

**MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL**  
**Hannahville Cultural Center - Tuesday, January 27, 2009**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 10:25 am by Coordinator Marilyn Shy as none of the officers for the Central Region were in attendance. Everyone introduced themselves. Marilyn thanked Earl Meshigaud and the Hannahville Cultural Center for providing a fantastic spot for our meeting and presentation.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Renee' Barron and Howard Haulotte-City of Gladstone; Benny Herioux & Rory Mattson-Delta CD; Tom Tauzer-NRCS Delta Co; W. Toby Rhue-USFS; Roger Quist-NRCS Manistique; Carol Kurtz and Chuck Harris-Dickinson CD; Warren Schauer-MSU Extension; Hamp Waring & Teri Grout-Alger CD; Renee Leow-Marquette Co. CD; Jerry Doucette-Alger Co Commission; Scott Wieting-Hannahville Indian Community; Donna Silta-FSA Gladstone; Susan Devoe-FSA Kingsford; Don Gerrie-Rural Development; Lloyd Matthes-CUPPAD; Angie Lucas-The Nature Conservancy; Marilyn Shy & Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES:** The agenda was approved (Herioux/Mattson) with the addition of a short presentation by Angie Lucas on the Central UP Cooperative Weed Management Area. The minutes from the meeting of October 28, 2008 were approved (Waring/Leow) with no changes.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Treasurer Dave Andersen was unable to attend the meeting. Darcy Rutkowski reported that the balance in the checking account is \$741.58. There was no activity since the last meeting. The treasurer's report will be placed on file.

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**Election of Vice-chairperson:** Nominations were opened for the office of vice-chairperson. Renee Leow nominated Hampton Waring. Two more requests for nominations for the office of vice-chairperson were made, and there were no additional nominations for this position. A motion was made that nominations be closed and that a unanimous ballot be cast for Hampton Waring (Kurtz/Leow). The motion passed.

Due to the absence of chairman Hoholik, Hampton Waring assumed the duties of chairperson for the remainder of the meeting.

**2009 Central RC&D Council Dues:** A motion to request \$25 dues for 2009 from each of the six conservation districts in the Central Region was made (Grout/Leow). The motion passed. Dues invoices will come from treasurer Dave Andersen.

**Elect Representative to UP RC&D Council:** The Central Regional RC&D Council currently has two people representing them on the UP RC&D Council. Those two representatives are Ernie Hoholik and Dave Andersen. Every regional council may have a maximum of three representatives on the UP Council. A motion was made to nominate Howard Haulotte to represent the Central Region on the UP Council (Grout/Mattson). Motion passed.

**Central UP Cooperative Weed Management Area (CUPCWMA):** Angie Lucas made a presentation to give members an idea of the goals of the newly established CUPCWMA. It grew out of the UP Invasives Council (UPIC) which serves as an umbrella organization with the goal of getting more CWMA's in place. There will be a "Non-Native Invasives" presentation on February 23 at 6 pm at Peter White Public Library in Marquette. CUPCWMA will focus on work in the Trestle Park Corridor this season with several work days being planned. They will have a website functional soon ([www.upicweeds.org](http://www.upicweeds.org)).

**Donation to Hannahville Cultural Center:** A motion was made (Tauzer/Leow) that the Central UP RC&D Council make a donation of \$50 to the Hannahville Cultural Center. Motion passed.

## REPORTS

**Alger Conservation District:** Teri Grout reported that they are finishing their CMI grant deliverables (Christmas Motor Sports project). Another issue they are tackling is the ice build-up at the AuTrain River mouth which is causing seasonal flooding and property damage. There is a history of flooding/dredging there.

**Delta Conservation District:** Rory Mattson reported that they are focusing their efforts on obtaining stable statewide funding for CD's which would be designed by the districts and their partners – not Lansing. They have had good support from Don Koivisto (MI Dept of Ag) and from the legislators they have been working with. Forest-based alternative energy would be emphasized. The district is also working with UP Whitetails to try to institute a bounty on wild hogs.

**Dickinson Conservation District:** Carol Kurtz reported that they are still finishing up two CMI grants. Ann Hruska has been working with folks from MACD to set up a meeting for those interested in switchgrass. They are also working with Florence County Wisconsin to set up a Cooperative Weed Management group which includes partners from the USFS, MSUE, Wisconsin DNR and WI Invasive Species Coordinator.

