

**MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL**  
**Gladstone City Hall - Tuesday, January 22, 2008**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** 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; Liz Coyne-Alger CD; Dave Andersen-MSU Ext Schoolcraft Co; Howard Haulotte-City of Gladstone; Benny Herioux-Delta CD; Tom Tauzer-NRCS, Delta Co; Don Howlett-USFS; Marilyn Shy, Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

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

**MINUTES:** Minutes from the meeting of October 30, 2007 were approved (Andersen/Sandstrom) with no changes.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Treasurer Dave Andersen reported the balance in the checking account is \$591.58. There has been no activity since his last report. The report was approved (Sandstrom/Hoholik).

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**Central Council Dues for 2008:** Darcy reported that the Central Council made a decision last year not to request \$25 dues from each Conservation District for 2007 due to the uncertainty of funding for the districts. A motion passed (Berger/Herioux) to mail invoices to all conservation districts in the Central Region of the UP RC&D Council and request \$25 dues for 2008. This money will go into the Central treasury and may be used to support projects or social gatherings for the Central Region.

**Update of Five Year Area Plan:** Marilyn reported that the UP RC&D Council five year Area Plan (2008-2012) has been approved by NRCS and signed by the State Conservationist. The plan incorporates input from all conservation districts, the three regional RC&D councils in the UP, and several other partners and members of the public. She noted that this document will guide the UP RC&D Council in their work during the next 5 years, however, new ideas and specific projects that are not in this plan, but are compatible with the goals stated in the Area Plan can also be supported by the Council. Darcy reported that Marilyn deserves much credit for her work in assisting the Council in the development of this new Area Plan. Alan Herceg who oversees the RC&D Programs in Michigan stated that this is one of the best Area Plans he has seen and requested permission to use it as a model for other RC&D areas in the state. Congratulations Marilyn!

**REPORTS**

**Alger County:** Liz Coyne reported that she is waiting to hear if the Alger CD has been awarded funding for the proposal that she wrote (with assistance from Marilyn) for some watershed projects. These projects are part of the Munising Bay Watershed Information and Education Project that was approved at our last meeting.

**Delta Conservation District:** Benny Herioux and Tom Tauzer reported that the Ford River project is almost completed. The framework, stabilization and seeding is complete with shrub planting to take place in the spring. Tom reported that Hannahville did a great job as contractor on the project. They are tentatively planning a closing ceremony that would include a repatriation by the tribe to take place in the spring. A presentation on the Ford River Project will be made at the Delta Conservation District Annual Meeting at the end of March. The CD is working to get their tree catalog out. Howard Haulotte has been appointed to fill a vacant board position, and the forestry position is still uncertain due to an uncertainty in state funding at this time. They have 8 funded EQIP contracts.

**Marquette Conservation District:** Sarah Janda reported that some of the Marquette CD board members met with Delta CD members and UP Whitetails to discuss the need for a forester position and how the position might be shared. The CD has a new Americorp staff member, Linnea McFadden. She is coordinating groundwater work in Delta, Menominee, Alger and Marquette Counties.

**Menominee County/CD:** Floyd Berger reported that there was a drawdown of water at Shakey Lakes (Menominee River) which exposed a lot of vegetation which was subsequently cleaned up. He reported that there is some mining exploration going on in the county.

**Schoolcraft County:** Ernie Hoholik reported that the Annual Meeting is coming up soon in Manistique and Deb LeBlanc is the featured speaker. Ernie has been appointed by the Schoolcraft Co. Commission to represent them on the Central UP RC&D Council for another year.

**MSU Extension:** Dave Andersen reported that Bill Cook (MSU Extension forester) distributed a list of forestry workshops that he is willing to facilitate. Contact Dave or Bill if you are interested and did not get the list. Dave is involved with the BURN UP project and MSU Extension will quite likely do some educational presentations in conjunction with BURN UP.

