

**MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL**  
**TUESDAY, February 13, 2007**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ernie Hoholik & Patti Segerstrom-Schoolcraft Co; Dave Andersen-MSU Ext Schoolcraft Co; Tom Tauzer-NRCS Delta Co; Benny Herioux & Rachel Miron-Delta CD; Howard Haulotte-City of Gladstone; Holly Wendrick-Groundwater Stewardship Program; Don Sandstrom-Alger Co Bd of Comm; Jude Holloway- Alger CD; Judy Pomeroy-Menominee CD; Ernie Houghton –MDNR; Sarah Janda & Rich Reader-Marquette CD; Bill Rice-Dickinson CD; Frank Smith-Dickinson Co Bd of Comm; Tom Berndt-NRCS Kingsford; Don Howlett-Hiawatha NF; Marilyn Shy, Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

**AGENDA:** The agenda was approved (Pomeroy/Sandstrom) with no changes.

**MINUTES:** Minutes from the meeting of November 8, 2006 were approved (Sandstrom/Andersen).

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** Jude Holloway presented the treasurer’s report which indicated a balance of \$591.58 with no activity since the last meeting. The report was approved (Pomeroy/Andersen).

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**Newsletter Feedback/Ideas:** Darcy invited members present to send any ideas for newsletter improvements or content to the UP RC&D Council office.

**Re-establish Forestry Committee:** Dave Andersen reported on the meeting he attended (along with Bernie Huetter, Ernie Houghton, Ralph Miller, Steve Albee and Marilyn Shy) for the purpose of developing a draft mission statement for the UP RC&D Council Forestry Committee. The draft statement was distributed and is being circulated at other regional council meetings for member input. This mission statement will be considered at the next UP Council meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup>. After a mission statement is approved, it is his intention to re-convene the past members of this committee and other interested people. When the committee is up-and-running, he stated that he would resign as chairperson due to time constraints.

There was discussion on the new Quality Forest Act. Dave reported that Bill Cook and Karen Potter-Witter modified the DNR flyer and it is available from MSU Extension. Sign-up for the new program should begin in March, total enrollment acreage is limited to 300,000 acres during the first year increasing to 600,000 the second year, owners must have a stewardship plan on file and public access to the land is not required. Many people are confused about the new program and would like more information. This might be a good project for the new forestry committee.

**Area Plan Process/Input:** The UP RC&D Council is currently in the process of updating its Area Plan. The new plan will be in effect beginning in 2008. The council is seeking input from partners and stakeholders regarding their views on the most important resource needs and opportunities facing the Upper Peninsula now and in the next 5 years. As a starting point, the Council is reviewing the current Resource Assessment documents from all 13 UP Conservation Districts and summarizing the resource conservation and development issues that they have identified. A preliminary summary (including 11 of the 13 districts) was presented. Resource needs from Delta and Menominee Counties have not been included yet. Members present were asked to pass along their ideas regarding the best ways to gather input from stakeholders.

## **REPORTS:**

Alger Co – Jude Holloway reported that they just received word that all Conservation Districts would have an immediate 50% budget reduction for FY2007 and that District funding has been zeroed out for FY2008. They are gearing up for their tree sale now. She reported on the status of the Kolbus Race Track – a 29 acre privately-owned parcel which has been cut and stripped of topsoil and has severe erosion problems. The owner is open to ideas about how to utilize this property and they would welcome any input. The UPPCO sale of land in the AuTrain basin is of great concern to their District. Jude requested that the Central Council consider submitting a letter of support to the DNR for having the lands remain in public ownership. A motion to send a letter of support from the Central UP RC&D Council passed (Pomeroy/Andersen). Jude will forward pertinent facts regarding the land sale to the Council office.