**Marquette County:** Renee Leow started out by commenting that all the partnerships represented in the meeting today are very healthy, and that the UP Conservation Districts have good cooperation amongst themselves. The Marquette CD is working with UP RC&D on the BURN-UP Project and the Central UP Volunteer Stream Monitoring Project. The District is also finishing up a 319 grant on the Lower Dead River and is in need of volunteers at their Trestle Park native plant demonstration site. They are wrapping up the EAB project they coordinated for Marquette, Alger, Baraga and Iron Counties (Teri Grout was responsible for trap trees). No EAB infestations were found in any of these four counties. Marquette and Alger Counties are working with a part-time forester to provide forestry assistance to private landowners. She mentioned that all districts are now involved in their tree sales and they rely heavily on the profits from these sales for funding their districts.

**Menominee County/CD:** The Menominee CD is in the process of hiring a new executive director.

**Schoolcraft Conservation District:** Roger Quist reported that their tree sale is also underway, and that no EAB infestations were found in Schoolcraft County. The CD is experiencing financial difficulties. Roger has been working on contracts and audits.

**MSU Extension:** Warren Schauer reported that he works with the MSU Products Center which helps folks who are interested in developing products to take to the retail market. He is a resource person who helps them through the process. He has also been working with the Forestry Area Expertise Team to develop educational materials. The "Ag for Tomorrow" Conference will be held at Bay College on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and non-profits can set up displays. Dr. Minn at the MSU Experiment Station in Chatham has several switchgrass presentations scheduled (3/18 in Dickinson Co, 3/25 in Chippewa Co, 4/1 in Ontonagon Co, 4/4 at the Bay DeNoc Garden Conference sponsored by WildOnes and Bay College.

Bill Cook sent a written report stating that he is getting closer to having a series of "woody biomass" information sheets available through MSU Extension and he has available a program called "Energy, Biomass, and Other Abstract Ideas" that he has delivered several times and is willing to present to interested groups.

**Hannahville/Natural Resources Environmental Protection Dept:** Scott Wieting reported the reservation lands are comprised of about 6000 acres (half north of US-2 and half south of US-2). Most of their natural resource funding comes from EPA. They are working on a 10 year water quality assessment project, and working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs on a timber stand improvement project. Most of

their timber is north of US-2. They are also doing radon testing and environmental assessments/compliance. They are in the process of developing a new procedure for reviewing new projects, tweaking their internal planning procedures, and developing a solid waste management plan.

**Farm Service Agency:** Susan DeVoe and Donna Silta reported that they are waiting for more information on the new Farm Bill. All counties in the UP have been designated for disaster relief (frost, freeze, drought) and a 35% loss level is approved (program not open yet). This will open the door for low interest loans. They mentioned that the number of dairy producers in Menominee County has dropped from 200 to 80.

**Rural Development:** Donald Gerrie distributed a handout of the loan and grant programs available through RD. Their mission is to increase the quality of life in rural America from the ground up. In 2007 more than \$400 million in tax dollars came to Michigan, in 2008 it was about \$733 million. For the coming year they are operating under a continuing budget resolution and are starting to get glimpses of what might be available through the stimulus bill which is now in congress.

**NRCS:** Tom Tauzer reported that the final rules will be out soon for the new Farm Bill and that NRCS just recently underwent a financial audit that was completed in December.

**City of Gladstone:** Howard Haulotte reported on progress at the Gladstone Marsh Area. The main priority has been buckthorn removal which is ongoing. They are also trying to determine where the boardwalks will be placed and he is working on another funding proposal

**CUPPAD:** Lloyd Matthes reported that they are working with Alger County on a flooding issue. They also anticipate involvement with the stimulus package, but aren't sure in what capacity at this point.

**Coordinator's Report:** Marilyn reported that she is happy to be back from Washington, and is busy looking at grant possibilities for several projects (several grants are open and some of them are not that difficult to write up). The 2009 Annual Plan of Work is now being finalized and after the UP Council approves it – it will be available on our website.

### **New Projects:**

**In Search of "WOW":** A Summer Outdoor Exploration Experience with Native American Youth – Toby Rhue reported that this project, sponsored by the USFS, Hiawatha National Forest, has the goal of increasing the awareness of Native American Youth to nature. This is in response to the dis-connect between kids and the outdoors. The positive effects of getting kids outdoors is that violence goes down and they get exposed to new opportunities. Native American kids from Hannahville and Bay Mills tribes will be participating by working off-reservation in a structured environment. The FS has applied for a grant to fund the project and they are looking for assistance in finding environmental projects that the kids can participate in. They hope to get help with that part from RC&D and other partners. If others are aware of appropriate projects, please let them know. The project will affect 6 kids directly and they will be ambassadors for the program. The project application was approved (Mattson/Grout).

