

MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL
TUESDAY, March 7, 2006

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by chairman Hoholik.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ernie Hoholik & Lindsey Frenette-Schoolcraft Co Bd of Comm; Dave Andersen-MSU Ext Schoolcraft Co; Patti Segerstrom-Schoolcraft CD; Bob Struck-Mqt Co Bd of Comm; Don Howlett-USFS; Becky Otto-NRCS Marq/Alger; Rich Reader-Marquette CD; Tom Tauzer, Ralph Lundquist, Jack Herrick, Holly Wendrick-Delta CD; Howard Haulotte, Brant Kucera-City of Gladstone; Lowell Paschke-Menominee CD; Wendy Sexton, Dennis Maufort-USDA Rural Dev; Tom Berndt, Joe Clark-NRCS, Kingsford; Chuck Harris-City of Kingsford; Donna Silta-FSA; Marilyn Shy, Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

INTRODUCTIONS: Marilyn Shy was welcomed as the new UP RC&D Coordinator. She gave a brief summary of her background and everyone present introduced themselves.

MINUTES: Minutes from the meeting of November 1, 2005 were approved (Andersen/Reader).

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jude Holloway was unable to attend the meeting, but sent a written report. Balance on hand as of 3/7/06 was \$466.58. There was no activity since the last meeting. The report was accepted (Lundquist/Andersen).

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Election of Officers – Ernie Hoholik was re-elected as chairperson (Frenette/Andersen), Judy Pomeroy was re-elected as vice-chairperson (Andersen/ Frenette), and Jude Holloway was re-elected as secretary/treasurer (Andersen/Frenette).

Meeting Schedule for 2006 – The group agreed on future 2006 meeting dates of May 9, August 1 and November 7.

REPORTS:

Alger Co - Becky Otto reported that the conservation district is applying for I/E grant. An implementation grant is already in progress for Eastern Alger County watersheds. Two road crossings were recently approved by the DEQ for the Munising Bay watershed project and the conservation district tree sale is currently underway.

Delta Co - Ralph Lundquist reported that their tree sale is also underway, the district timber sale with Baldwin Twp realized over \$64,000, and the Annual Meeting is scheduled for April 8th at the Rapid River Lion's Club. Ralph has submitted his resignation to the conservation district board of directors. Holly Wendrick was introduced at the groundwater technician for the district.

Tom Tauzer reported that the Rapid River forestry club will be doing the first seeding of native plants this spring for the Native Plants Project, and the Ford River Cemetery Project will stabilize 1400 feet of riverbank and is funded with a \$248,000 EQIP grant, hopefully \$50,000 from Hannahville, \$20,000 from a private landowner and \$5,000 from the CD. The permit process is now underway.

Dickinson Co – Chuck Harris and Tom Berndt reported on a project in the city of Norway to re-locate a stream to the original path. Wisconsin Electric is doing run-off work, the bid solicitation is complete and the project should be completed this summer. The funding is complicated with six sources of money. The Hamilton Creek Watershed Project received a watershed planning grant.

Marquette Co – Rich Reader reported CD forester, Chris Burnett, is part of a 10 member Advisory Board made up of Conservation Foresters in the state of Michigan and has created a written presentation on “The Day in the Life of a Forester”. The district will be holding a tree planting workshop, an apple tree maintenance workshop and a soil erosion workshop in the near future, they will also be doing Emerald Ash Borer trapping again this year. The district has hired a watershed intern, Sarah Cody, for five projects on the Lower Dead River. They received a “Pulling it Together” grant to be used in mapping and pulling non-native species with concentration on 3 species – purple loosestrife, Eurasian milfoil, and garlic mustard. They will be making contact with the public at the UP Builder’s Show and have moved into the new office that the UP RC&D shares with NRCS in Marquette.

Schoolcraft Co – Lindsey Frenette reported that the county bought Southtown Creek and wants to bridge it. This is a current RC&D project that has not been funded to date, but they would like to see it re-visited and move forward. Ernie Hoholik reported that the CD would be holding their 40th Annual Mtg and Greg Whitney, the district’s soil conservationist, will be the speaker.

