

**Eastern UP RC&D Council Meeting Minutes
February 19, 2009 Teleconference Meeting**

Present: Dusty King-CEMCD; Jill Maki-Luce Co. Commission; Dick Timmer-Chippewa Co. Commission; Scott Hughey and Will Bomier-NRCS; Carrie Crigier-Luce W. Mackinac CD; Nathan Fazer-EUPRPDC; Dean Reid-Mackinac Co. Planning Commission; Marilyn Shy & Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVE AGENDA & MINUTES: The meeting was called to order at 1:10 pm by Chairman Dick Timmer. The Agenda was approved (King/Maki) The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with no changes (Reid/Maki).

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Election of Officers: Nominations were opened for the office of chairperson. Dick Timmer nominated Dean Reid. Two more requests for nominations for the office of 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 Dean Reid (Timmer/Maki). The motion passed.

Nominations were opened for the office of vice-chairperson. Jill Maki nominated Dick Timmer. 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 Dick Timmer (Maki/Reid). The motion passed.

REPORTS:

Chippewa County- Dick Timmer reported that Chippewa was anxiously waiting to find out how the new federal stimulus package might impact their county. The Mascoma project has been named "Frontier" and the land swap that was underway to facilitate the project went through. The Regional Planning Commission is focusing on alternative energy projects. Dick mentioned that Zellar Bark (Kinross) was doing well, providing materials for landscaping and their business might tie in with use of waste wood from Frontier.

Luce County- Jill Maki reported that her county is also looking at the possible impact of the federal stimulus package. There is still a lot of interest in recycling in the Eastern UP and also broadband services for the region

Mackinac County- Dean Reid reported that the county is looking at re-instituting the EDC. The Hiawatha Sportsmen's Club Board of Directors approved the siting of towers to measure wind and hope to have something in place by late spring or early summer.

NRCS- Scott Hughey reported on some highlights from the District Annual Report: -11, 500' of fence for prescribed grazing, 8,800' of windbreaks, 15.7 acres of tree/shrub planting for a total for conservation programs for the CEMCD of \$259,337. The rule-writing process for the Farm Bill is now underway, and is moving slow enough to let the new administration have some input. He heard that they estimate the programs will roll-out by June 2009. Scott reported that the 2007 Census of Agriculture has recently been released, and is available at www.agcensus.usda.gov. There is a wealth of statistical information available regarding farming and it is available for every county in the U.S

Dean Reid inquired as to whether Scott had any information about what might be available in the Farm Bill regarding the conversion of agricultural lands to fuel crops such as hybrid poplar. Several members present had heard that the rules would probably not be available until the next growing season, sign-up would be through FSA (with NRCS possibly writing the plans). It is possible that the Secretary of Agriculture might designate certain areas for eligibility. It was suggested that we try to get the FSA personnel from the area where we are meeting to attend out future meetings so we can take advantage of any new programs that become available. Dean Reid will make a point to meet with Kay Victorson from FSA regarding this issue.

Chippewa East Mackinac CD- Dusty reported that they are in the midst of their tree sale now. The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) program in Mackinac County was wrapped up at the end of January and they hope to start up again around April 1. MDA is using the area as a prototype for how to handle future infestations of EAB in municipal areas. The state is threatening to cut funds to CD's again, their support has slowly been eroding over the years from a high of \$20,000 down to a proposed \$5400 now. Dean Reid also mentioned that he has been working as a consultant for MTU, setting up timber sales on areas affected (or soon to be affected) by EAB

Luce West Mackinac CD- Carrie Crigier reported that they are also starting their tree sale. The Hamilton Lake Nature Area Trail System is being worked on as well.

EUPRPDC- Nathan Fazer reported that he is excited that he had been elected to the DNR Advisory Council. Their office is working on un-motorized trails and will sponsor workshops in March and April. EUPRPDC was working in conjunction with several other groups in the room to determine if a DOE grant opportunity was appropriate for the transmission line upgrades needed in the Eastern UP. Marilyn provided a few more details about this particular grant and it did not hold a lot of promise for them. Apparently the other two regional planning areas in the UP are working together with ADC to try to develop a map to outline areas most appropriate for installing wind energy.