**Garden Village/Township Flood Control Project** - Tom Tauzer and Rory Mattson gave some background on this project which is being sponsored by the Delta Conservation District. There has been a flood control problem in the village and township of Garden for a long time. Flooding that occurred not that long ago took out the street and threatened homes. There are also some sinkhole issues. Last summer there was a meeting of partners to discuss jurisdictional issues, and determine how the partners could work together and who would assume financial responsibility. At this point they are requesting engineering assistance from NRCS (neutral party) and assistance in bringing the partners together. This could be followed up by another project proposal requesting help securing funding for implementation. The project application was approved (Herioux/Grout).

**Project Updates:** Marilyn reported that of the five schools that received engineering pre-feasibility studies in the first phase of the BURN UP project – 1 school will definitely be moving forward with a second engineering study (for which they must pay half the cost) to determine the feasibility of installing a woody biomass heating system. That school is St. Ignace. Other schools are interested, but for various reasons do not wish to continue at this point in time. There may be additional engineering pre-feasibility study funding available for interested schools or other similar institutions. There will be two additional woody biomass harvest demonstrations in 2009 sponsored by the project. A workshop titled “Forest-based Bioenergy for Michigan’s Upper Peninsula” will take place on March 10<sup>th</sup> in Marquette and the registration information is available on the BURN-UP website at [www.upwoodybiomass.org](http://www.upwoodybiomass.org). The workshop is being sponsored in part by the BURN-UP Project. The steering committee is providing excellent technical advice and expertise to the project and they are in the process of determining the next steps in obtaining funding to continue the work. The project was the recipient of the “Two Chief’s Partnership Award. The award recognizes exemplary employees and projects from the Forest Service, NRCS, State Forestry Agencies, and conservation Districts who have worked collaboratively to support conservation and forest stewardship.

The Huron River Restoration group used the MiCorp protocol to do volunteer sampling in that watershed and this helped them leverage some funding from a 319 grant to have more work done. The Central UP Volunteer Stream Monitoring project has received a 3 month extension and will be concluded by June 30, 2009.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 21, 2009 at 10 am (Eastern Time) at the Gladstone City Hall.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm and members were treated to a wonderful presentation by Hannahville Cultural Director, Earl Meshigaud, followed by lunch.**

**MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL**  
**Gladstone City Hall - Tuesday, April 21, 2009**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am by Chairman Hoholik. Everyone introduced themselves.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Renee Barron and Howard Haulotte-City of Gladstone; Tom Tauzer-NRCS Delta Co; Roger Quist-NRCS Manistique; Warren Schauer-MSU Extension; Hamp Waring & Liz Coyne-Alger CD; Renee Leow-Marquette Co. CD; Jerry Doucette-Alger Co Commission; Donna Silta-FSA Gladstone; Lloyd Matthes-CUPPAD; Ernie Hoholik-Schoolcraft Co; David Schultz-Delta Co Comm; Clyde Thoune-Menominee CD; Marilyn Shy & Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES:** The agenda was approved and the minutes from the meeting of January 27, 2009 were approved (Waring/Leow) with no changes.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Treasurer Dave Andersen was unable to attend the meeting. Darcy Rutkowski reported that the balance in the checking account is \$567.58. There were two \$25 deposits made during March. The treasurer's report will be placed on file.

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**2009 County Dues Update:** All counties except Delta have paid their 2009 dues, and Dave Schultz reported that Delta County has approved payment of the dues and he had hoped to have a check with him today but the clerk was out of the office.

**Legislative Update:** The UP RC&D Council has sent letters to the UP legislative aides for Sens. Stabenow and Levin and Congressman Stupak asking them to urge the legislators to support reinstating funding of at least \$56 million for the RC&D program in the budget. We received positive feedback that they were all in support of RC&D. A Dear Colleague letter will be circulating in the Senate soon and we will request that our Senators sign that.

**REPORTS**

**Alger Conservation District:** Liz Coyne reported that the CMI grant will be wrapped up by October 1. They still have a couple of culverts and the race track project to complete. The completion date for the NFWF grant project is 12/31/09 and they will be replacing 2 culverts and doing some GIS work for the riparian zone study. The district has been working with AuTrain Township to solve problems at the mouth of the river. There is only 60 feet of dune between the lake the M-28. MDOT owns the property. The dam on the AuTrain Basin is being considered for possible ownership change. If UPPCO can't find anyone interested in buying the dam, they will remove it. The district tree sale is May 1.

**Delta Conservation District:** Tom Tauzer reported that the district held their Annual Meeting last week and it was well attended. Stacy Welling from the DNR attended. They also will be holding their tree sale during the first part of May. NRCS has started some engineering work in Garden on the new RC&D project there. Ann Jousma Miller is the new UP Liaison for Gov. Granholm. She is from Delta County and this should be good for Delta and the entire UP. Dave Schultz reported that the county is happy with the wetland work and fencing work that the district is doing for the county (at a cost savings). The soil erosion permits are now being done by the district as well.