MSU Extension—Dave Andersen reported that registration is now open for a March 27th Land Use Summit at the MSU Kellogg Center. It will focus on prosperity in rural communities. Dave and Mike Jensen of the DNR will be staffing a booth at the UP Builders Show on the FIREWISE Program - providing information on the impact of wildfire on private lands. There will be a Citizen Planner Program beginning April 9th in Escanaba teaching the roles, responsibilities, tools and techniques for public officials dealing with land use issues.

USFS – Don Howlett reported that Nelson Logging in Escanaba has the only slash-bundler operational in North America at the present time. The FS is setting up a demonstration day to show off biomass utilization issues and whole tree harvesting (may not be appropriate for all sites). They will again have an exhibit at the UP State Fair called “Growing UP Foresters” geared for K-13 yr olds which will teach about forestry and natural resources.

Farm Service Agency – Donna Silta reported that Delta Co. was designated a Disaster County for 2005 due to drought conditions and producers may apply for loans. Applications for all programs are now available on-line as a convenience to the public. The Common Land Units program application is also available on-line.

Rural Development – Wendy Sexton and Dennis Maufort reported that Wendy will staff a booth at the UP Builders Show. Rural Development has helped 9 communities with water/sewer assistance since October 1, 2005 and also assisted communities in securing fire trucks and police vehicles.

PROJECT UPDATES:

Gladstone Marsh Project – This is a marsh area within the city of Gladstone. They propose to create a nature preserve and have applied to the DNR (current property owner) for public use permit. The DNR has requested a survey of the land. Howard Haulotte, Tom Tauzer, Ralph Lundquist and Brant Kucera are on a committee which is searching for funding. Funding pledged to date from Wildlife Unlimited of Delta Co. and the Delta CD. Dave Andersen mentioned the UP Sustainable Forestry & Wildlife Fund as a possible source of funding (up to \$1,000).

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 9, 2006. Tom Tauzer will look into other possible meeting rooms as we seem to have outgrown the conference room at the NRCS service center!

Alger Co - Becky Otto reported that the conservation district is applying for I/E (Information/Education) grant. An implementation grant is already in progress for Munising Bay Watershed Project and two road crossings were recently approved by the DEQ. The conservation district tree sale is currently underway and they have applied for a watershed planning grant for the Eastern Alger County Watershed Project.

MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL
TUESDAY, May 9, 2006

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 1:05 pm by chairman Hoholik.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ernie Hoholik & Lindsey Frenette-Schoolcraft Co Bd of Comm; Dave Andersen-MSU Ext Schoolcraft Co; Don Howlett-USFS; Tom Tauzer, Benny Herioux, Rory Mattson-Delta CD; Howard Haulotte-City of Gladstone; Don Sandstrom-Alger Co Bd of Comm; Ernie Houghton-DNR; Lowell Paschke, Judy Pomeroy-Menominee CD; Marilyn Shy, Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

MINUTES: Minutes from the meeting of March 7, 2006 were approved (Pomeroy/Frenette) with the following correction in the Alger Co Report – An implementation grant is already in progress for Munising Bay Watershed Project (not E. Alger Co.). The district has applied for a watershed planning grant for the Eastern Alger Co. Watershed Project.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jude Holloway was unable to attend the meeting, but sent a written report. Balance on hand as of 5/9/06 was \$566.58. The only activity since the last meeting was income of \$100 in dues payments. The report was approved (Sandstrom/Andersen).

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Dues Update: Darcy reported that dues of \$300 had been received from all UP counties.

Legislative Update: The House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee rejected the President's budget request for the RC&D program. The RC&D program was funded at \$50,787,000 which was the same funding level as FY06. The Full Appropriations Comm. will consider the bill and then it will go to the House floor for consideration. The Senate will take up their version of the bill after Memorial Day.

REPORTS:

Alger Co – Don Sandstrom brought a written report from Alger Co. as Becky Otto and the conservation district were involved in planting trees/shrubs at the St. Martin's Hill site. The report follows:

Happenings at the Alger Conservation District

Two DEQ grants were applied for in March—one application was for a 319 planning grant for the Eastern Alger County Watersheds which includes all the streams that flow into Lake Superior that are in Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore and the Sucker River, east of Grant Marais.