**City of Gladstone:** Howard Haulotte reported on progress at the Gladstone Marsh Area. They were having problems with 4-wheelers and dirt bikes last fall and the DNR started patrolling to help them out. They also installed another gate at the other end of the road, secured some cedar posts from the Ford River Project and will use the posts to install some fencing in the spring on either side of the gate. They have some funds available and are seeking more funds.

**UP RC&D Coordinator:** Marilyn reported that the 2008 Annual Plan of Work has not been finalized but will be done soon. The UP Council will be meeting 6 times during 2008 rather than 4 times/year as in past years. They will meet 3 times at the Council office in Marquette and 3 times by teleconference. She reported that she has met with two forestry groups recently – WUPPEM and EUPPEM (Western and Eastern UP Partners in Ecosystem Management). These groups have been in existence for quite some time and both were seeking someone to facilitate their meetings. The UP RC&D Council Forestry Committee at their last meeting requested that Marilyn meet with these existing groups to see if they would have interest in her help with facilitation in exchange for their input on forestry needs/issues/potential projects for the RC&D. They are both interested in this relationship and she will continue to act as a liaison between the two groups. Marilyn is currently working on two proposals – one dealing with invasive species control and management. This project evolved out of a meeting of the 5 UP tribes and NRCS where common resource concerns were explored. She feels the Conservation Innovation Grant that they are applying for is a good fit for their joint project. Dave Andersen mentioned that the tribes are also looking at land acquisition for forestry and this might result in forestry departments for each tribe. Marilyn is also working with Chris Burnett, director of the BURN UP Project, and the BURN UP Steering committee to submit a grant application for additional funding for that project.

#### **New Projects: Marquette Township Groundwater/Surface Water Initiative Project**

The Marquette CD is the project applicant and they are interested in applying for grants to help educate the public about the connection between groundwater and surface water, implement low impact development strategies that recharge groundwater and control stormwater at the source, and monitor the social attitudes and cost savings of low impact development projects. The project was approved (Sandstrom/Herioux).

**Project Updates:** Marilyn reported on BURN UP – Chris Burnett is working with the website host to develop a website and has made a presentation to many UP School Superintendents on BURN UP and distributed surveys and fact sheets to all UP schools. Several members of the steering committee are

working with the State Forester to develop sustainable biomass harvesting protocols for the state of Michigan.

Central UP Volunteer Stream Monitoring Project – Sarah Janda and Liz Coyne are working together on this project and reported that their QAPP has been approved, they have held volunteer training sessions in both Marquette and Alger Counties, monitoring was conducted at 2 sites in the Dead River Watershed, and they attended the MiCorps Conference this fall which was very informative. They are still recruiting additional volunteers and working with interested groups in other counties (Baraga) and the next monitoring will take place in the spring.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 22, 2008 at 10 am at the Gladstone City Hall. Please note that the meeting time has been changed to 10 am.**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 pm.

**MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL**  
**Gladstone City Hall - Tuesday, April 22, 2008**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Chairman Ernie Hoholik and introductions were made.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Don Sandstrom-Alger Co Bd of Comm; Ernie Hoholik-Schoolcraft Co Bd of Comm; Floyd Berger-Menominee Co Bd of Comm; Gerald Corkin-Marquette Co Bd of Comm; Liz Coyne and Teri Grout-Alger CD; Howard Haulotte-City of Gladstone; Benny Herioux-Delta CD; Tom Tauzer-NRCS Delta Co; Don Howlett-USFS; Donna Silta-FSA Gladstone; Susan DeVoe-FSA Kingsford; Jack Hubbard-Burt Twp Supervisor; Don Spodek-Delta Co Planning Comm; Dave Higbee-NRCS Stephenson; Roger Quist-NRCS Manistique; Carol Kurtz and Chuck Harris-Dickinson CD; Marilyn Shy, Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES:** The agenda was approved (Sandstrom/Berger) with no additions and the minutes from the meeting of January 22, 2008 were approved (Spodek/Sandstrom) with no changes.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Treasurer Dave Andersen sent a written report indicating the balance in the checking account is \$641.58. The only activity since his last report was a deposit of \$50 in dues, \$25 each from Alger and Schoolcraft counties. The report was approved (Corkin/Sandstrom).