This led to general discussion about 4 MSU Extension workshops (all downstate) regarding bioeconomy/biofuels. A similar workshop was held at Bay College regarding farmers and alternative energy crops. We will make a special attempt to get the MSU Ext. person from the county where we are meeting in the future to attend out meeting. Dean Reid will contact Michelle Walk about a similar workshop in the UP.

Dick Timmer expressed frustration that there is no leadership in terms of a long-range energy plan for the State of Michigan (similar to what exists in several other states, Minnesota being one good example). The guidelines in a plan might emphasize different alternative energy options for different geographic areas of the state based on the resources of that area. A long -range plan would provide guidance and help areas coordinate efforts in the development of alternative energy sources, and help eliminate non-plausible options and duplication of efforts. A motion was made (Timmer/Reid) that the Eastern Regional RC&D Council encourage the UP RC&D Council to make a request to the State of Michigan that they develop a long-range (10 year?) energy plan for the state.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Marilyn is working on several grant proposals right now with several deadlines fast approaching. Some of the grants she has been looking at to help various partners are Conservation Innovation Grant, Great Lakes Fisheries Grant, Federal Byways Grant, and Great Lakes Basin Program Soil Erosion and Sedimentation grant. Some of the grants require cash match which is pretty hard to come up with on most projects. She has been trying to get information about the final stimulus bill that passed congress, but most information is still pretty vague.

NEW PROJECTS: Will Bomier reported on the new project measure that is called “Bay Mills Indian Community Wetland Preserve Educational and Cultural Trail”. He said that Amanda Bosak and folks from the Intertribal Council wanted to be at the meeting but couldn’t, and several of them had a big part in putting the application together. The process started about 2 years ago with the Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Historically there was a trail in this same area in the 1930’s called the “Government Trail”. They are not sure of the exact route of the new trail, work is still being done to determine that. It will start behind the charter school and it is hoped it will be used by students, tribal members, locals as well as visitors/tourists. It may eventually tie in with the Superior Shores Trail. The project was approved (Timmer/Reid).

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 is now a possibility that a private company is willing to pay the \$3500 for the Tahquamenon Schools second phase engineering study. This fits in with work that company is proposing on the boilers, heating controls, lighting, etc. at the school. There will be two more woody biomass harvest demonstrations in 2009 sponsored by the project. A brochure for a workshop titled “Forest-based Bioenergy for Michigan’s Upper Peninsula” is available on the BURN-UP website at www.upwoodybiomass.org. The workshop is being sponsored in part by the BURN-UP Project and will take place on March 10, 2009 at the Peter White Public Library in Marquette. 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. Don Howlett is working on trying to get the Secretary of Agriculture to the UP to visit some harvest demonstration sites related to the project. There is also a Logger’s Roundtable on April 17 in Marquette that is part of the project.

Will Bomier and Dusty updated the group on Operation Windbreak. They have a new contact person they are working with – the transportation specialist from the S.S. Marie Tribe and they hope this might lead to some funds from the BIA for road improvements. This may fund work on roads (other than trunk lines). They are still pursuing the possibility of using farm bill cost share programs to help fund the installation of windbreaks on private lands. They have had great success with tree survival (90%), and will try to replant in failure areas. MDOT is pleased with the project (although still has no funds to contribute), and they have been getting questions from other areas about implementation of the project. The cost for the program is estimated to be about \$2000/mile.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting will take place on Thursday, May 14, 2009 at 1 pm in Chippewa County. It was suggested that the meeting be held at Bay Mill Community college and hopefully Dwight Sargent and Amanda Bosak might attend.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Timmer, seconded by Fazer to adjourn at 2:30 pm.

**Eastern Regional RC&D Council Meeting
Sault Ste. Marie – May 14, 2009**

PRESENT: Jill Maki-Luce Co Comm; Dean Reid-Mackinac Co Comm; Dusty King and Pat Carr-Chippewa East Mackinac CD; Nathan Fazer-EUPRPDC; Roger Quist-NRCS in Schoolcraft and Luce counties; Marilyn Shy and Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Reid at 1 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved without any changes (Maki/King).