Delta Co –Tom Tauzer has been working with the Hannahville Tribe on the Ford River project which has a new engineering design at an (increased) estimated cost of \$810,000 (\$460,000 available at this point). The tribe is deciding if they would like to do the work themselves or put the job out for bids. The forestry program is working with the Rapid River Schools on reforestation of 40 acres which were cut (spruce bud worm) and also on restoring 2 acres of prairie through the Native Plants Project. New employee (expenses shared with MDA) is working out well to help with Farm Bill Program backlog. Holly Wendrick of the Groundwater Stewardship Program is working with farmers on pest management and nutrient management plans. She is excited that the first certified farm is located in Menominee County. Benny Herioux reported that the Conservation District Board is touring the pelletizing plant in Vulcan. Howard Haulotte reported that GIS mapping was done at the Gladstone Marsh site, the parking lot gravelling was completed and they will begin trail work in the spring. Dave Andersen reminded him that the UP Sustainable Forest and Wildlife Fund might be a possible source of funds for this project.

Dickinson Co – Bill Rice reported on the CD interest in switch grass for biofuel, and the informational meeting at the Dickinson Co. MSU Ext. office on March 6<sup>th</sup>. They are working with the pelletizing plant in Vulcan. There is a lot of interest in this in Dickinson County.

Marquette Co – Rich Reader reported on and distributed flyers for three workshops the CD is sponsoring: Conservation Cost Sharing Opportunities on 2/22, Apple Tree Workshop on 3/31 and a Tree Selection Workshop on 3/13. Their tree sale is also going on at this time. They are working in conjunction with the Baraga CD on a new project (submitted to the Western Council) called Huron River Watershed Planning Grant. 75% of the watershed is in Baraga Co, 25% in Marquette Co. Other partners involved are KBIC, 3 townships in Baraga and 2 townships in Marquette County and a local watershed council. The Marquette CD will be the lead partner in this project. He also reported that EAB traps were set with no detections.

Menominee Co – Judy Pomeroy reported that their tree sale was also in progress.

Schoolcraft Co – Patti Segerstrom reported that Richard VandeBusse from Ag Solutions is being featured at their meeting on 3/17. They are in the process of renewing their county millage to support their Conservation District Forester and their tree sale is also in progress.

MSU Extension – Dave Andersen reported that MSU Extension has also been affected by an Executive Order for immediate cuts. He suggests people educate themselves by checking out the budget details at [www.michigan.gov/budget](http://www.michigan.gov/budget) and contact their legislators with concerns. He has already expressed his concerns to his constituents – “The Friends of Extension in Schoolcraft County”. The 2008 budget proposes a 10% cut to MSU Extension (\$500,000 and approx. 40 positions in the region). Extension is in the process of a second round of Citizen Planner workshops which will take place in St. Ignace beginning on March 12, and running for 9 weeks. The course is also available (for a fee) on the web. It provides great information for land use planners and allows them to be pro-active rather than re-active.

DNR – Ernie Houghton reported that the DNR also has “budget woes”. He offered to visit Conservation Districts and talk about QFP, preferably in March after the application forms are available. They still have money available for Conservation Programs, but the projects must be completed and paid for by the end of September.

USFS – Don Howlett reported that they are operating under a Continuing Resolution for 2007 which is making for impacts on the local level including travel restrictions. He notified members of two grant opportunities. The National Forest Foundation, a non-profit organization which does fund-raising for the FS has a “matching awards program”. Work must be done on NF lands or immediately adjacent lands which benefits the Forest. Check their website for details at [www.natlforests.org](http://www.natlforests.org). The next round of proposals are due July 27, 2007 and the match must be a cash match. The second grant opportunity is a USFS Program involving Conservation Education proposals which work to bring kids to the Forests and public land. These grant dollars are extremely competitive. Don mentioned that the FS has a new Chief – Gayle Kimball. Also, the Michigan Society of American Foresters will be hosting a conference on Woody Biomass Opportunities in Escanaba (Bay College?) on May 8-10, 2007. Utilizing biomass is an issue which is gaining interest in the FS.

Coordinator’s Report-Marilyn distributed a written report highlighting several projects and also gave a budget update. The President’s FY2008 budget proposes eliminating 325 of the 375 Coordinator positions and requiring the remaining 50 coordinators to serve all councils in each state.