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**UP Council Dues for 2008:** Darcy reported that requests for \$300 dues were sent to all counties and that all Central counties have paid with the exception of Delta County. Marilyn reminded members that she is willing to attend county commission and conservation district meetings when requested. She will be attending the Mackinac County Commission and the Delta CD meetings in May.

**Annual Plan of Work:** The 2008 Annual Plan of Work was recently approved by the UP Council and was distributed. Marilyn had added comments/updates for various projects. New projects can be added to the Annual Plan as they are approved.

**Legislative Update:** Darcy reported that UP council has been in contact with the Upper Peninsula legislative aides for Senators Levin and Stabenow and Congressman Stupak, and that all three of these aides attended the last UP council meeting in early April. Since the President's budget request for FY2009 included no funding for the RC&D program, the UP Council members had sent letters requesting support for level funding (at a minimum) from all these legislators on our behalf. They have been very supportive and they informed us that they will do everything they can to restore funding.

**REPORTS**

**Alger County:** Liz Coyne reported that the Alger CD should hear by next week if they have been awarded funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for remediation of two more road crossings and additional outreach in the Munising Bay Watershed. They have received favorable comments so far. The project to remediate the racetrack erosion problems in Christmas should be completed this summer and the land is now for sale.

**Delta Conservation District:** Benny Herioux reported that the tree sale is now going on. They had about 150 people attend their annual meeting and Tom Tauzer gave a presentation on the completed Ford River project. The county board has put together a brownfield committee and obtained two grants to study brownfield sites. They would like to use some of the funding to clean up the mouth of the Escanaba River.

**Dickinson Conservation District:** Carol Kurtz reported that a portion of the Menominee River is being considered for a RWA initiative and they have been in contact with partners in Wisconsin regarding this. Some work was done on the river in the past and they are hoping it can be updated. They will be starting classroom tours of the Norway Myr soon. Approximately 237 species of birds have been associated with the Myr. They also received a \$23,000 energy grant from the EPA to conduct classroom energy audits and school energy audits.

**Marquette County:** Gerald Corkin reported that Marquette County is very supportive of the UP RC&D Council and would like to be able to do more to financially support RC&D. They are working to increase the tax base so they can provide more funding to groups like RC&D and valuations have increased by \$80 million.

**Menominee County/CD:** Floyd Berger reported that the county has been planting new maple trees (replacing old oaks) and they are working with Delta County on a joint health dept. code which will be similar to that which other UP counties have. Dave Higbee reported that the Delta CD received a \$10,000 grant for the disposal of scrap tires from one Menominee County farm that has approximately 3500 tires on site. He said the spreading of manure on the snow during the winter is a concern there. He is busy with EQIP contracts at this time.

**Schoolcraft County:** Roger Quist is also busy working on contracts. The conservation district will continue their Emerald Ash Borer work again this year. He reported that their tree sales are not as high as in previous years and the CD meetings are being held every other month.

**USFS:** Don Howlett reminded members of the presentation today at 4 pm at Bay College by Ray Miller of the MSU Tree Improvement Center regarding Bioeconomy Development for the Central UP. There is the possibility that Escanaba might be named as a Center of Excellence for Biofuel Economy Development.

**FSA:** Donna Silta reported that they have been working on disaster programs for quantity losses. They are eagerly awaiting the passage of the Farm Bill (the continuing resolution was extended one more week) so they can get on with their normal programs which are now somewhat on hold. They are also working on Livestock Compensation and Dairy Disaster (related to drought losses) programs. There is some talk of reducing subsidies for all farms making more than \$200,000 per year (now the lower threshold is \$250,000). This would affect many of the farms they work with.

**City of Gladstone:** Howard Haulotte reported on progress at the Gladstone Marsh Area. He met with Marilyn, Darcy and Tom Tauzer prior to this meeting to look at possible grant opportunities. They have some limited funds that could be used as match. They would like to do some work starting this spring on the first viewing platform and boardwalk. They are still having problems with 4-wheelers and dirt bikes entering the area illegally. They will be reinforcing the two gates with some adjacent fencing (cedar posts donated from Ford River Project).