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as written (King/Maki).

BUSINESS ITEMS:

County Dues Update: All 15 counties have paid their dues for 2009.

Legislative Update: When President Obama's budget was released for FY2010 the RC&D program was zeroed out. Subsequently, the UP RC&D Council sent letters to both Michigan Senators and to Congressman Stupak (through their UP regional offices) requesting that they support action in the legislature to reinstate the RC&D funding at a minimum of \$56 million for FY2010 (flat level funding). We received responses back from all three offices that they all support the RC&D program and they would work to restore funding. Currently there is a "Dear Colleague Letter" circulating in the Senate in support of reinstating funding for RC&D and both Senator Levin and Senator Stabenow have signed that letter. We are very grateful for the strong support of our legislators and their UP staff.

CD Appointee & Alternate to UP RC&D Council: Received confirmation of those people who have been appointed by their county commissions and conservation districts to represent them on the Eastern Region RC&D Council. Still need confirmation of representatives for Luce W. Mackinac CD.

Future Tour of Les Cheneaux Watershed: Our next meeting will take place in Cedarville. We will meet at the gazebo for our meeting and a potluck lunch and then tour some sites within the watershed which Pat Carr will determine. It was suggested that some additional people be invited to join us for this meeting and the focus of the meeting will be on the accomplishments in that area. Pat will help determine a list of additional folks that we will invite to the meeting (like additional county commissioners, township officials, watershed council members, etc).

REPORTS:

Luce County: Jill Maki reported the there is work being done on two additional trails related to Hamilton Lake. One new trail goes from downtown Newberry out to the lake and the other is an extension of the trail that already goes around the lake. The organization that she belongs to that has been helping to educate off road vehicle users has received two awards recognizing the work they are doing. One award is from MUCC and the other is from the Natural Resources Commission. They also received a grant from Plum Creek to help offset costs of signs and written educational materials.

Mackinac County: Dean Reid reported that they have not made a decision on how to handle the EDC within the county and they have asked the county planning commission to make some recommendations regarding the EDC.

NRCS: Roger Quist reported that the NRCS employees have recently attended roll-out training regarding the programs in the new farm bill. There are quite a few applications for EQIP and WHIP (a few in Schoolcraft/Luce counties, but more than 20 in Chippewa County). They are anticipating a huge workload in regards to the Grassland Reserve program for which the signup ends in May and they expect a fast turn-around. He reported that Scott Hughey is transferring to a job based in Bear Lake and Will Bomier is taking a new NRCS job in Duluth. Roger and Jerry Davis will be covering for them until their positions are filled. The Schoolcraft CD is looking for more affordable space for their office and sold all the trees in their tree sale as did the Luce W. Mackinac CD.

Chippewa East Mackinac CD: Dusty King reported that they are gearing up for the EAB program based in Moran (phase 2). Also 173 traps for EAB will be placed in high risk areas. They have two MTU grants to set up private timber sales in EAB affected areas. Similar programs to the Moran program may get going in both Delta and Houghton counties to combat EAB if funding becomes available. They are hoping funding for a forester and a site coordinator will come through. The Moran work is being based out of the Brevort Twp. Hall. They are hoping to get a 6 person “conservation crew” for both Chippewa and Mackinac counties this summer.

Pat Carr reported on the Les Cheneaux watershed project (319 grant) for which he recently helped Clark Township with master plan and zoning ordinances. They received approval to remediate the road crossing on State Avenue and are hoping to do two more additional road crossings later this summer or fall. They are also planning another hazardous waste collection in late July and have \$4000 in donations remaining to help fund this. They have completed preliminary bank stabilization on McKay creek with a group of boy scouts. Pat applied for 319 funds to do watershed planning for the Munuscong watershed last fall and should get word soon about whether it was funded. The work would start in January if funded. He has completed a watershed management plan for Sault Ste. Marie and is working on mapping all the wetlands in the city which would help expedite future development permits.