**NEW PROJECTS: The Badger Creek Trail Project**, submitted at the Central Meeting on November 8 and not approved at that time, was re-submitted. Sarah Janda gave an update on the property ownership issues which had been of concern at the time it was originally submitted. The Recreation Committee for Marquette Twp. has held two public meetings with area residents for informational purposes. The trail system is accessible at the end of a dead-end road. They would be requesting assistance from Marilyn to help them pursue funding to acquire private lands and for some coordination. The project was approved (Sandstrom/Reader). **The Central UP Volunteer Stream Monitoring Grant Project** involves two years of stream monitoring in Marquette and Alger Counties during 2008. A grant has been submitted and if funded there is money allocated to pay the UP RC&D Council to administer the grant. This project was approved (Reader/Andersen). **The Central UP Scrap Tire Cleanup Project** is a 6 county project which arose out of the Central UP Groundwater Stewardship Program because the surveys they administer indicated that many residents have scrap tires on their property that need to be properly disposed of. Members felt this project would provide great publicity for the Districts and also help keep the tires from being disposed of on public lands. This project was approved (Sandstrom/Holloway). **The Woodland Park Electrical and Water Upgrade Project** was discussed. Members present suggested that this would be an ideal candidate for funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Marilyn will pass on information to the Burt Twp. officials who sponsored this project and let them know they must have a recreation plan on file and the deadline for the grant is April 1. This project did not get approved as an RC&D measure.

**Other:** A motion was approved (Andersen/Holloway) that a letter be sent to our legislators from the Central UP RC&D Council indicating their desire for the restoration of funding for the RC&D program budget for FY2008.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 1, 1pm at the Gladstone City Hall.**

**MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL**  
**Gladstone City Hall - Tuesday, May 1, 2007**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Tom Tauzer-NRCS Delta Co; Benny Herioux-Delta CD; Don Spodeck-Delta County; Holly Wendrick-Groundwater Stewardship Program; Don Sandstrom-Alger Co Bd of Comm; Don Howlett-Hiawatha NF; Warren Schauer-MSU Extension; Dennis Maufort-USDA Rural Development; Mike LaPointe-NRCS; Marilyn Shy, Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

**AGENDA:** The agenda was approved (Sandstrom/Herioux) with no changes.

**MINUTES:** Minutes from the meeting of February 13, 2007 were approved (Herioux/Sandstrom).

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Jude Holloway prepared the treasurer's report which indicated a balance of \$591.58 with no activity since the last meeting. The report was approved (Sandstrom/Herioux).

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**Legislative Updates:** Darcy reported that the UP RC&D Council sent letters to Rep. Stupak, and Senators Levin and Stabenow urging them to support full funding for the RC&D program (flat funding). The president's budget had recommended cutting the funding from \$56 million to \$14 million and eliminating all but one Coordinator in each state.

**Re-establishment of Forest Resources Committee:** The first meeting of the newly re-established Forest Resources Committee will take place at the UP RC&D office on May 15, 2007. Meeting notices have been sent to all former Forestry Committee Members and several others who have expressed an interest in attending. The Mission Statement which was approved at the last UP Council meeting was distributed. This first meeting will help establish priorities for the new committee which will work closely with the UP Council.

**Area Plan Survey:** The UP RC&D Council is in the process of formulating a new 5-year Area Plan which will become effective in 2008. As part of the process they are seeking input from all partners and have developed a survey which was distributed to members present for completion.

**REPORTS**

**Alger County:** Don Sandstrom reported that the Kolbus Racetrack site is still experiencing erosion problems and the CD continues to seek solutions to the problem.

**Delta County:** Tom Tauzer reported on progress on the Ford River project which has been expanded from the original plan. They were able to settle on an engineering plan that is feasible. There are about 10 partners and the Hannahville Tribe has really stepped up to help the project go forward. They are obtaining the black locust trees from Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and the project should be underway by July 1. The entire project cost is now approximately \$650,000. He also reported on the Native Plants Project – another 1.5 acres were cleared of Scotch Pine at the Rapid River School Forest and they just replanted 40 acres that had been affected by spruce bud worm. They are planning a prescribed burn next fall. The CD is doing some GIS work at the Gladstone City Marsh site. The city is applying for grants and some funding from Mendards which was a possibility is probably not going to come through. Benny Herioux reported that the CD is working with Delta County to do recreation plans for all park units and they may assume some responsibility for some of the parks. Funding for the Conservation District is a critical issue right now in light of the state of Michigan's financial problems.