**New Projects: Grand Marais Harbor Breakwall-** Burt Twp in Alger County submitted this project application requesting assistance with building a new breakwall. Jack Hubbard, Burt Twp Supervisor, described the situation in Grand Marais Harbor. The current breakwall has not had maintenance since 1943 and the water depth in the harbor that was 85 feet deep has dropped to 28-30 feet. The harbor is filling with sand at a rate of over 100,000 cubic yards per year. There is overwhelming support for the project from area citizens (they currently pay a millage toward project costs) and he presented letters of support for the project from Senators Levin and Stabenow, Congressman Stupak, State Sen. Mike Prusi, State Rep. Steve Lindberg, and the Alger Conservation District. They would like UP RC&D Council

assistance with grant research/writing and possibly engineering. Mr. Hubbard provided an educational DVD regarding the project that was very informative. The project was approved (Corkin/Sandstrom). **Project Updates:** Marilyn reported on BURN UP – three school tours are scheduled (North Dickinson tomorrow, CLK schools on 4/24 and Whitefish Twp school in early May. These schools already utilize woody biomass energy systems. Two harvest demonstrations will be taking place in early summer. RFP's were sent to engineering firms to do pre-feasibility studies at a minimum of three schools and the successful engineering firm will be chosen by mid-May. Additional funding has been applied for to take the project to the next phase and possibly provide some funds for one or more schools to actually implement a new woody biomass system. The website is now available and can be viewed at [www.upwoodybiomass.org](http://www.upwoodybiomass.org). Liz Coyne reported that volunteers working on the Central UP Volunteer Stream Monitoring Project will be doing some sampling on the Huron River in Baraga County over Memorial Day Weekend and on both the Anna and Dead Rivers the following weekend (May 30<sup>th</sup>). Contact the Alger or Marquette Conservation Districts if you are interested in helping.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 29, 2008 at 10 am at the Gladstone City Hall. Please note that the meeting time has been changed to 10 am.**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 am.

**MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL**  
**Gladstone City Hall - Tuesday, July 29, 2008**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am by Chairman Ernie Hoholik and introductions were made.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Don Sandstrom-Alger Co Bd of Comm; Ernie Hoholik-Schoolcraft Co Bd of Comm; Floyd Berger-Menominee Co Bd of Comm; Brant Kucera and Howard Haulotte-City of Gladstone; Benny Herioux-Delta CD; Tom Tauzer-NRCS Delta Co; Don Howlett-USFS; Roger Quist-NRCS Manistique; Ann Hruska and Chuck Harris-Dickinson CD; Dave Andersen-MSU Extension; Dave Schultz-Delta Co Bd.of Comm; Becky Otto-NRCS Marquette/Alger; Marilyn Shy, Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES:** The agenda was approved (Sandstrom/Berger) with no additions and the minutes from the meeting of April 22, 2008 were approved (Sandstrom/Andersen) with no changes.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Treasurer Dave Andersen presented the treasurer's report indicating the balance in the checking account is \$741.58. The only activity since his last report was a deposit of \$100 in dues, \$25 each from Menominee, Marquette, Dickinson and Delta county conservation districts. The report was approved (Sandstrom/Berger). Dave suggested that due to the accumulation of funds in the treasury and little spending activity, the Council should either suspend requesting dues from the CD's or spend some of the money. It was agreed that a tour and lunch would be provided for the next meeting in late October and Marilyn will work with Tom Tauzer and Howard Haulotte to come up with a plan for this.

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**Election of Officers:** Chairman Hoholik relinquished control of the meeting to Darcy Rutkowski, Executive Assistant for the UP RC&D Council for election of officers. Ernie Hoholik was nominated for Chairman (Sandstrom/Andersen) and elected to that position, Judy Pomeroy was nominated for Vice-chairman (Sandstrom/Berger) and elected to that position, and Dave Andersen was nominated for Secretary/Treasurer (Hoholik/Sandstrom) and elected to that position.