**Dickinson Conservation District: No One**

**Marquette County:** Renee Leow spoke to Bob Struck about attending this meeting, but he had a previous commitment. The district is hoping that some economic stimulus funding might come through to allow for the hiring of extra people this summer. They are very busy preparing for the tree sale which is

next week. Becky Otto, Marquette/Alger District Conservationist is leaving to take a job in the Detroit area with the Army Corp. of Engineers. Marilyn Shy and Jerry Davis will be covering the critical issues that come up until the position is filled.

**Menominee County/CD:** Clyde Thoun reported that the district just finished their tree sale last weekend and it was very successful. They have hired a new office administrator, Dan Mathein, who can now be reached at the district office. He also mentioned that there are 2 farms east of Daggett with contaminated wells (and about 1000 head of cattle). Holly Wendrick with the groundwater stewardship program might be able to give some advice on dealing with this problem. Clyde was speculating that there might be an opportunity for some group to oversee the new medical marijuana program because that program was approved by voters in November. He feels that someone will have to oversee the enforcement and permitting and it might be a source of revenue that the districts should explore to see if it would be feasible.

**Schoolcraft Conservation District:** Roger Quist reported that their tree sale is May 1 & 2. They are in the process of negotiating with the Schoolcraft board of commissioners for different, more affordable space for the district office. The next district meeting is Monday, April 27 at noon and the Annual Meeting is at the Garfield Township Hall on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

**MSU Extension:** Warren Schauer reported that there is a group working on Forest Estate Planning for Forestland owners. All fifth graders will be visiting farms through the Ag and Natural Resource tours. The Michigan Tree Improvement Center (MTIC) received a grant to look at biomass procurement. The MSU Master Gardener's Booth at the Home and Garden Show was very well done.

**Farm Service Agency:** Donna Silta reported that they are still waiting for the handbook with guidelines for the new Farm Bill. Their office has been extremely busy with the new loans which are available to help producers in the area. The sign-up period for the disaster programs will be opening soon.

**City of Gladstone:** Howard Haulotte reported that they submitted a grant application to the NFWF for removal of buckthorn and replacement with native species at the Gladstone Marsh Area. The grant requires 100% match but in-kind match is allowed. They should know if they are funded by June 1. An Eagle Scout will be doing a project related to a viewing platform at the marsh area.

**CUPPAD:** Lloyd Matthes reported that they are working with the Hannahville Tribe on an energy assessment for the potential of generating electricity with wind or solar power. They are also exploring the feasibility of a couple of alternative energy crops which are being grown successfully in Canada (canola and camelina). Canola has low yields but camelina is being grown heavily in Saskatchewan, Montana, and Minnesota so has some promise for the UP. Lloyd attended a media event with Gov. Granholm last night and he suggested folks go to the recovery website for the state (<http://www.michigan.gov/recovery>) and click on grants. Most recovery funding is being handled through existing state agencies. He suggests making applications as positive as possible and be persistent. Be sure to look at the qualifications for "city size" as a city of 80,000 is considered small by their standards. Therefore 90% of the projects in the UP "did not qualify".

**Coordinator's Report:** Marilyn reported that she has been getting lots of requests to submit lists of "shovel ready" projects. She chooses the projects that fit the priorities of the requesting agency and she is also passing on lots of RFP's when appropriate to project sponsors that she knows have RC&D projects in progress. There is a link to the stimulus recovery programs on Rep. Stupak's website which is helpful. Some of the funding is not available to non-profits at this point, but hopefully the next batch of funding will be. NOAA will have funding to do streambank improvements and fish passage improvements and the Baraga Co. Road Commission has requested 1.5 million for culvert work for this purpose. The EPA may also have funding to pass through as time goes on. Her priority has been to get as many projects on these

lists as possible. Marilyn and Jerry Davis are covering Becky Otto's job (DC for Marquette and Alger counties) until the position is filled. Becky took a new job with the Corp. of Engineers in the Detroit area. Mike LaPointe is trying to fill the vacancy as fast as possible. Marilyn reminded everyone of the policy that all new project applications must arrive in the UP RC&D office at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which they are going to be considered for adoption.