**MSU Extension:** Warren Shauer reported the the “Ag for Tomorrow” conference was just completed. They have also been hosting some Wind Energy workshops. April 20<sup>th</sup> was the deadline for applying for the wind anemometer loan program. There is a \$250 fee for relocation, but the data collected is available on the MSU website and will provide information as to the feasibility of wind power for a particular area.

**U.S. Forest Service:** Don Howlett reported that they will be dealing with budget shortfalls for the remainder of the fiscal year: The SAF conference on woody biomass is coming up May 8 and 9 in Escanaba and he distributed brochures on the conference.

**Rural Development:** Dennis Maufort reported that fifteen community/non-profit projects had been funded with \$450,000 in loans and \$460,000 in grants (fire and police services, etc.). Water and sewer projects were funded with \$141,000 in loans and \$997,000 in grants. He is working with 3 hospitals looking at expansion. In regards to next year’s funding – the Bush administration has recommended assistance have more emphasis on loans – they are not proposing any grant funds.

**Area Conservatoinist:** Mike LaPointe reported that the federal government is looking for employees willing to take temporary assignments in Iraq, New Orleans and some places on the East Coast. NRCS in Michigan hit the targeted maximum funding for the EQIP program (\$450,000). Gary Lee has been appointed as the new State Conservationist (this is the third State Con. In 3 years). NRCS is still operating under a continuing resolution for FY2007. The new Farm Bill is looking favorable for conservation.

**UP RC&D Coordinator:** Marilyn reported that there are approximately 20 active projects in the UP and she highlighted a few and also distributed a written report highlighting several others. The project Central UP Volunteer Stream Monitoring received a MiCorps grant for about \$14,000. This is a two year project to be conducted on the Dead River in Marquette County and the Anna River in Alger County. The UP RC&D Council will receive a small amount of money to administer the grant. She updated those present on the project dealing with the changes in large corporate landownership in the UP and how that might impact recreation, wildlife and the forest products industry. The dates for the three community forums have been set as June 19 in Newberry, June 20 in Marquette and June 21 in Houghton. Invitation mailing lists are being developed by the three Conservation Districts for mailing in mid-May. She also reported that the Tahquamenon Civic Center project is moving forward and she will be attending a meeting tomorrow regarding the establishment of a recreational authority.

**Groundwater Stewardship Program:** Holly Wendrick reported on the Central UP Scrap Tire Collection Project. The focus will be on collecting tires from agricultural sites. The Conservation Districts will be surveying their residents as a first step to determine how many tires are out there and where they are located. The DEQ has grant funds available to fund the disposal of the tires, but no money for collection and administration of the program. They hope to use this information to apply for a grant this fall with the intention of collecting the tires next summer. The DEQ has very specific criteria for this type of tire collection.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, August 7 at 1 pm at the Gladstone City Hall. Members were interested in visiting the Ford River Project site if feasible.**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

**MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL**  
**Ford River Township Hall - Tuesday, August 7, 2007**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Tom Tauzer-NRCS Delta Co; Becky Otto-NRCS Mqt & Alger Co; Don Sandstrom-Alger Co Bd of Comm; Ernie Hoholik-Schoolcraft Co Bd of Comm; Floyd Berger-Menominee Co Bd of Comm; Sarah Janda-Marquette CD; Teri Grout & Danita Rask-Alger CD; Judy Pomeroy-Menominee CD; Dave Andersen-MSU Ext Schoolcraft Co; Wendy Sexton-USDA Rural Development; Mike LaPointe-NRCS; Marilyn Shy, Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

**AGENDA:** The agenda was approved (Sandstrom/Andersen) with no changes.

**MINUTES:** Minutes from the meeting of May 1, 2007 were approved (Sandstrom/Andersen).

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Jude Holloway has resigned as treasurer so no treasurer's report was available.

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**Election of Treasurer:** Dave Andersen was nominated for the position of Secretary/Treasurer (Berger/Pomeroy) and unanimously elected for the position.

**County Dues Update:** Darcy reported that all but 3 counties (Delta, Dickinson and Gogebic) have paid their dues for the 2007 fiscal year.