**Legislative Update:** Darcy reported that both the Senate Appropriations and the House Appropriations sub-committees have recommended a similar amount of funding for the RC&D program for FY2009 – about \$50.7 million dollars. The National Assoc. of RC&D Councils was hoping for about \$53 million, but this is much better than the President's budget which zeroed out funding for the RC&D program.

**REPORTS**

**Alger County:** Don Sandstrom reported that the Alger CD has a new Administrator, Teri Grout, and that Danita will be retiring although she is still working for a limited time during the transition. Don will only be attending one more meeting as he will not be seeking re-election to the Alger County Board of Commissioners.

**Delta Conservation District:** Benny Herioux reported that the CD is assuming the soil erosion permitting responsibilities for the county and they are in the process of a land inventory program. Tom Tauzer reported that NRCS has two completed WHIP contracts. One is with the City of Gladstone to remove the invasive species buckthorn from the Gladstone Marsh and the second is for 25 acres of tree planting on the Garden Peninsula. They are also getting ready for the state fair where two booths will be shared by the UP CD's, NRCS, Farm Service Agency and Rural Development. The Delta CD will have their own booth where they will be selling raffle tickets for a small truck. .

**Dickinson Conservation District:** Ann Hruska reported that they are finishing up two watershed projects (Fumee Creek and Hamilton Lake) and are probably going to request one more grant extension to complete the work. They received an EPA Environmental Education grant and will be visiting schools to educate students and holding workshops and creating an educational DVD to make residents aware of alternative energy uses in the area. A flyer was distributed for the next "Farm to Fuel" switchgrass meeting which will feature the President and CEO of Renewafuel. This company is interested in possibly contracting with growers and will utilize a diverse spectrum of raw materials for their energy production. They have a new plant being constructed at KI Sawyer. One grower in the area has planted a trial plot (6.7 acres) of switchgrass. Dr. Minn from the MSU Experiment Station in Chatham will also be leading a field day on August 13 to visit the trial plot.

**Marquette County:** Becky Otto reported that the CD is also preparing for a booth at the Marquette County Fair. They will be holding another fall native plant plug sale and they are looking for a forester in conjunction with the Alger CD. They have 2 new WHIP contracts in Alger County and 1 in Marquette County.

**Menominee County/CD:** Floyd Berger reported that there is a building between Daggett and Carney that is being used to store core drillings by a mining company doing survey work in the county.

**Schoolcraft County:** Ernie Hoholik reported that the Schoolcraft County Fair was this week. Manistique is completing a big art project and the Conservation District has not met for 2 months. Roger Quist reported that information on the "environmental lab" will also be at the fair. This is an 80 acre tract that Manistique offered for a nature trail which has since fallen into disarray, but now is getting some attention and rehabilitation.

**MSU Extension:** Dave Andersen reported that MTU & MSU received a \$500,000 alternative energy grant. MSUE will probably be doing the outreach component, but the budget is not in place (dependent on state budget). MSUE has proposed a statewide workshop to educate folks on all aspects of biofuels (Bill Cook would be involved) emphasizing the vertical integration from forests all the way to industry with no wasted products along the way. Dave also reminded folks that the UP Sustainable Forestry and Wildlife Fund accepts grant applications twice a year (next time is April). These grants can be a maximum of \$2000 and they like to see the grant applications have an educational focus and be tangible, visible projects. Conservation Districts and other non-profits are eligible to apply. For more information, contact Gary LaPlant at the UP Community Foundation. Dave also mentioned that in April 2009 the Land Policy Institute and the Land Use Group plan to charter a bus to attend the National Planning Association Meeting and will have room for additional riders that have an interest in land planning. They hope to visit innovative project sites on the way and will be inviting folks from local planning commissions to join them.

**USFS:** Don Howlett forwarded Marilyn an RFP from the US Endowment for Forestry and Communities which he feels is a good fit for continuing some of the sustainable biomass-related work we are currently involved in. The USFS will have a booth at the state fair also.