**New Projects:**

Forest Landowners Assistance Program for Central Upper Michigan – Renee Leow provided some information about this project which is being sponsored by the Marquette CD. They have submitted an application for CIG through NRCS and if the grant is awarded they would use it to fund a forester position for the two counties. They currently have a forester on contract that works part-time but this is the second fiscal year that they have been without a full-time forester to serve the needs of their private landowners. They hope to encourage landowner management plans, promote the forestry programs in the new farm bill, and increase sustainable woody biomass harvesting in the two county area. The grant required a 50% match with half of that required in cash. Their partners are Big Creek Forestry, TNC, Cleveland Cliffs, MDA, and UPRC&D. They hope if funded, this project will serve as a pilot project for other counties/CD's because there is a definite need across the UP for forestry assistance. They feel it is important to keep a forestry presence in the two counties. They are requesting assistance from the UP RC&D Council to help with grant writing and serve on an advisory committee to the project. The project was approved (Thoune/Waring).

AuTrain Beach Restoration Phase I: Hydraulic Study: This project was tabled.

**Project Updates:** Marilyn reported that a contract was recently awarded to IDI to do second phase engineering studies at the St. Ignace Schools and possibly at some other institutions as well. Two more first-phase pre-feasibility studies will be done at two Marquette schools, and two more harvest demonstrations will be hosted in September (probably near Alberta and eastern Alger County). The Grand Marais Harbor breakwall project is scheduled to request bids in September with work scheduled to begin in summer 2010. This \$6 million project has been in the works for a long time and the Corp of Engineers has approved a slightly different plan that the township has also approved. The Central UP Stream Monitoring project will be completed by July 1 (Dead River and Anna River). The project has expanded to include the Huron River where there is a very interested group of stakeholders (TU is using the MiCorp protocol to monitor 24 sites and has embraced the program). There has also been some interest in using the MiCorp protocol on the eastern end in the Two Hearted watershed. Burt Twp. Schools are interested in stream monitoring in their school forest but there was some question as to whether MiCorp would accept data from school groups.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 21 at 10 am at the Gladstone City Hall.**

**MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL**  
**Gladstone City Hall - Tuesday, July 21, 2009**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 10:10 am by Vice-Chairman Hampton Waring. Everyone introduced themselves.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Howard Haulotte-City of Gladstone; Tom Tauzer-NRCS Delta Co; Warren Schauer-MSU Extension; Hamp Waring-Alger & Marquette CD; Jerry Doucette-Alger Co Commission; Lloyd Matthes-CUPPAD; Dave Andersen-MSU Extension Schoolcraft Co; Clyde Thoune & Dan Mathein-Menominee CD; Carol Kurtz & Charles Harris-Dickinson CD; Don Howlett-USFS; Judy Pomeroy-Menominee Co. (former UP Council Board Member); Marilyn Shy & Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES:** The agenda was approved (Andersen/Thoune) and the minutes from the meeting of April 21, 2009 were approved (Matthes/Andersen) with no changes.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Treasurer Dave Andersen presented a summary of the activity in the checking account through July 17, 2009. The ending balance is \$617.58. He reported that 5 of the six conservation districts have paid their dues (he does not think he received dues from the Marquette County CD but will follow up on that). The treasurer's report will be placed on file.

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**Set Dates for Future Regional Meetings:** Marilyn reported that the UP Council is in the process of revising the project application and would like to list all the meeting dates for the calendar year (2010) on the form and also on the website. This will allow those submitting a new project application to plan for the date that the application will be due in the UP Council office (which is two weeks prior to the meeting at which the application will be considered for approval). It was decided that the meetings would be the first Tuesday of the month on a quarterly basis. The next five meeting dates are October 6, 2009 and during 2010 January 5, April 6, July 6, and October 5.

**Legislative Update:**

Darcy reported that both the house and senate agriculture appropriations committee reinstated \$50.7 million for the RC&D FY2010 budget. The National Association of RC&D Councils is urging council members to call their legislators and ask them to support the house version of the bill. The house version funds the RC&D program as a separate, stand-alone entity and the senate version rolls the funding into the NRCS Operations Budget and therefore the funding for RC&D would be discretionary.

**Recognition of Judy Pomeroy's Service to RC&D:** Dave Andersen presented a plaque to Judy in honor of her many years of service to the UP RC&D Council. Judy started volunteering on the Central Council when she became a Menominee County Commissioner in 1996. She served on both the Central Council and the UP Council as Treasurer for many years.

**REPORTS**

**Alger Conservation District/Alger County Commission:** Hampton Waring reported that they are waiting for a scour study to be done by the Corp of Engineers at the mouth of the AuTrain River. Jerry Doucette reported that Senator Stabenow's office informed him that the funding for the study is on its way out of committee and hopefully will get funded. There are future plans to straighten the mouth, do streambank stabilization, and add railings. The county worked with Michigan Works to obtain a youth work crew and they have been assisting with invasive weed pulls, and lots of other conservation projects.