**Legislative Updates:** Darcy reported that the latest information she has received was on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and the RC&D program received \$52,370,000 from the House Appropriations Committee and \$53,150,000 from the Senate Appropriations Committee. This is an increase from the President's budget proposal of \$14.6 million. The next step in the process is for these bills to be considered for a floor vote in both the House and Senate.

**Update on Forest Resources Committee:** The committee has met twice and has developed a project entitled "B.U.R.N. U.P. (Biomass Utilization & Restoration Network in the Upper Peninsula) which is being sponsored by the Marquette Conservation District and will be brought to the UP Council Meeting in September for approval. A copy of the application was passed out. This is a UP-wide project which deals with the need to develop a network that will facilitate the exchange of information regarding the availability, location and cost of small woody biomass and explore the feasibility of utilization of this resource by schools or other institutions. The North Dickinson schools have utilized a woodchip heating system since 1991 and there are also models in the western US in "Fuels for Schools" programs. The UP RC&D Council has applied for grant funding for this project from the USFS Forest Restoration Partnership Grant Program and should find out shortly if we were awarded funding. This grant program appeared to be a good fit for this project as it required working partnerships among State Foresters, Conservation Districts, RC&D Councils and local governments.

**Area Plan Update:** The UP RC&D Council is in the process of formulating a new 5-year Area Plan which will become effective in 2008. Marilyn updated those present on the summary of results of the 60 surveys received so far and asked for input on specific projects that would help those present achieve their vision of what might be accomplished over the next five years. Some possible project ideas are:

## Community Development

Encourage participation in Citizen Planner Program – This MSU Ext. certificate program provides training on planning/zoning and could benefit from interagency support – RC&D could encourage participation in this program

Alternative Fuels Projects – switchgrass and woody biomass have good potential in the UP, although we are early in the process these alternative fuel sources could have far-ranging benefits for the entire UP (possibly set up task force to address biofuels)

Promote Local agriculture/food (saves energy/fuel, good for economy, healthy food)

Protect/Improve Fish and Wildlife – new way of thinking on watershed basis

## REPORTS

**Alger County:** Danita Rask introduced Terry Grout as their new appointee to RC&D. The Kolbus Racetrack project now has a new engineer and they hope to have a site plan within a month or so. She reported that they will have a \$24,000 funding shortfall in this year's budget and that is about the entire amount they have in savings.

**Delta Conservation District:** Tom Tauzer reported that the District is still assisting the city of Gladstone with the Marsh project which is steadily progressing. The boy scouts recently put up signs stating acceptable use and within one day the signs were vandalized. They are also looking at working cooperatively with the Marquette and Dickinson Districts in the Escanaba River Watershed. They have been able to use EQIP funding to get lots of things done (including the Ford River Project which we will see today on our tour).

**MSU Extension:** Dave Andersen let people know about a Form-based coding workshop which is taking place at Bay College on September 26, Room 952 (there is a cost \$149 for-profit, \$129 non-profit and \$99 if 4 or more from one entity). Form based coding is a new method of zoning which focuses on appearance and maintaining the integrity of the current status rather than land use.

**Marquette Conservation District:** Sarah Janda reported that she had just finished a stream crossing/grade stabilization project on private land (part of her Dead River Project) which included \$8,000 investment and \$17,000 in local match. This was her first experience at covering all aspects of a project like that. She mentioned that the County Fair would be underway later this week and the CD planned their First Annual Conservation Tour which involved renting a bus to visit several sites. They are targeting local, state and federal govt. reps and road commissioners. At this point the number registered is not very high. Their Michigan Groundwater Stewardship intern left for graduate school and they are looking into replacing her possibly this fall.

**Menominee County/CD:** Floyd Berger, the newly appointed Men. Co. Commissioner said that he is just getting acquainted with RC&D (this is his first meeting). He reported that a Menominee Co. dairy farmer, Rob Getzloff, was the first in the UP to be verified in the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) with assistance from Holly Wendrick, Central UP Groundwater Stewardship Program technician. The farm is verified in all three systems – livestock, farmstead and cropping. The MAEAP verification indicates to the public that they are using environmentally sound practices in their operations.

