

**Minutes of the Renville County Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors regular meeting held on Thursday, April 14, 2011 at the Ag Service Center in Olivia MN.**

**Present:** Marc Iverson  
Dave Guggisberg  
Kathryn K Kelly  
Loyal Fisher  
Jim Schafer

**Also Present:** John Stahl, Renville County Board; Tom Fischer, BWSR Board Conservationist; Jeff Kjorness, NRCS District Conservationist; Jason Beckler, Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist; and Tara Latozke & Karen Flom, SWCD Staff.

**Meeting was called to order by Chair, Marc Iverson at 7:00 a.m.**

**MSC (Kathryn, Loyal) to approve the Minutes of the March 10, 2011 regular meeting.**

**MSC (Dave, Kathryn) to approve the March Treasurer's Report subject to audit and to approve the March bills as presented.**

**Staff Reports:**

- Karen reviewed workload pertaining to upcoming meetings, upcoming education events, and accounting tasks.
- Karen reported that the landlord and USDA have reached an agreement on a 10 year lease. The rent increase will amount to an additional \$993/year for the SWCD. All the flooring in the office will be replaced as part of the agreement.
- SWCD was notified that the website meets BWSR requirements.
- An audit will be required for the year ending Dec. 31, 2010 and Karen will request two bids.
- Tom was not at the meeting so Karen reviewed his written report which included updates on the easement programs and the workload for feedlot inspections for the month.
- Tom also presented at the March 24<sup>th</sup> Area VI meeting, was interviewed by the local newspaper, testified at a House committee meeting and gave a presentation at the "Our Water Our Choices" and attended the public viewing of Troubled Waters.

**NRCS Report: Jeff reported**

- That 5 of the 15 CSP applications are preapproved for 2011.
- There were 14 EQIP applications totaling \$208,000 for the 2011 sign-up.
- Renville County had five WHIP applications for the 2011 sign-up and they were all approved for funding.
- Renville County currently has one WRP application and staff are working with two other landowners on a combined project.
- Both Jeff & Mike attended the Wind Erosion Program training.

**Board Reports:**

- Loyal indicated that he was interested in writing an RC&D grant application for GPS training for high school students. He'll look into costs and report back to the Board.

**Kasey Taylor joined the meeting and gave the following report from NRCS:**

- There will be a noon conference call with Don Baloun regarding current budget issues
  - They anticipate a \$118 million cut for this fiscal year
- Kasey reported on the efforts to reduce the number of area offices from 7 to 6 at this time with a goal of reducing to 5 offices within 5-6 years. Area 6 will be the first office phased out. It is anticipated that the Olivia service area will be included in Area V.
- RC&D budgets have been zeroed out so leadership team is working on staffing issues as those NRCS people are absorbed. All the RC&D councils have indicated a desire to continue.
- There have been turnback dollars for EQIP and CSP so Kasey anticipates more projects will be funded.
- Kasey had to leave to attend a meeting with Congressman Walz staff in Mankato.

**Staff Reports continued:**

- Tara reported on easement workload including enhancement fund requests, well monitoring and setting up seeding on a bank site.
- Tara is assisting Redwood SWCD with WCA and any State Cost-Share projects that need technical assistance. She has also worked with a couple Renville County landowners on design of tree projects. Redwood anticipates a new employee in June with wetland training this summer. Tara has reviewed a project in Buffalo Lake for WCA and informed the landowners of what is needed to proceed with their project. Tara reported that she attended a WCA administrative meeting in Marshall on March 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Tara reported that one of the FWQM grant projects is coming in under budget so there may be the opportunity to fund a couple more small projects.
- Tara completed the modifications and required forms for WRP funding of tree removal on two existing projects. She reviewed two mining reclamation plans.
- Tara reported that she completed work on a water cycle game aimed at younger elementary students. She attended the Area VI meeting, assisted with set-up of Our Waters Our Choices and Troubled Waters and she attended the CROW Technical Committee meeting. She reported that she thinks more incentive funds will be coming from the CROW in the future.

**Tara presented two Buffer Cost Share projects for approval:**

**MSC (Marc, Kathryn) to approve Contract #B06-10 for \$3,822 or 75% whichever is less based on an estimated total cost of \$5,100 with Mark Young for Restoration and Management of Declining Habitat (practice 643 D-1) in the SE1/4 Section 24, Henryville Twp for inter-seeding RIM with native local ecotype grasses and forbs. Taralee Latozke TAA with Technical assistance of \$955.50**

**MSC (Loyal, Jim) to approve Contract #B07-10 for \$10,950.00 or 75% whichever is less based on an estimated cost estimate of \$14,600.00 with Chuck Hayes for Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats (Practice 643 D-1) in the NW ¼ of Sec. 3, Lower Flora Twp. for invasive tree removal and a controlled burn on remnant dry hill prairie. Taralee Latozke TAA with Technical assistance of \$2,737.50.**

**Conference Call with Tabor Hoek, BWSR Marshall Office:** Supervisors discussed this history and funding of the Walk-In program and workload expectations for the Farm Bill Technicians in the participating counties. This is federal funding for a 3 year pilot program and staffing funding will be used to offset funding shortages for the FBT positions. The expectation is that all eligible landowners in participating counties will be notified of the program. After the call, **MSC (Kathryn, Dave) to participate in the Walk-In program with all program responsibilities to be assumed by the Farm Bill Tech.**

#### **Staff Reports Continued:**

- Jason reported that he'd contact 29 people this month, had 3 new CRP contracts for 17.7 acres. One was a wetland contract for 15.0 acres and two were tree planting contracts.
- Jason reported there are currently \$12,570 left in Working Land Initiative and he has two projects in mind for that funding.
- Jason reported that he'd been to several meetings including a Farm Bill teleconference, the WEPS training, had two radio interviews, spoke at the Buffalo Lake Rod & Gun club and was involved in several local PF meetings and the local PF banquet.

#### **Board Reports**

- Marc reported on the meeting he and Kathryn attended with Mark Erickson and Sara Folsted. This was the quarterly meeting to discuss the feedlot program. Things are going well and they anticipate inviting Tom & Scott to the next meeting which will be in June. Marc also attended the Troubled Waters showing.
- Dave reported on the Area meeting.
- Kathryn reported that she'd testified with Tom at the House. She attended three area meetings as MASWCD president. Yesterday they had an RC&D meeting and were told grant funding is still available for projects that are in line with RC&D goals. She brought a copy of the RC&D annual report and stated that the RC&D Council is paying for a reprint of the grazing handbook. Kathryn also made positive comments about Our Water Our Choices and Troubled Waters.

**MSC (Dave, Jim) to approve the FY 12 Farm Bill Assistance Grant application as presented.**

Karen presented a request from Xcel Energy to temporarily park a vehicle on a RIM property next to the Danube substation. Current electrical equipment will be placed on a vehicle parked on the Scott Groen RIM property while the substation is reconstructed. Mr. Groen is in agreement and the SWCD staff recommend approval of this request. **MSC (Kathryn, Dave) to approve the request by Xcel Energy to park a temporary mobile substation on the Scott Groen RIM easement between the dates of April 15, 2011 and October 1, 2011.**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.