**Delta Conservation District:** Tom Tauzer reported that the district is heading up the conservation district booth for the UP State Fair. The booth will be scaled back a bit this year (Marquette, Alger and Dickinson



CD's will also be participating). The Conservation District has taken over the soil erosion permitting for the county which has been a boost in both income and responsibilities. The conservation district has a work crew which has been helping with various projects, including the Gladstone Nature preserve where they have been helping remove buckthorn. They have also been helping with drainage ditches in the Village of Garden. The state funding cuts to conservation districts have been severe.

**Dickinson Conservation District:** Carol Kurtz reported that the district has a Michigan Works Crew and they have been doing clean-up and tree planting at the Norway Myr, and they are also working on the channel between Hamilton Lake and Lake Louise. They helped out at the summer science camp with invasive species education. The funding for the Fumee Lake and Hamilton Lake projects will end in September and the EPA Energy grant funding ended in June. The video created in that project is available. They are looking into holding a fall tree sale which would also include the sale of books and other related items.

**Marquette County:** Hampton Waring reported that the district also has a Michigan Works Youth Crew and that they have been doing a lot of work on invasive weed pulls, especially at the Trestle Park native plant garden. Sarah Janda left the district to take a new job, so currently there are only two employees (Hamp and Renee Leow), plus a part-time forester. They plan to have a booth at the county fair and also participate in the CD booth at the UP State Fair. They did not get funding under the CIG grant application that they submitted (woody biomass category). They will be working in conjunction with the Alger and Dickinson CD's on a fall tree sale. The District Conservationist position that was vacated when Becky Otto took another job downstate is still vacant.

**Menominee County/CD:** Dan Mathein reported that he is the new part-time Executive Director for the Menominee CD. He has 10 years experience on the board. The board has changed their district model to having three people cover the district priorities by job sharing. They are focusing on their tree sale, board relations and relations with the state, and grant writing. The grant writing is locally focused – working with service groups and local counties. Clyde Thoun reported that there is some controversy over the proposed mining in the county – some people are in favor of the mining and others are not. They are also holding a limited fall tree sale (3 spruces, red pine and douglas fir). The order deadline is September 4 with pick-up on September 26. Clyde mentioned that there is a lot of interest among farmers in the no-till drill.

**Schoolcraft County:** Dave Andersen was the only person in attendance from Schoolcraft County. He did not have information about the conservation district but reported that the UP Sustainable Forestry & Wildlife Fund awarded \$1000 to the Environmental/Outdoor Lab recently for new interpretive signs. They partnered with the Sault tribe to have all the signs in both English and the Native language.

**MSU Extension:** Warren Schauer reported that Forest Estate Planning is still on-going. All fifth graders will be visiting farms through the Ag and Natural Resource tours. The Michigan Tree Improvement Center (MTIC) received a \$1.4 million grant in conjunction with MTU. Dave Andersen reported that the Ag and Natural Resources group will be meeting to schedule workshops to address citizen needs. The Land Use group is trying to schedule workshops on green development and adaptive re-use of structures. The workshops will be held in 2-3 locations throughout the UP and each workshop takes approximately half a day.

**USFS:** Don Howlett reported that they Forest Service will have a booth at the UP State Fair. He has been on assignment to Washington DC from February 1 through June. The new Obama administration appointees have been getting familiar with the FS and the new chief is a former regional chief from the Northern Region.

**City of Gladstone:** Howard Haulotte reported that a crew spent a day at the Gladstone Marsh/Outdoor Classroom removing buckthorn mechanically. They are now spraying the stumps as well. They are using the \$25,000 NFWF grant to do invasive species removal (they are not allowed to do construction with grant funds). They are installing educational signs and an Eagle Scout is installing a viewing platform. They are in the process of applying for a Kodak grant for \$2500.

**CUPPAD:** Lloyd Matthes reported that RFP's for two stimulus grants being sponsored by DLEG will be available in late August or early September. He referred folks to [www.michigan.gov/energyoffice](http://www.michigan.gov/energyoffice) for more information. One of the grants is focused on communities of less than 25,000 for which all cities and counties in the UP qualify. The other is related to LED lights. Menominee and Delta counties recognize that they need to do planning for an influx of people if some of the mining projects and other projects in the works there come to fruition and begin to impact their growth. They are working to diversify while they have the opportunity and look at future re-use. He just finished an energy assessment for Delta County and mentioned that new technology is coming out constantly – it is changing so fast it's hard to keep up with everything. The greatest potential in the near future is in the biofuels area in Delta and the surrounding areas and also low-velocity wind energy has some potential.