The other grant applied for was a CMI (Clean Michigan Initiative) DEQ Information and Education grant that complements our current Munising Bay Watershed Restoration Project and would allow for outreach activities to local school kids and the public. We probably won't hear about awarding of these grants until fall.

Construction of two culvert replacement projects in the Munising Bay Watershed grant are scheduled to begin in early June. The Alger County Road Commission is our partner on these projects. They are both on Ridge Road in AuTrain Township.

The St. Martin's Hill project in the City of Munising is nearing completion. 75 middle and high school students will volunteer to plant 500 native trees and shrubs in an all day planting that will take place today-May 9th. In early June another planting of 1000 native wildflowers and grasses will take place and that will then complete the project. The St. Martin's Hill project was sponsored by R,C & D and was completed with one grant from DEQ (a CMI grant) for \$91,000 and one grant from the Great Lakes Basin Program for \$110,000 and with financial assistance from the City of Munising. All three phases of the project totaled nearly \$750,000.

Delta Co - Benny Herioux was welcomed as the new Delta CD chairperson, he replaces Ralph Lundquist as the RC&D appointee. Rory reported on the success of the CD tree sale, the forestry program and the groundwater program. Tom Tauzer gave an update on the Ford River Bank Stabilization RC&D project – permits have been submitted, Hannahville has committed to \$50,000, NRCS \$248,000, CD \$5000. The DNR is providing trees for crib walls (valued at \$20,000). He hopes work can begin by early fall if permits go through. It was noted that this RC&D project has been on the books since the 1970's and is finally being realized. This would be a good project to feature on our website. The Rapid River forestry club planted native grasses/forbs recently on the 2 acre site that had been cleared of scotch pine. The seeds were obtained from the Forest Service and also collected by volunteers from the WildOnes chapter. Howard Haulotte reported that Boy Scouts were installing an osprey platform at the site of the Gladstone Marsh Project, and they are still awaiting a public use permit from the DNR before further progress can be made. Rory will follow up with the DNR on the status of the permit. There was discussion of possibly transferring the \$75,000 that Menards in Escanaba is required to spend to create an outdoor classroom to this existing Gladstone Marsh Project.

Dickinson Co – No reps in attendance
Marquette Co – No reps in attendance

Menominee Co - Lowell Paschke reported that the tree sale was successful and that DC Dave Higbee would like to review all RC&D projects to see where they stand.

Schoolcraft Co – Lindsey Frenette reported that the EDC received a grant to identify wetlands, and the Hinds Park paving project is moving ahead. He also spoke of the Rd. Comm. trying to secure a deed to pave the middle section of the Michibay Rd near Gulliver which is not presently being maintained and does not currently provide emergency access to all residences. Ernie Hoholik brought a copy of the recently released Soil Survey for Schoolcraft County. It is for sale at the CD and will be on-line at the NRCS site by the end of the summer. It will also be available in digital format on CD. The For. Service has done some soils mapping and worked with the soil surveyors to make sure the public would have access to consistent information.

MSU Extension – The Citizen Planner Program is in progress in Escanaba. The program is designed for planning commissioners, zoning officials and other government officials that deal with land use issues. In April Gov. Granholm signed a new Zoning Enabling Act with a 1 year grace period in which to become compliant. There will be 3 training sessions in the UP in May (Houghton, Marquette and St. Ignace) and they will be publicized.

USFS – Don Howlett reported that the final Forest Plan for the Hiawatha is now out and in the public comment period. The Rural Assistance Program which he has used as seed money to assist groups such as the Noquemanon Trail Network has been slashed from the FY07 budget. The Hiawatha will be working jointly with interested parties in northeastern Wisconsin to address an increased interest in biomass utilization. This year is the 75th Anniversary for both the Hiawatha and Ottawa NF, and they will again have an exhibit at the UP State Fair called “Growing UP Foresters” geared for K-13 yr olds which will teach about forestry and natural resources.