**City of Gladstone:** Howard Haulotte reported on progress at the Gladstone Marsh Area. He submitted a grant proposal to the Royal Bank of Canada to fund work at the site and should know in September if the proposal was funded. They have been working to extend fences by the gates and this is helping somewhat with controlling 4-wheelers and dirt bikes. The Gladstone City Commission approved the purchase of more land to expand the area.

**Coordinator's Report:** Marilyn met with both the Mackinac and Delta county commissions to give them an update on projects in their areas and across the UP and give them a better idea how the RC&D Council operates. There are three Rapid Watershed Assessments (RWA's) in progress and scheduled to be

completed by October 1, 2008 (Eastern UP RWA – Tahquamenon and Two Hearted Rivers, Otter River RWA -mostly in Houghton County, and the KBIC RWA – includes all streams flowing across or originating on the L'Anse reservations lands). These RWA's are being conducted nationwide and typically are completed in 9-12 months. They provide a snapshot of current conditions in the watersheds and conservation practices already installed and a summary of conservation needs.

#### **New Projects:**

**Menominee River RWA** – Ann Hruska from the Dickinson CD helped develop this proposal which involved agencies from both Michigan and Wisconsin (got the support of both State Conservationists). The last time that studies were done in this watershed was 1982 and there is a need for updating and additional work. The Menominee Watershed Initiative already exists which includes representatives from resource agencies, municipalities and private citizens from both states. The proposal was not funded at this time, but they plan to resubmit the proposal at a later date with some changes suggested by the funder and more letters of support from the Wisconsin entities.

**Farm Bill Program Marketing and Education-** Mike LaPointe requested that Becky Otto develop a project proposal for marketing of farm bill programs since the new farm bill contains additional funding for forestry and wildlife initiatives. The Marquette Conservation District submitted the proposal and is requesting assistance with generating ideas, planning and coordinating workshops.

**Red Fox Inn Erosion Project-**Marquette County submitted this proposal to help remediate erosion which is occurring on county land at Sawyer Airport and affecting an ATV/snowmobile trail and also a public roadway. The county already has secured the money for the engineering study but is seeking assistance with finding funding sources to remediate the site (they have money for match). Amy Berglund, Carl Levin's Upper Peninsula Aide, suggested that the county contact the RC&D Council regarding this project.

All projects were approved (Andersen/Sandstrom).

**Project Updates:** Marilyn reported on BURN UP – the current project director, Chris Burnett, will be leaving to focus more on his consulting business and a vacancy announcement has been distributed with a deadline of August 8<sup>th</sup>. Four prefeasibility engineering site visits have been completed by Integrated Designs and reports are being finalized for the school districts (Stanton Twp, St. Ignace, Manistique, Munising) and the steering committee decided to fund a fifth assessment at the Tahquamenon School District. Two harvest demonstrations have been scheduled for September, and members of the steering committee have been working with the Michigan DNR on sustainable biomass harvesting guidelines for the state.

Dave Andersen gave an update on the South Town Creek Project. He spoke with MDOT and was told there is not much chance for approval of the permit needed from MDOT.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 28, 2008 at 10 am. The location has not yet been determined, but a tour and lunch (provided by the Central RC&D Council) will be part of the meeting. The Hannahville Cultural Center was suggested as a possible site for the meeting.**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am.

**MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL**  
**Gladstone City Hall - Tuesday, October 28, 2008**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am by Chairman Ernie Hoholik and introductions were made.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ernie Hoholik-Schoolcraft Co Bd of Comm; Floyd Berger-Menominee Co Bd of Comm; Renee' Barron and Howard Haulotte-City of Gladstone; Benny Herioux-Delta CD; Tom Tauzer-NRCS Delta Co; Don Howlett-USFS; Roger Quist-NRCS Manistique; Carol Kurtz and Chuck Harris-Dickinson CD; Warren Schauer-MSU Extension; Mike LaPointe-NRCS Area Conservationist; Becky Otto-NRCS Marquette/Alger (Acting UP RC&D Coordinator); Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES:** The agenda was approved with no additions and the minutes from the meeting of July 29, 2008 were approved (Herioux/Berger) with no changes.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Treasurer Dave Andersen was unable to attend the meeting so Darcy Rutkowski reported that the balance in the checking account is \$741.58. There was no activity since the last meeting.