**Coordinator's Report:** Marilyn distributed handouts on two upcoming grant funding opportunities: the Great Lakes Basin Soil and Sedimentation Control grants (2010 RFP's are due out in October this year) and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grants (RFP's may be out in August or September). She reported that the UP RC&D Council submitted a pre-proposal to the NFWF for an Invasive Species Management project which would involve the Chippewa East Mackinac CD and the UP tribes. The project would improve communication across the UP to help transfer university research to on-the-ground work and would sponsor regional workshops to help inform groups what others are doing to control invasive plants. We are waiting to hear if we can submit a full grant proposal.

**New Projects:** Manistique District Heating Plant Feasibility Study - The project applicant is the City of Manistique and Dave Andersen provided some background on the proposed project. They are seeking assistance to help locate funding for a feasibility study for a district heating plant in the Manistique area. There are eight to ten potential participants, all institutional facilities, within a 3/8 mile radius that are interested in exploring the possibility of a district heating plant. Lew McCreary, the administrator of the two USFS grants that fund the BURN-UP project will be visiting the Manistique site in early August and meeting with the interested parties. They are seeking some facilitation and grant research assistance from the UP RC&D Council and possibly some engineering assistance from NRCS. The project was approved (Thoune/Matthes).

**Project Updates:** Marilyn reported the Central UP Volunteer Stream Monitoring project was completed at the end of June. The BURN-UP project will be sponsoring two harvest demonstrations again this fall (one in the eastern UP probably Alger or Luce County and one near Alberta in the western UP), and the funding for that project is due to end on October 1, however there is the possibility of an extension. Some possible clusters have been identified for biomass heating plants (Bay College, Manistique, and a few other loosely organized groups). She is always on the lookout for future appropriate grants to move the project to the next stage.

**Next Meeting:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am (Andersen/Thoune) and the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 6 at 10 am at the Gladstone City Hall.

**MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL**  
**Gladstone City Hall - Tuesday, October 6, 2009**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 10:07 am by Chairman Ernie Hoholik. Everyone introduced themselves.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ernie Hoholik-Schoolcraft Co; Renee Barron-City of Gladstone; Tom Tauzer-NRCS Delta Co; Hamp Waring-Alger & Marquette CD; Jerry Doucette-Alger Co Commission; Dave Andersen-MSU Extension Schoolcraft Co; Clyde Thoune-Menominee CD; Bill Rice & Chuck Harris-Dickinson CD; Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES:** The agenda was approved (Andersen/Thoune) with the addition under business items of "County Dues Update" and the minutes from the meeting of July 21, 2009 were approved (Waring/Andersen) with no changes.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Treasurer Dave Andersen presented a summary of the activity in the checking account through September 30, 2009. The ending balance is \$642.58. A motion was made to place the treasurer's report on file (Thoune/Rice).

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**Legislative Update:** Darcy reported that the house and senate conference committee for the FY2010 Agriculture Appropriations Bill has restored funding for the RC&D Program as a **standalone program**. The conference committee language provides \$50,730,000 for the RC&D FY2010 budget. The National Association of RC&D Councils feels this is a big win for our RC&D Program because the Senate proposal would have given the Secretary of Agriculture the **option** of providing the funding within the Conservation Operations account.

**Michigan Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grants:** Dave Andersen provided the group with an update on these grants. The State of Michigan released the RFP on 9/25/09 and the grant application deadline is 10/22/09, which provides very little time to put together the application. He and Marilyn attended a training session by DLEG personnel prior to the release of the RFP and Dave began work at that time for the application which he coordinated for the City of Manistique and the other partners that are looking at the feasibility of a District Heating Plant for that area. All communities in the UP are eligible to apply for the funds, and no match is required, but match is looked on favorably.

**County Dues Update:** Darcy reported that at their meeting on September 29, 2009, the UP RC&D Council voted to make no changes to the amount that is requested for annual dues from the 15 counties in the UP. The dues will remain at \$300 and invoices will be mailed to the counties in January 2010.

**REPORTS**

**Alger Conservation District:** Hampton Waring reported that the district is finishing up their watershed restoration project and also the problem at the race track has finally been resolved. They wrapped up the Michigan Works "Learn While You Earn" program and the youth did a tremendous amount of work on several conservation projects. They will be holding a fall tree/wildflower sale in conjunction with the Dickinson and Marquette CD's. Watershed Manager, Liz Coyne, attended a shoreline protection workshop. They are sponsoring "Agri-palooza" in cooperation with the Marquette CD for all 7<sup>th</sup> graders in the two county region. Students will visit 19 stations and there is a poster contest. The CD is open 4 days/week now. They are celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Annual Meeting on November 4 at Messiah Lutheran Church with a program by Lynn Emerick and displays from their archives.

