Sample of Partners/Stakeholders: DOAG, UConn/BuyCTGrown, USDA, CT Farm Bureau, NOFA, CTOPM, Northeast CT Farmer's Market, CT Farm Fresh,

Conservation Innovation Grants - CIG

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) are competitive grants that stimulate the development and adoption of innovative approaches and technologies for conservation on agricultural lands. CIG uses Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds to award competitive grants to non-Federal governmental or nongovernmental organizations, American Indian Tribes, or individuals. Producers involved in CIG funded projects must be EQIP eligible.

- Purchase 2 Roller Crimpers, a Planter and a Flare Mower and other support equipment for cooperative use to support no-till agriculture program for organic farmers and other interested agriculture growers
- Management of cooperative lending program to farmers – nominal fee based maintenance and performance management assessment through acreage meter
- Outreach and marketing in partnership with NOFA
- Federal Competition (May) – Waiting for Connecticut Announcement

Long Island Sound Futures Fund - LISFF

Habitat Restoration Management and Riparian Corridor Protection in the Salmon River Watershed
CTRC&D – Salmon River Watershed Partnership - Kleinschmidt Associates

The fast, cold Salmon River drains a 149 square mile watershed in 10 towns. Experts have ranked the Salmon as the best example of its river type in Connecticut, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) recognizes it as a Special Focus Area for fisheries. It is one of two remaining areas in Connecticut that is still stocked with Atlantic salmon fry as part of maintaining a legacy population. In a five-year status review of what changes had been adopted, conducted in 2015, local planners also identified further implementation that would assist in the land use review process. One key item is the need for specific information to identify priority tributaries for fish species based on collected data and criteria for riparian protection.

- Integrate all existing data in a summary document: including; stream temperature mapping, fish surveys, macroinvertebrate assessments, water quality monitoring, fish stocking, lamprey nest inventory, salmon fry stocking and significant fish passage barriers
- Identify key species of importance and life cycle requirements: Focus on diadromous species and native brook trout. (note: native brook trout are also included as a connection for local action and sensitivity)
- Based on current data, identify those tributaries that meet or could most likely meet the needs of identified species
- Identify appropriate riparian buffer conditions and setbacks for priority tributaries
- Calculate sediment and nutrient loading and temperature changes on a per linear foot/100feet/mile of riparian buffer lost or restored
- Utilizing the watershed open space map and state riparian buffer map overlays, identify gaps in riparian protection for priority tributaries and priority restoration areas
- Establish measures for analysis of climate change impacts to upland tributaries of Long Island Sound for fish species
- Create a final working document for local land-use officials use during the planning and review process

Preproposal has been submitted for comment. Grant Application due: May 5, 2016 - \$60,000 - \$150,000

Other Business:

Annual Plan of Work - Executive Committee to assist with review for Annual Meeting. We should update the existing plan and maintain its current framework.

Budget Draft for Annual Meeting – Schedule 1st Week in May meeting to review draft budget And annual plan review.

Update on New England RC&D Spring Meeting – The meeting will be held at Holcomb Farm

Partner Updates:

Lynn Stoddard, ECSU, spoke on municipal Environmental score cards.

NRCS:

CIG Partnership Program – May 10th.

2 GS5 Soil Conservationist job positions available in CT.

Any NRCS project with tree cutting needs to check on tree cutting policy concerning Long Horned Beetle.

New England RC&D meeting take aways. Can the remaining Rc&D work together to advance the common mission. Rhode Island and food hubs, extend farm energy program to rest of New England.

Annual meeting will be held June 8th in North Granby. 9:30 – 11:30 with a tour afterwards.

There was a call from a farm asking about the Tour de Farm program. We could promote the Tour de Farms as a bike route.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:40am.

Respectfully submitted,

Margot Burns
Secretary