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**New Policy for Submitting Project Applications:** The UP RC&D Council approved a new policy for the submission of new project applications. All new project applications must be received at the Council office a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the regional meeting at which they are being considered for approval.

**County Dues:** Darcy reported that the UP Council made a decision at their meeting on October 9, 2008 to request \$300 in dues from each county for 2009. Letters were sent to all county clerks informing them of the dues amount for 2009 for their budgeting purposes. Invoices will be sent to all counties in January 2009. The dues have not increased since 2002. The UP Council has received dues from all counties in the UP for 2008 except for Delta County.

**REPORTS**

**Alger Conservation District:** Becky Otto reported that the district is wrapping up their Munising Bay Watershed Project. The Alger CD Annual Meeting is scheduled for November 7 in Chatham.

**Delta Conservation District:** Tom Tauzer reported that the conservation district formed a partnership with the county to do the soil erosion permitting. He is helping a group (village, county commission, road commission, MDOT, landowners) put together a project application for the Village of Garden. The Project will involve flood control and they will be seeking some engineering assistance.

**Dickinson Conservation District:** Carol Kurtz reported that they are still finishing up two watershed projects (Fumee Creek and Hamilton Lake) and have a grant extension to September 2009 to complete the work. Ann Hruska has been educating teachers and students about energy conservation through an EPA Energy Grant. They are conducting classroom audits and taking information home to their families. This project will continue through the end of the year.

**Marquette County:** Becky Otto reported that the conservation district annual meeting is scheduled for October 30<sup>th</sup> and that they just distributed their annual report.

**Menominee County/CD:** Floyd Berger reported that the Delta/Menominee Sanitary Code was passed and is similar to codes in other counties in the UP.

**Schoolcraft Conservation District:** Roger Quist reported that Bernie Huetter is wrapping up his EAB work in the county. The traps have been removed and no insects were found in them. Trap trees have yet to be taken down. The Conservation district is in need of new members.

**MSU Extension:** Warren Schauer reported that he participated in a bio-energy tour in Indiana and Ohio and there was a biomass demonstration tour in the UP in September. They visited plots of miscanthus, switch grass, willow and poplar and had a good turnout of people for the tour. The wind anemometer is now in Menominee County for the next year to measure the wind resource in that area. They already did a wind evaluation in Delta County and in Schoolcraft County. MSU Extension is sponsoring five informational meetings on the new Farm Bill and saw variable turnout. There is another meeting in Stephenson on Nov. 11 and one in Iron River on Nov. 24. There is a Biomass Crop Program in the new Farm Bill which should help landowners. The US government established 6 regional experimental plants for producing energy from biomass (the Mascoma plant in Kinross is not one of them). They will work on new technologies and on taking the existing technology and making it economically feasible. Right now more work needs to be done on the barriers to breaking down lignin to sugar, which is easy to convert to ethanol.

**USFS:** Don Howlett was asked how EAB is affecting forest service policies. He said cleaning equipment when moving it from one site to another helps to control the spread of invasives. They have been working to control buckthorn at Seney and Tom Tauzer is working with the City of Gladstone to remove buckthorn from the Gladstone Marsh. There is a potential to use EQIP and WHIP for control programs.

**City of Gladstone:** Howard Haulotte reported on progress at the Gladstone Marsh Area. The grant proposal he submitted was not funded. Marilyn sent him another possible grant opportunity and he is looking at that. He has some money for match. The buckthorn controls (cutting) that were mentioned earlier have begun at the Gladstone Marsh.