**Schoolcraft County:** Ernie Hoholik reported that today is election day in the county and there is a millage request for conservation on the ballot. Dave Andersen gave an update on the South Town Creek project (which they have found out really is not South Town Creek – it is un-named). They are trying to establish better access to the property which the county owns on Lake Michigan at the site of a popular

smelting creek . Marilyn, Dave and Lindsley Frenette met with MDOT which is looking at the feasibility of developing a 100' wide strip which is 200' deep with trails to provide public access to the beach. An adjacent landowner has expressed willingness to provide an easement through his property. The county is also working on an Economic Development Plan with the help of a small grant, and will be holding focus group meetings in each township as well as Manistique for community input. They are planning to involve youth in the planning process. They are also in the process of writing a recreational plan for the County – possibly developing a multi-jurisdictional recreation authority. Having a county-wide recreation plan on file allows any jurisdiction to file for grants.

**Rural Development:** Wendy Sexton distributed a brochure on a youth camp called “Protectors of the Earth Camp” which recently took place. Several USDA agencies provide support for the camp which is a one week natural resource based experience (soils, botany, water quality, forestry) to help expose minority students to careers in natural resources in hopes they will pursue higher education in those fields. The camp is funded strictly with donations as the camp is free to the students. Actual cost per camper is in the range of \$1,200-1,500 and 17 students attended this year. It was held at Bay Mills and some previous campers are now involved in internships with plans to attend MSU in the future. The campers get ethnic meals and have college and career fairs to expose them to various careers.

**Michigan DNR:** Ernie Houghton sent Marilyn a message indicating that he would not be able to attend our meetings or other meetings of this type until further notice due to budget cuts and his job responsibilities changing temporarily with these cuts. Dave Andersen expressed concern that private landowners no longer have assistance from the DNR except in the CFR & QFP programs. He said that Conservation District foresters do not write forest plans, but they can refer citizens to private consultants who can write the plans. He mentioned that in the past corporate foresters gave assistance to private landowners also with the hope that they might secure a sale on the private property, but that doesn't exist much anymore either.

**Area Conservationist:** Mike LaPointe reported that conservation programs seemed to fair quite well in the new Farm Bill (especially EQIP). Environmental groups are looking at the Farm Bill programs as a way to fund more of their conservation projects. The new State Conservationist, Gary Lee, was in the UP recently and visited every field office, traveling over 1,000 miles with Mike. He is proposing that more of the state technical committee meetings be held outside of Lansing in the regions where people are being affected and would be able to attend and give input.

**UP RC&D Coordinator:** Marilyn passed around before/after pictures of the sites being restored in the Native Plants Project. She also distributed a copy of the 2007 Annual Plan of Work for the Council with updates/progress and accomplishments noted for the various projects.

**New Projects: None**

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 30 at 1 pm at the Gladstone City Hall.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 pm.**

**A tour of the Ford River Project Site followed the meeting. Members were very impressed with this project and interested in possibly returning to the site following the next meeting in October when the project is scheduled to be completed.**

**MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL**  
**Gladstone City Hall - Tuesday, October 30, 2007**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Roger Quist-NRCS Schoolcraft; Don Sandstrom-Alger Co Bd of Comm; Ernie Hoholik-Schoolcraft Co Bd of Comm; Floyd Berger-Menominee Co Bd of Comm; Sarah Janda-Marquette CD; Danita Rask-Alger CD; Dave Andersen-MSU Ext Schoolcraft Co; Dennis Maufort-USDA Rural Development; Brant Kucera-City of Gladstone; Benny Herioux-Delta CD; Jim Pawlowicz-MDA/ESD; Carol Kurtz & Chuck Harris-Dickinson CD; Marilyn Shy, Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

**AGENDA:** The agenda was approved (Andersen/Sandstrom) with no changes.

**MINUTES:** Minutes from the meeting of August 7, 2007 were approved (Sandstrom/Herioux) with a change under the Michigan DNR report. It was pointed out that CD foresters are still writing forest plans.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Dave Andersen is in the process of moving the checking account to mBank where the other UP RC&D Council accounts have been and reported that the balance in the checking account is \$591.58.