EUPRPDC: Nathan Fazer reported that Ellen held several non-motorized workshops which will help with the non-motorized plan she is putting together for the region. Nathan will be helping her with mapping. Their office is starting to get lots of questions about ordinances related to alternative energy. Dean mentioned that Rudyard has a pretty restrictive ordinance for wind energy and that MSU Extension is a good source of information regarding this. Nathan has formed a small GIS-users group for Chippewa County. He is trying to compile a list of GIS needs for Chippewa County (eventually expand to the entire region). They would like to be the regional clearinghouse for GIS data.

Coordinators Report: Marilyn reported that Darcy received the award from the North Central Association of RC&D councils for council administrator of the year. She and Darcy will be attending the National Association of RC&D Councils Conference in Albuquerque next month for the award presentation and several days of training. Marilyn is the “acting DC (sharing this responsibility with Jerry Davis) for Marquette and Alger counties until this position is filled. The EQIP program has a new aspect targeted to small forest landowners which will provide funds for them to obtain management plans for their forested property. NRCS will be certifying foresters to be technical providers and provide e-certification and technical training. There will be workshops for foresters in late June. There is not a lot of money for this program the first year, so it is seen as a pilot project.

NEW PROJECT MEASURES: None

PROJECT UPDATES:

BURN-UP-St. Ignace schools will receive a second engineering study and possibly Tahquamenon as well. She and the project director met with folks in Manistique who are interested in working together in a “cluster” to provide woody biomass generated heat (and maybe power also). They will be looking for appropriate grants to fund something like this.

CEMCD Alternate Energy Project-The committee met this morning to discuss this project. There is interest in obtaining a press for grass seed. The CEMCD is getting ready to sign an agreement with MSU Extension for rental of their 9 acres of land to MSU for 10 years to experiment with growing hybrid poplars and willow crops.

Operation Windbreak- Recently planted another 1800 white spruce trees (planted 1500 last year and only about 100 had to be replaced this year. The planting was done along I-75 and also along M-28 from Cloverland Electric the road that goes north to Brimley. They had a request for trees for the airport and will be planting 300 this week.

Bay Mills Indian Community Wetland Preserve Trail – Marilyn heard from Will that they had tried to relocate the original trail that went through that area and it was very wet and overgrown with tag alders.

Tahquamenon Area Civic Center-Marilyn met with the Civic Center committee recently and they have hired Melissa Ronquist to follow-up on some of the things they are hoping to accomplish. They would still like to make a “green building” and will be seeking additional engineering advice on this.

Dusty mentioned that she would like to see the “Rapid Response for Invasives” project looked at again. Darcy suggested that she contact the Huron Pines RC&D Council because they are doing a lot with invasive species control and also have a “conservation first responders” program in place.

CORRESPONDENCE: The UP RC&D Council received a letter from Sen. Levin’s office stating that they will support reinstating funding for the RC&D program.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting is scheduled for the gazebo in Cedarville on Thursday, August 20th at noon. We will begin with a picnic and follow with a meeting which focuses on the accomplishments in the Les Cheneaux Watershed and tour some sites in the watershed.

**Eastern Regional RC&D Council Meeting
Cedarville – August 20, 2009**

PRESENT: Jill Maki-Luce Co Comm; Dean Reid-Mackinac Co Planning Comm; Dusty King and Pat Carr-Chippewa East Mackinac CD; Nathan Fazer-EUPRPDC; Mike Patrick-Mackinac Co Comm; Dick Timmer-Chippewa Co Comm; Della Juliano-Luce West Mackinac CD; Greg Zimmerman-Lake Superior State Univ; Marilyn Shy and Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Reid at 11:20 am.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved without any changes (Timmer/Patrick).