**Rural Development:** Dennis Maufort retired.

**Area Conservationist Report:** Mike LaPointe reported that the “rule-writing” has begun for the new Farm Bill. He feels that the new incentives in the bill are favorable for conservation. They will be taking comment from the public. It would be good for MACD to comment, but they also need regional input. The agency is operating under a continuing resolution until the funding for the new Farm Bill is authorized. There is currently a freeze on hiring but he was able to get approval for advertising the open engineering position in the UP which is critically needed. Chief Alan Lancaster will be visiting Michigan in mid-November and doing a leadership team review. Mike plans to highlight the BURN-UP Project with the Chief. He has asked Bill Cook who is on the BURN-UP Steering Committee to make a presentation on that project at the MACD meeting in December.

**Groundwater Stewardship Program:** Holly Wendrick sent a report about the completed RC&D project regarding Scrap Tire Removal. The project was completed on August 26, 2008 and 4,163 tires were removed from one site in Wilson. The grant total was \$11,284 and she worked with Wayne Stenberg of U.P. Environmental Services, who cleaned up and hauled tires downstate to CM Rubber Recycling in Coleman where the tires were recycled.

**Coordinator’s Report:** Darcy read a message she received from Marilyn regarding her temporary assignment in Washington, DC:

I am working in the NRCS Operations Management and Oversight Division in Washington, DC. The major responsibilities of my division are: conducting operations management reviews for the NRCS state offices, providing training on operations management to the NRCS state offices, coordinating customer service satisfaction surveys, providing leadership for business planning, and coordinating a national

facilitator cadre. Since most of these activities are brand-new to me, my own participation has been pretty limited! I have sat in with the deputy chiefs and taken notes as they put together the National business plan for NRCS, and helped to put together a national calendar of events, and a national calendar of reports—so far I have compiled over 120 dates for reports that are due. I have most enjoyed my work with the facilitator cadre, and I will attend a national training on facilitation during the first week in November, which I think will be extremely helpful in my future RC&D work when I get back. Before I left for Washington, I facilitated groups working on some of the RC&D projects, and I think the training will help provide me new skills and new tools to help these projects achieve their goals. I have also been allowed to meet with a number of people in leadership positions. One person that provided me a lot of information is in charge of the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) Program, that is part of the Farm Bill. I miss my work and my job in the U.P! I return to Michigan on December 19, and I look forward to seeing all of you in January.

**New Projects:** Champion Township Restored Wetlands and Recreation Area – Becky Otto gave a synopsis of this project. The area being considered for restoration is located in the center of Champion. The township acquired the land through the DNR trust fund. They envision boardwalks, trails, signs and want to connect to the bike trail which is in place at Van Riper State Park to the Berle LaPin Memorial Park on the other end. They are in the planning stages – a professor at NMU has done a vegetation analysis and they need planning and grant-writing assistance. The project was approved (Berger/Herioux).

**Project Updates:** Darcy reported that the three Rapid Watershed Assessments that were being facilitated by the UP RC&D Council have all been completed and are available on the Michigan NRCS website. The BURN UP Project hosted two successful woody biomass harvesting demonstrations in September. One was held in Trenary on land being managed by Plum Creek Timber Company and being logged by Nelson Logging. The second demonstration took place near Shingleton on land owned by The Forestland Group and being managed by Cold Springs Forestry. More than 40 people attended each demonstration. Also, five schools received free engineering pre-feasibility studies which were done by Integrated Designs, Inc. The studies will help schools determine if converting their non-renewable heating systems to one which utilizes woody biomass would be feasible. The schools receiving the studies were St. Ignace, Tahquamenon Area Schools, Munising School District, Manistique School District and Stanton Twp. Schools. The studies have been completed and show promising results for most of the schools. One or more of these schools will be considered for a second, more-detailed engineering study (the school will be required to match the award from the UP RC & D Council) in the second phase of the project. The website for the project ([www.upwoodybiomass.org](http://www.upwoodybiomass.org)) continues to be developed and provides a wealth of information about woody biomass utilization.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 27, 2009 at 10 am. If possible we will re-schedule the tour and lunch (provided by the Central RC&D Council) to the Potawatomi Heritage Center for this meeting. Tom Tauzer will check into this.**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am.