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**County Dues Set for 2008:** Darcy reported that all but 1 county (Delta) have paid their dues for the 2007 fiscal year. The UP Council voted to leave the 2008 county dues amount at \$300, noting that the dues have not increased for several years.

**Update on Forest Resources Committee:** Dave Andersen reported that he resigned as the chairman of the Forest Resources Committee at the last meeting which was held in Escanaba on October 4, 2007 and that no one was interested in taking on that responsibility – so at this point the committee is “chairless”. The committee developed a project entitled “B.U.R.N. U.P. (Biomass Utilization & Restoration Network in the Upper Peninsula) which is being sponsored by the Marquette Conservation District and has been approved by the UP Council. The project has been funded in the amount of \$99,450 through a Forest Stewardship Grant. This is a UP-wide project and Chris Burnett (former forester with the Mqt and Alger CD's) is the project leader under contract with the UP RC&D Council. A steering committee meeting for this project was also held on Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> and several forest resource committee members were in attendance and will be serving on other committees for the BURN UP project.

**Area Plan Update:** The UP RC&D Council is in the process of formulating a new 5-year Area Plan which will become effective in 2008. Marilyn is working with the UP Council to incorporate input from the three regional councils and other partners into the draft Area Plan. The UP Council worked on modifying their vision and mission statements at their last meeting in September. The final version of these statements will be included in the new Area Plan.

**REPORTS**

**Alger County:** Danita Rask reported that the Alger CD has awarded a contract for the Kolbus Racetrack project and work will be done in the spring. It now appears that each CD will be funded for the 2008 FY at \$11,600. They have a couple of small projects outside their current grant area that they are seeking funding to complete and they have brought a project application to this meeting requesting assistance for those projects (see New Projects). The Alger CD Annual Meeting is Friday, November 2 at 6 pm and Fred Rhydholm is the featured speaker.

**Delta Conservation District:** Benny Herioux reported that the Ford River project is moving along and should be completed before Thanksgiving. The Delta and Dickinson CD's have hired a forester to serve

both conservation districts. One of the Delta CD directors, Punch Johnson, passed away and they have a new director from the city of Gladstone.

**Dickinson County/CD:** Carol Kurtz displayed samples of the new signs they have developed for the Norway Myr, a wetland/educational project. The area has walking trails and they are doing wildlife surveys. Ann Hruska has been leading watershed tours. Their CD sponsors a photo contest and the winning photos are displayed in a calendar they produce and sell (\$10) for a fundraising project. The calendar is paid for by ads and they have printed 1000. Three photos from Dickinson have also won in the National Assoc. of CD's photo contest. This provides great exposure for their conservation district. It was suggested that the Norway Myr would make a good tour for a spring or summer meeting.

**Marquette Conservation District:** Sarah Janda reported that the Annual Meeting was last week and that Jack Deo presented a program of historical photos. She also reported that Chris Burnett will no longer be serving as the Mgt/Alger Forester (he will be contracted to work for the UP RC&D Council on the BURN UP project) and that they are hopeful that the funding for the position which is now uncertain will be reinstated by the state..

**Menominee County/CD:** Floyd Berger reported that about 1400 people attended "Breakfast on the Farm" at the Robert Hanchek farm. Jilberts Dairy brought a truck with free milk and other displays and there was a tractor display.

**Schoolcraft County:** Ernie Hoholik reported that the county approved a millage renewal for financial support for the Conservation District. Roger Quist reported that the NRCS funding for the EQIP program is now available and they hope to have all the money allocated by December (although sign-up is year round). The funding for WRP and WHIP is still uncertain. The Schoolcraft CD is looking at improving an outdoor interpretive trail on 40 acres owned by Manistique Twp which has been damaged by vandalism over the years. The county is applying for a Coastal Zone Mgmt Planning grant to help them with updating of their conservation plan with assistance from the Michigan Natural Features Inventory. Schoolcraft Co. has the most diverse flora and fauna of any county in Michigan. If they receive the grant they will include an educational component in the planning process for landowners.

**MSU Extension:** Dave Andersen reported that the Form-based coding workshop was completed in Escanaba at the end of September and the last class for the Citizen Planner class that has been taking place in Iron County is tomorrow night. They were hoping to get participants from other counties to take the class and that did not happen. Bill Cook is working on an oak wilt project in Menominee County funded by the state DNR.