**Delta Conservation District:** Tom Tauzer reported that the district is in the process of filling a new position of a forester. The position will start next week and is funded jointly between the CD and NRCS and has two years of funding. The DNR was originally going to have a part in sponsoring the position, but has backed out for now. The new position will address a need for forestry services in Delta County which is currently not being met. Tom mentioned that all district funding is uncertain, and that MDA will make a decision as to what to do with the funding they have. The Conservation Stewardship Program in the new Farm Bill has had great response, it rewards people who are doing good management. The Michigan Works crew did some work on the Garden Flood Control Project and NRCS engineers have completed a map of the watershed. The district also held their annual 5<sup>th</sup> grade Ag and Natural Resources Tour where they bus the kids to 4 sites, and all schools in the county participated.

**Dickinson Conservation District:** Bill Rice reported that all their grant funded projects are due to be completed in September and Ann is working to secure more funding. They will be participating in the joint Alger/Marquette/Dickinson fall tree sale, and their office is also open 4 days per week now.

**Marquette County:** Hampton Waring reported that the district also had a Michigan Works Youth Crew and that they helped with Agri-palooza, did work at Connor's Creek, the Trestle Park native plant garden, and other invasive plant pulls. Their Annual Meeting is scheduled for October 28<sup>th</sup> at Upfront and Company. The district is renovating its website and have gotten about 3000 hits/month. They also have plans for putting a rain barrel on site (which is pretty expensive to construct).

**Menominee County/CD:** Clyde Thoun reported that they also had a successful fall tree sale and have had luck educating folks that fall planting can be better than spring. They did sell bigger plants. They have their CD staffed 21 hours/week (the hours divided between 3 people) and they need a good spring tree sale to help keep it open. The Annual Meeting is in March.

**Schoolcraft County:** Dave Andersen reported that the county board conducted a space utilization study and consequently rent in the courthouse doubled. The CD and NRCS could not afford their current space and are moving to a very small space. The funding is very limited. Ernie Hoholik reported that the state park is closed for renovation.

**MSU Extension:** Dave Andersen reported that his office also had a Michigan Works crew of 6-9 kids plus a supervisor. They were used to help with 4-H programs, partnered with the Sault Tribe, and cleaned up the environmental lab (an interpretive trail which focuses on forestry and wildlife management). It's in good shape now with help from a grant from the UP Forestry and Wildlife Fund. Dave reminded folks about the fund and that they distribute grants of up to \$2000 twice a year. The contact person is Gary LaPlant at the UP Community Foundation (906-786-6654). The UP RC&D Council has a seat on the board. Grants were made in April and may be made again this fall. Dave is also holding workshops in Schoolcraft and Iron Counties on "Adaptive Re-Use" which involves making use of existing infrastructure (brownfields, etc). The workshops are on 10/27 in Manistique and on 10/28 in Iron County. There is also an Ecommerce workshop on "How to get your business on e-commerce" on November 2. MSU Extension is also looking at changes in how they are organized. They have considered changing from a county-based to a need-based system. Their budgets are pretty good through 2011, but then they will see a big problem with funding. In order to take advantage of stimulus funds, the states had to hold higher education harmless. MSU Extension hopes to cut back their extension agents through attrition. At this time each county extension director has both local and UP-wide responsibilities.

**Coordinator's Report:** Marilyn was not able to attend the meeting, but she sent an updated Annual Plan of Work so folks can see what progress has been made on various projects.

## **New Projects: None**

**Project Updates:** Dave Andersen gave an update on the Manistique District Heating Plant Feasibility Study. This project is an offshoot of the BURN-UP project. He, Marilyn, and Linda Howlett met with Lew McCreery, the grant administrator of our Forest Service grant at the Manistique cluster site. They also visited the Bay College “cluster” site. Mr. McCreery offered to provide a pre-feasibility study for about 80% of the cost with the BU grant funds to be used as match for the remaining 20%. There are 16 stakeholders/buildings (12 organizations). The USFS will analyze the energy use data that was compiled from each building for the past 2 years, and they will do a site visit, look at distribution systems, etc. They hope to have the results back by early January. The follow-up engineering work would require another \$65,000 and they have applied for the EECBG grant to cover those costs. They would also need to form a district energy authority, and then seek a bonding issue if they decide to proceed. Darcy reported that the BURN-UP project received a grant extension for Phase II until March 31, 2010. The two harvest demonstrations were held in September and had great attendance. Marilyn and Darcy have been working on a UP-wide grant proposal to control invasive species throughout the entire UP. The proposal involved 5 tribes, 13 CD's, TNC, MDOT, MSUE and MNFI. We won't find out if the project is funded until March 2010.

**Next Meeting: The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am and the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 5, 2010 at 10 am at the Gladstone City Hall.**