PUBLIC COMMENT: Dr. Greg Zimmerman, from the biology department at LSSU updated the group on the biomass work he and his students have been involved in. Using two grants from DLEG, they are looking at the feasibility of producing fuel pellets from reed canary grass. This species is easily grown on clay soils in the northeastern UP and they are experimenting with different recipes to combine with the grass as a binder. Three acre test plots have yielded 3 tons of pellets which is equivalent in btu's to 800 gallons of propane. They have been doing production at a small scale, but are studying options to have larger scale production. There are 3 options for this: group of farmers (coop), converting an existing pellet plant to one that utilizes reed canary grass, or a student-run enterprise at LSSU. The pellets can be burned in a "multi-fuel stove" which can be programmed to burn at different temps for various fuels and a small pellet press can be purchased for around \$30,000. They have even considered using a mobile-pelletizer. Dusty expressed interest in having the CD demonstrate some of this technology to residents and questioned whether this could be a new RC&D project. Jill mentioned that the wood pellet plant that was proposed for Luce County is on hold due to power requirements. Marilyn mentioned that there is currently DLEG money available which can be used to sponsor workshops and that this might be a good time to try something like this for his project. The workshops are meant for targeted audiences (not just the general public).

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as written (Timmer/Maki) and will be placed on file.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Future Grant Opportunities: 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). There are many different opportunities and some require no match. Marilyn is available to provide grant writing assistance to partners with current RC&D projects that feel one or more of these grants may be appropriate for their project.

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 will also allow staff at the UP RC&D Council office to schedule other activities around the quarterly regional meetings. It was decided that the meetings would be the first Thursday of the month on a quarterly basis. The next five meeting dates are December 3, 2009 and during 2010 March 4, June 3, September 2, and December 2.

Legislative Update:

Darcy reported that both the house and senate agriculture appropriations committees 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. A letter from UP RC&D Council chairman Bob Larson has been sent to the UP offices of both senators.

REPORTS:

Chippewa East Mackinac CD: Dusty King reported that they are still without the two NRCS employees that work with their district and are waiting for the positions to be filled. There were no applicants for the DC position so it was re-advertised at a higher grade with NRCS hoping for more interest. It definitely hurts them to have these positions open and they hope to have some new people on-board by December. She also distributed a brochure that was put together by the district working with the Northern Wild Plant & Seed Cooperative on EUP Native Wildflowers which was very well done.

Luce County: Jill Maki reported that the county EDC received a grant for \$1.6 million to add on to the Industrial Park in Newberry.

Mackinac County: Dean Reid reported that the Planning Commission is doing a survey to gauge resident's opinions on whether or not they would like to have an EDC.

NRCS: Marilyn reported that the DC position for the Marquette/Alger Conservation Districts will be filled soon because interviews are currently being conducted. She also reported that Steve Law – RC&D Coordinator for the Timberland Council - was going to be assigned to the Chippewa East Mackinac CD on temporary duty to help out with the work load there.

LWMCD: Della Juliano reported that she has been working as the CD administrator since April 1 and she is still in the learning process. She has already completed the spring tree sale and the annual meeting, so she had to learn quickly! They are still working on additional projects at Hamilton Lake.

EUPRPDC: Nathan Fazer reported that Jeff Hagan has been working with Tim McKee to assist Whitefish Twp and Luce County on their wildfire protection grants. Mascoma has pushed back their opening to the second half of 2013, although they will begin construction in 2010. They have also reduced their initial production goals from 80 million gallons of ethanol a year down to 20 million gallons and they hope to scale up their operation as time goes on. The EUPRPDC has been using their USDA Recycling grant to do some community presentations this summer and have some planned for the fall. They were disappointed to find out that the Scenic Byways grant they had been awarded will be rescinded.

Coordinators Report: Marilyn provided the group with several project updates. The BURN-UP Project will be wrapping up later this year. There will be two harvest demos in September, one near Seney and the other near Alberta. There are also two "clusters" of users – one in Manistique and the other at Bay College in Escanaba – which are going to be receiving feasibility studies from the USFS in conjunction with Project BURN-UP. The Manistique group submitted a project application for assistance at the Central meeting last month which was approved.

NEW PROJECT MEASURES: Two Hearted River Aquatic Habitat Improvement- The Nature Conservancy is the sponsor of this project which involves the remediation of stream crossing in the watershed. The crossings have already been identified and prioritized based on their relative impacts on aquatic habitats. TNC has funding for the highest priority crossing and that work will be completed in 2010. They are seeking assistance with planning, fundraising and engineering for the remaining work. The project was approved (Timmer/Fazer).