**Rural Development:** Dennis Maufort gave some figures for financial impact of the rural development programs in the state last year. In the area of Community Facilities (fire/police/women's centers, etc) 48.1 million came back to the state. In the area of water and waste loans/grants 30 communities received 51.9 million and over \$100 million was brought back to the state.

**City of Gladstone:** The City has installed another gate at the Nature Preserve and they are working with the DNR on ORV compliance (no permanent signs, using paper signs to "attract" vandals). They also have a sidewalk project (1700') and have received a grant for promoting active communities. They are currently exploring the creation of an arboretum/wildflower garden in the same area. They are working with MDOT to do some city to city (Gladstone to Escanaba) screening of the highway corridor and seeking grant funding.

**MDA:** Jim Pawlowicz reported that the state budget work is now done and that it does include some money for conservation districts (both operating funds and forestry funds). EAB has been found in Mackinac County by a CEMCD employee contracted with MDA to remove last year's trap trees and set

new trap trees. There is a quarantine on moving any wood within a 50 square mile area and a person is stationed at the Mackinac Bridge 24/7 to check firewood and lumber crossing the bridge. The new Director of the MDA is Don Koivisto and some of his priorities are promoting economic viability of agriculture, the MI Agricultural Environmental Assurance program and disease (bovine TB).

**Other:** Ernie Hoholik reported that he, Dave Andersen, Bob Larson, Darcy and Marilyn recently attended the Michigan Association of RC&D Councils meeting in St. Ignace. The focus of the meeting was strategic planning for a group that has not been very functional in recent years. Goals and objectives were developed for the organization and they are developing a new plan of work. One thing they have been fairly successful at is contacting legislators in Washington DC to secure funding for the RC&D program nationwide...

**UP RC&D Coordinator: See Project Updates.**

**New Projects: Munising Bay Watershed Information and Education Project**

The Alger CD is the project applicant and they are interested in applying for a NWF grant to help them complete some projects in conjunction with their current watershed project that are not included in their current grant area (buffer strip on stream in downtown Munising). They are requesting grant writing assistance from Marilyn. The project was approved (Sandstrom/Rask).

**Project Updates:** Marilyn reported on BURN UP – Chris Burnett met with the people at the Calumet school district who currently utilize wood chips to heat their facility. He will be making a presentation to all the UP superintendents in early December and all districts will be asked to complete a survey of their current heating system and interest in converting their system to wood chip utilization. She provided information about a statewide study of boilers which was done by the SE Michigan RC&D Council. Most facilities that have converted their boilers to wood chip utilization are using boilers manufactured by Messersmith Manufacturing. The project will also include tours to facilities that use wood chips and harvesting demonstrations. Some of the folks who are serving on the steering committee for this project will also be working with the DNR to develop guidance for harvesting woody biomass in the state. A website will be developed to provide information to the public.

Central UP Scrap Tire Collection – Holly Wendrick is working on a grant application for this project. It requires a minimum of 500 tires/site and she is focusing on two farms that have 2000-3000 tires at each site.

Central UP Volunteer Stream Monitoring – Sarah Janda reported that a grant was received from the Michigan Clean Water Corp to provide seed money to organize volunteers to collect data (macroinvertebrates, stream habitat assessments) in under-represented streams. This is being done in the Dead River watershed in Marquette Co. and the Anna River in Alger Co. Local stakeholders/volunteers are being trained in sample techniques and data collection/reporting. She has 6 volunteers and 5 sample locations in Marquette Co. Sampling will be done in fall after leaf drop and in spring before leaf out. She attended the Annual MiCorp Conference which was great for idea sharing and the UP RC&D Council was awarded a certificate for being a new grant recipient. The hope is that the volunteer monitoring will continue after the 2 year funding cycle is complete. Data is available online for all sites being monitored by volunteers in the state.

Ford River Project – Marilyn reported that it is anticipated the project will be completed by Thanksgiving.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 22, 2008 at 1 pm at the Gladstone City Hall.**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm. (Sandstrom/Berger)