DNR – Ernie Houghton reported that there are now 2 new Conservation District Foresters in the western UP (one for Houghton/Keweenaw Counties and 1 for Gogebic/Ontonagon Counties). He reported on a training session for Forest Stewardship Planners and the Forestland Enhancement Program for which enrollment ends on September 30, 2006. Equal priority is given to planting for wildlife and timber, with highest priority given to catastrophic recovery. There is continuous enrollment in this program and all unused monies will be returned to the state at the conclusion of this program (approx. \$75,000- 100,000 at this point). Ernie is currently overseeing 1.6 million acres of Commercial Forest Land in the state out of a total of 2.2 million acres.

PROJECT UPDATES:

No new projects were submitted, however Marilyn updated the group on a couple projects that are “in the works”. The first – Blue-Green Algae Sampling and Education for Central UP Lakes – addresses a common problem in Wisconsin lakes that is moving north. This would be a study to determine the extent of the problem (b-g algae can be toxic to both animals and humans and can become a health issue. In Little Bay de Noc, blue-green algae infestations followed zebra mussel invasion. This proposal will probably be submitted at the next Central meeting by the Dickinson CD. The second potential project – Bio-diesel by the Bay – is in the early planning stages in Alger Co where the entire NPS fleet of diesel engines utilized bio-diesel. This would probably be a one-day educational event. Marilyn mentioned that folks in Chippewa Co. are interested in bio-diesel development using canola or switchgrass. One limitation for bio-diesel development in the UP is that there is limited proximity to processing plants.

An update on the UP Native Plants Project was presented (partners are NMU, CLSWP, Rapid River School Forestry Group and Forest Service). The UP RC&D recently selected the Marquette Conservation District to receive the contract for the Native Plant Restoration Specialist. This contract is for 1 year and renewable for a second year and the native plant specialist will provide expertise to all project partners.

Marilyn reported on the Michigan Association of RC&D spring meeting which she attended. The structure of “regional RC&D Councils” that we utilize is unique in the state. This works well due to the large geographic area that our Council covers.

All reports were approved (Sandstrom/Andersen), and the meeting was adjourned (Carlson/Frenette).

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, August 1, 2006, 1pm at the Gladstone City Hall. Members present suggested that the meeting be followed by a field trip/tour to either the new Bio-diesel plant or the Gladstone Marsh Project site.

MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL
TUESDAY, August 1, 2006

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by chairman Hoholik.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ernie Hoholik & Lindsey Frenette-Schoolcraft Co Bd of Comm; Warren Schauer-MSU Ext Delta Co; Tom Tauzer-NRCS Delta Co; Benny Herioux, Delta CD; Howard Haulotte-City of Gladstone; Don Sandstrom-Alger Co Bd of Comm; Lowell Paschke, Mary Fleissner-Menominee CD; Dave Higbee-Stephenson NRCS; Ann Hruska & Chuck Harris-Dickinson CD; Mike LaPointe-NRCS; Donna Peppin, Marilyn Shy, Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

MINUTES: Minutes from the meeting of May 9, 2006 were approved (Sandstrom/Frenette).

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jude Holloway was unable to attend the meeting, but sent a report which was presented by Don Sandstrom. Balance on hand as of 8/1/06 was \$591.58. The report was approved (Paschke/Frenette).

REPORTS:

Alger Co – Don Sandstrom brought a written report from Danita Rask of the Alger CD which was a summary of Munising Bay Watershed Restoration Project activities.

Delta Co –Tom Tauzer reported that the CD is working with Hannahville on the Ford River Project (see more details under “Project Updates”). The CD also helped make a deal with Hannahville to get a bridge from Nahma and the district is also helping them secure permits for their developments at the golf course/casino. The CD is working with Delta Co. on the Renaissance Center, and working with the City of Escanaba (asked to sit on a wetland task force). NRCS is busy with the restoration of 200 acres on the Garden Peninsula. Benny Herioux reported that the CD held a planning meeting for the coming year recently and is facilitating a forest cutting on Sac Bay. They are also working with folks at the MSU Experimental Farm in Chatham on switch grass production. There are still issues to be addressed such as “What comes first – the crop or the facility to process the switch grass into a fuel product”. There are also concerns about the small window for harvesting this crop.

Howard Haulotte reported that the City of Gladstone was recently informed that they were being deeded the land for the Gladstone Nature Area by the State of Michigan which will allow that project to move forward.

