

Minutes of the Renville County Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors regular meeting held on Thursday, December 8, 2011 at 7:00 a.m. at the Ag Services Building in Olivia.

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

Also Present: John Stahl, Renville County Board; Jeff Kjorness, NRCS District Conservationist; Jason Beckler, Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist; and Tom Kalahar, Taralee Latozke & Karen Flom, staff.

Meeting was **Called to Order** by Chair Marc Iverson at 7:00 a.m.

MSC (Dave, Kathryn) to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2011 meeting.

MSC (Kathryn, Loyal) to approve the November Treasurer's Report subject to audit and the November bills as presented.

Staff Reports:

- Karen reported on workload related to the November 15th Drainage meeting, preparation for the MASWCD meeting, and upcoming LCCMR reports as well as assisting with the MDA Research Grant for the Limbo Creek area.
 - The new NRCS copy machine arrived. Karen canceled the maintenance contact on the SWCD machine which will be used as a back-up until existing supplies are gone.
 - Karen attended both the Area VI meeting and the Convention & reported on presentations and mini-sessions.
 - Byron Hogberg, FSA CED retired effective Dec. 3rd.

Board Reports:

- Jim reported that he attended the CROW meeting
- Loyal reported on the MASWCD convention
- Marc reported that he felt the Nov. 15th Drainage meeting went well.
- Dave also reported on the Drainage meeting
- Kathryn reported on the following:
 - The Rountable met several times & presented at the convention.
 - She attended the MREA convention representing SW/WC.
 - She attended a clean water meeting.
 - She attended both the Area VI and the Area V MASWCD meetings.
 - She attended the MAWD convention in Alex.
 - January will be the strategic planning meeting for the MASWCD Board
 - MASWCD Legislative Day at the Capitol will be Feb. 15 & 16 at the Embassy Suites in St. Paul

Staff Reports Continued:

- Tom reported on progress of the Rock Outcrop easement grants and on required reporting.
 - Tom completed 4 feedlot inspections in the last month. He's completed all but 3 required inspections for 2011. The operators have not cooperated with his efforts to do an inspection so he's turned the names over to Renville County.
 - Tom attended the Nov. 15th Drainage meeting and has been working on the MDA Research Grant for County tile system 77.
 - Tom also attended the MASWCD Convention on Dec. 6th.
- Jason reported that he contacted 106 people in the last month and got 15 CRP contracts for 74.8 acres. There are 9 filter strips totaling 66.6 acres and 6 shelterbelt CRP contacts for 8.2 acres. He also been working on mid-contract management plants.
- Jason listened to the BWSR Buffer easement training on Nov. 30th. He showed the Supervisors two areas he feels should be priority areas for the RFP and a couple other areas that are possibilities. The RFP can only list 3 priority areas. It's due in mid-Jan. Jason & Karen will work on getting it completed.
- Jason is still looking for a new WLI site and is thinking of the south Sacred Heart area.
- Jason attended the PF benefits meeting, the BWSR RIM Buffer training, the MN PF team meeting and a meeting with the MN Cattlemen's Executive Director Jo Martin, the MN Cattlemen's President Don Schiefelbein, MN Dept. of Ag Commissioner Dave Frederickson, MN Farm Bureau President Kevin Paap and PF Senior Field Coordinator Matt Holland. They discussed grazing & possible grazing easements.

NRCS Report: Jeff Kjorness, District Conservationist

- Jeff reported that staff continue to work on EQIP & WHIP contract clean-up to determine if payments have been made, if they need to modify the contract or if they practice or contact may need to be cancelled. Jeff attended 2012 EQIP raining. The sign-up is continuous with applications for the first sign-up period due January 27, 2012. Other ranking periods will follow if funds are available.
- Staff continue to work on modifications and payments for 2010 & 2011 CEP contracts. The 2012 CSP sign-up will end January 13, 2012.
- Jeff attended Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) training. Renville has 24 sites to evaluate for 2011.
- Several Area 5 NRCS staff have been to Olivia to assist with the conversion from Area 6 to Area 5.

Staff Reports Continue:

- Tara reported on workload with road bank easements. She is working with BWSR to get payments out and working to complete a repair job.
- Tara reported that the Renville County park sites were seeded this fall.

Tara requested Board action on the Buffer Cost Share contract with Chuck Hayes.

MSC (Dave, Kathryn) to approve Contract #B08-10 with Chuck Hayes for Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats 643 D-1 in the NW ¼ of Section 03, Lower Flora Twp, T 113N R 36W for invasive tree removal and controlled burn on remnant dry hill prairie. Total estimated cost is \$5,900 with \$4,293.75 or 75%, whichever is less, to be encumbered. Technical Assistance of \$1,073.43 with Taralee Latozke as TAA.

- Tara also reported on the grant application to the MDA for research & equipment funds for the Limbo Creek/Tile 77 area.
- Tara reported that the fieldwork for the WRP monitoring is completed and she is about 1/3 of the way done with the paperwork required. Deadline is Dec. 31st.
- WCA workload included the Nov. 15th Drainage meeting. Kane Radel, BWSR Wetland Specialist, also attended the meeting. Tara has been reviewing ag drainage requests. There has been one ag drainage violation. She attended the NRCS wetland review policy training.
- Tara attended the Local Water Management task force meeting. She's been working on well closure contracts and vouchers. She also reported on the RFP for the Water Plan re-write.
- Tara attended the MASWCD convention on Dec. 5th and attended sessions on Urban Stormwater Management retrofitting and a session that displayed a watershed game. She also attended the Hawk Creek Local Work Group meeting.

Cost-Share Policy Review:

MSC (Jim, Kathryn) to continue the current Renville County SWCD policy of not cost-sharing on farmstead shelterbelts.

MSC (Marc, Dave) to deny **Contract 01-11 Gail Johnson Farmstead Shelterbelt Practice D-4,380 NW ¼ S.6 T.115N R.33W Melville Township. Total Cost Estimate \$825.00 Requested Cost Share \$412.50 or 50% cost share whichever is less. Contract denied because it does not meet Renville SWCD Cost-Share Policy.**

Tara reported on upcoming policy changes to the State Cost-Share program.

MSC (Dave, Kathryn) to reduce the Renville SWCD cost share rate to 50% on Living Snow Fence and Farmstead Shelterbelt practices.

There was discussion regarding a weather policy for winter board meetings. Consensus was to call Karen either at home or her cell phone after 5:30 a.m. on a board meeting day to check on weather in Olivia and to report on weather conditions at the Supervisor's home. Meeting will be held if a quorum is able to attend.

Kathryn suggested a Natural Resource Education Day to be held for the public and elected officials & employees. More discussion will follow at the next meeting.

Next regular meeting will be held on January 12th. Tara reported there is a possibility of a special meeting in late Dec. to approve cost-share payments. Discussion was that either late on Dec. 29th or early Dec. 30th would be best. Staff will work with Marc on date and agenda if a special meeting is needed.