Dickinson Co – Ann Hruska reported that the district is focusing efforts on two watershed projects. The Norway Wetland Project, funded with CMI and WRP dollars involves re-routing a creek that goes right behind businesses on US 2 and MDOT is planning a non-motorized trail in conjunction with this. The Hamilton Creek Project is proceeding and involves the restoration of eight shoreline areas and dam removal. NRCS folks have been swamped with EQIP measures.

Marquette Co – No reps in attendance

Menominee Co – Mary Fleissner reported that the district is in the process of conducting a resource Assesment with stakeholders in the County. They are also working with Hannahville to purchase a new no-till drill. Mary, Lowell Paschke, Judy Pomeroy and Dave Higbee met with Marilyn to review “open RC&D projects” and chose a couple of projects as possibilities to focus efforts on in the near future (Erickson Park and Bark River/Harris school nature trails). DC Dave Higbee distributed a handout of “Discussion Topics for Potential Measures” that he has formulated.

Schoolcraft Co – Lindsey Frenette reported that the Hinds Park paving project is moving ahead and that the DEQ has given permission for the Road Comm to pave a section of roadway along Lake Michigan (through a dune area) which is public on either end, but privately owned in the center. Lindsey also mentioned the abundance of Queen Anne’s Lace along the roadways and the potential problem this can cause for farmers when it takes over their grazing fields.

MSU Extension – Warren Schauer reported that the Chatham Experimental Station held a Field Day recently. He also mentioned that the MSU President would be visiting the UP State Fair and would be attending a reception of those interested in Agriculture on Thursday of the Fair Week at 5pm in the Activities Tent. Call any MSU Extension Office for more details. Extension is also planning their 5th grade Agriculture Tour in conjunction with the Delta CD on the last Wednesday in September.

Other Reports- Mike LaPointe, Area 1 Asst. State Conservationist, reported that he was pleased to be able to hire Marilyn to fill the vacant UP RC&D Coordinator position because she brings so much knowledge and experience to the job. He feels it was helpful that the entire UP Council was in attendance at the fall MARCDC meeting to express their concern for filling this position without delay to Al Herceg. He mentioned that the Coordinator position at CRA has been vacant for 7 months now. As far as the “Big Picture” – NRCS is in leaner times, cutting staff and working with deficit budgets. The Farm Bill which is up for re-authorization, will not be as financially promising as the last Farm Bill. NRCS and MDA are working together to meet some of the needs in Michigan, by sharing the cost of 5 engineers (1 in Sault Ste. Marie). They hope to expand this cooperative job funding, expanding by 10 more shared positions. Hopefully one of those people hired will be assigned to the UP.

Coordinator’s Report-Marilyn distributed a written report highlighting recently funded projects (St. Mary’s River Rapid Watershed Assessment; and UP People and Land Community Forums) in the UP and some of the on-going projects UP Native Plant Restoration, Western UP Bat Habitat Project) and new projects (Stabilization of Inland Stamp Sands in Houghton & Keweenaw Counties; and Tahquamenon Area Civic Center) that she has been spending a good deal of time working on.

NEW PROJECTS: Ann Hruska, Dickinson CD, distributed copies of their project application for a new project entitled “Developing a Blue-Green Algae Monitoring Program for the Central Menominee River Watershed”. The idea for this project originated in the Dickinson County Lakes and Streams Coalition. Certain strains of Blue-Green Algae release toxins that can be harmful to humans and animals, and this project would attempt to ascertain the presence/quantities of those species in some Dickinson County Lakes. The CD has submitted a grant application to WEnergies for funding. The project was approved (Sandstrom/Frenette).

Marilyn distributed a **draft** of a project application from Liz Coyne (Alger CD) for a project titled “Biodiesel on the Bay”. Liz plans to complete the project plans/application prior to the next Central UP RC&D meeting.

PROJECT UPDATES: Tom Tauzer made a very interesting powerpoint presentation on the Ford River Project. This project originated in 1972 and work should begin this fall on the bank stabilization. This eroding streambank is the site of an old cemetery and previous to that, a Native American burial ground. Some of the coffins are being unearthed by the erosion. There is also a very unique home on the effected property. Funding has been secured from NRCS/EQIP \$240,000, Hannahville Indian Community \$50,000, private property owner \$20,000, Cons. District \$25,000 and Great Lks. Basin Program \$20,000. Ford River Twp. is paying for permits and the DNR is donating 110 cords of cedar logs. A log crib will be constructed with Black Locust logs and backfilled with rock to begin the stabilization.

Donna Peppin, the newly hired Native Plant Restoration Specialist for the UP Native Plants Project, also gave a very interesting presentation on the status of that project and her work. Donna is providing expertise to project partners NMU, USFS, Lake Superior Watershed Partnership and Rapid River School Forestry Club/Delta CD. She reported that all partner's work is progressing nicely on this two year project. She has developed a "Native Plant Resource Center" page on the UP RC&D website (www.uprcd.org) and invited everyone present to check out the resource center and encouraged them to complete the on-line survey to give her feedback.

The meeting was adjourned (Frenette/Sandstrom) at 2:30 pm and followed by a field trip to the Gladstone Marsh Nature Preserve which was led by Howard Haulotte.

NEXT MEETING: PLEASE NOTE CHANGE –Wednesday, November 8, 2006, 1pm at the Gladstone City Hall. The meeting was changed because the previously scheduled meeting fell on Election Day and the meeting room that the City of Gladstone has so generously provided for our use, would not be available on election day.

MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, November 8, 2006

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by chairman Hoholik.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ernie Hoholik & Lindsey Frenette-Schoolcraft Co Bd of Comm; Dave Andersen-MSU Ext Schoolcraft Co; Tom Tauzer-NRCS Delta Co; Benny Herioux, Delta CD; Howard Haulotte & Brant Kucera -City of Gladstone; Don Sandstrom-Alger Co Bd of Comm; Jude Holloway- Alger CD; Lowell Paschke, Mary Fleissner-Menominee CD; Ernie Houghton –MDNR; Sarah Janda – Marquette CD; Marilyn Shy, Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

MINUTES: Minutes from the meeting of August 1, 2006 were approved (Sandstrom/Frenette).

TREASURER’S REPORT: Jude Holloway presented the treasurer’s report which indicated a balance of \$591.58 with no activity since the last meeting.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Re-establish Forestry Committee: Marilyn gave a brief background on the Forestry Committee and reported that she has had several requests regarding the status of that committee from partners. All three regional councils are being asked for their ideas regarding the re-establishment of the committee and what their charge would be. Dave Andersen indicated that he had been the chair of this committee for the past 10 years, and that the previous coordinator, Randy Wilkinson, took the lead in bringing issues to the committee and was the driving force behind it. He expressed the importance of forestry in the UP, and the fact that forestry and the forest industry touch on every UP resident’s life. It was a good place to network, but went by the wayside with the corporate folks dropping off first. Ernie Houghton suggested that a subcommittee with reps from each UP RC&D region would be a good place to start and they might develop a mission statement and establish the relationship between this committee and the UP RC&D Council. Diversity on the committee is important and educating the public is an important component. This forestry committee would be helpful for the NWF-PAL Community Forums.

Silent Auction/Goody Bags: Members present were asked for suggestions for possible items which could be purchased or donated to the UP Council for the silent auction which is to be held at the NCRCDC Regional meeting in Frankenmuth in March. Every council is responsible for providing at least one item for this auction. It was suggested by Dave Andersen that a birdseye maple item would be unique to the UP. Dave will provide Darcy with contact information for Birdseye Creations and Nature’s Way Woods.

Presentation by Messersmith Manufacturing: Information that Messersmith Manufacturing sent the UP RC&D Council was distributed. Those present were asked if they would like to have a representative from Messersmith attend a future meeting and give a presentation. They felt that while this may be interesting and useful, it would not be a good idea as it would set a precedent of supporting/promoting an individual company. It was agreed that a future workshop where many different companies could present would be more equitable to everyone.

REPORTS:

Alger Co – Jude Holloway reported that the Annual Meeting was successful (elected 2 new board members bringing positive new energy to the group), the St. Martin’s Hill project was extremely well done and a wonderful success story, and that the CD was at a standstill in their work with the Kobus racetrack which had received a letter from the DEQ stating the track hadn’t measured up to expectations and the sediment basin was not working as intended.

Delta Co –Tom Tauzer and Benny Herioux reported that NRCS and MDA are sharing the cost of Craig Aho, a new employee who is helping NRCS get Farm Bill work done in several counties in the Central UP. The CD is working with the County Comm. on timber sales on county lands/parks. They are also assisting the City of Escanaba with wetlands issues. The cost of completion of the Ford River Project has almost doubled, they are re-evaluating the engineering plans and seeking additional funding. They are also trying to locate black locust logs at an affordable price. Hannahville representatives and Tom were out at the site this past week looking for and removing any exposed bones from the cemetery site for future re-burial. The Rapid River Forestry club is restoring 2 acres of native prairie and planting trees through an EQIP contract. Holly Wendrick with the CD groundwater program is doing educational presentations and has obtained the first “certified farm” in the UP in Menominee County.

Howard Haulotte reported that work at the Gladstone Nature Area was moving forward, the road has been gated and parking area work is scheduled for this fall. In the spring they will start work on restrooms, the trail system, and viewing platforms. The city commission will be holding a forum on a “conservation subdivision” they hope to develop on city owned land (this involves a concentrated area of development with the remainder of the property being common, natural area. They hope to start this project next summer.

Dickinson Co – No reps

Marquette Co – Sarah Janda reported that the CD Annual Meeting is tonight and Richard Vande Vusse of Ag Solutions, Inc. is the guest speaker. Sarah is working on a 2 year implementation grant (Clean Michigan grant) on the Lower Dead River. She has been doing some work in partnership with Cleveland Cliffs on streambank stabilization. She also works with Marquette Township on planning and development.

Menominee Co – Mary Fleissner and Lowell Paschke reported that the district has been busy assisting NRCS with the Farm Bill programs. Also, 100% of the fifth graders in the county are participating in their natural resource education program which focuses on the four areas of soil, water, wildlife and forests. They are teaching the message of “using natural resources wisely to protect them for the future”. They would like to include a re-cycling component but don’t want to teach how important it is until students actually have a place available for re-cycling. Their annual meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2007.

Schoolcraft Co – Lindsey Frenette reported that the county, city of Manistique and public school system are looking at wind farm options. Also, they are starting to gear up to start work on smelt fishing access on the South Town Creek Project (with the DNR, DEQ & DOT) and would like Marilyn to come over for a visit. Their annual meeting is scheduled for March 3, 2007.

MSU Extension – Dave Andersen reported that MSU is actively engaging in biofuels research, doing yield studies for switchgrass at the Chatham Experimental Station. Currently no market for switchgrass. In Presque Isle County, the power company is looking at coal-fired electrical generating plant and burning only 1% biofuels would utilize half a million acres of switchgrass. MSU extension has access to anemometers to test for wind generation potential – most UP coastal communities have wind power feasibility.

DNR – Ernie Houghton reported that 6 new forestry bills were signed at the end of September. The Qualified Forest Acres bill stipulates the landowner must have 20-320 acres/twp with no buildings, must have a forest management plan, must have 80% active forest lands. There is a penalty for breaking the contract early, and it is dependent on whether or not there has been a commercial harvest. Possible to switch lands from CFA to QFA for a 1 year time period. It is not necessary to allow the public access to your property. The Dept. of Treasury is administering the program, the DNR reviews the forest plans. CFA also has seen some changes.

Coordinator's Report-Marilyn distributed a written report highlighting several projects.

NEW PROJECTS: City of Stephenson Recycle Program – passed. Badger Creek Trail – did not pass for lack of support - members present did not feel the UP RC&D Coordinator should be involved until the land acquisition/public access problems were solved or conservation easements were obtained.

PROJECT UPDATES: Marilyn reported that the Dickinson CD did not receive funding they had requested from WE Energies and they are working on another source of funding.

Darcy gave an update on the UP Native Plant Restoration Project and explained the content of the live fascine DVD. DVD's were made available to those members in attendance.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, February 13th, 1pm at the Gladstone City Hall.