PROJECT UPDATES:

CEMCD Alternate Energy Project-The committee met this morning to discuss this project. There is strong interest in continuing to meet on a regular basis. Marilyn informed the group of some training she attended related to the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grants for Michigan non-entitlement communities. The RFP's for these grants will be released soon and all UP counties are qualified to apply for funds based on their population size. The group asked Marilyn to contact the appropriate county board personnel in all three counties to determine their interest in these grants. The counties are eligible to apply as separate entities or could have a joint application if that was deemed advantageous.

EUP Cooperative Weed Management Area Project: Dusty updated the group on the invasive species work that the youth work crew assigned to the district completed this summer. They identified sites, targeted three species and set up trials to test various treatments which they researched online prior to implementation. They included control plots as well. She also made folks aware of the "Plants Out of Place" brochure which was produced by several partners including the Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission and NRCS. Dean Reid mentioned that control of spotted knapweed in gravel pits (where it is very abundant) would help prevent the spread of that species.

Les Cheneaux Watershed Project: Pat Carr reported on the Les Cheneaux watershed project sites that we will be touring following our meeting. The district received a \$600,000 implementation grant following a 319 planning grant. Half of the money will help to remediate 6 road crossings which are contributing to sedimentation of Lake Huron, and half the funds will be used for information/education in the watershed and for work to update the Clark Twp. Master plan and zoning ordinances. They have developed an interactive website and held several septic workshops for residents. They are also working with the Mackinac Co. Health Dept. to develop a technical manual for alternative septic installations. They are trying to educate residents that protection of coastal wetlands is critical to the economy (and fishery) of the region. They have held 3 hazardous waste collections and calculate they have kept 30,000 pounds of hazardous wastes out of a 100 square mile area. The district was notified they also received a Planning grant for the Munuscong watershed. This is their third such grant funded through the clean water act. This two year project will help them develop a plan for remediation activities in that watershed and determine where investments would make the most sense. They hope it will also be followed by an implementation grant.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

Meeting was adjourned at 1:15 pm (Timmer/Fazer).

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 3rd with the time and location to be determined.

**Eastern Regional RC&D Council Meeting
Newberry – December 3, 2009**

PRESENT: Jill Maki-Luce Co Comm; Dean Reid-Mackinac Co Planning Comm; Dusty King-Chippewa East Mackinac CD; Pat Carr-NRCS; Nathan Fazer-EUPRPDC; Dick Timmer-Chippewa Co Comm; Marilyn Shy and Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Reid at 12:55 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved with the addition of a new project “SAWP GLRI” (Timmer/Fazer).

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as written (Timmer/Maki) and will be placed on file.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

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.

2010 Draft Annual Plan of Work: Marilyn distributed copies of the draft 2010 Annual Plan of Work. She believes that this draft will be approved when the UP RC&D Council meets tomorrow.

REPORTS:

Chippewa East Mackinac CD: Dusty King reported that they have 3 job openings at this time in the CD - engineer (Johanna took at job in New Hampshire), watershed planner (to replace Pat Carr who will now be working with the district as an NRCS employee), and forester (to work on EAB near Moran).

Luce County: Jill Maki reported that the county is in the budget process right now and it has been frustrating. They did receive funding for expansion to the industrial site.

Mackinac County: Dean Reid reported that the county is in the process of re-evaluating whether they want to remain with the district health department (3 counties) or go out on their own. They will probably continue with the other counties. The St. Ignace School District met with community leaders and is looking at a possible millage vote in May to fund technology, transportation and the new biomass heating system.

NRCS: Pat Carr reported that he was recently hired by NRCS as a Soil Conservation Technician and will be working with the new DC, Kent Dankenbring, helping implement farm bill programs and helping with construction oversight. Marilyn reported that Mike LaPointe is scheduled to be back from temporary duty in Flint on December 7 and that Steve Law (Timberland RC&D Coordinator) has been covering Mike's job while he is downstate.

LWMCD: No one present, Della called to say she could not be here today.

EUPRPDC: Nathan Fazer reported that EUPRPDC is working on a Wildfire Protection Plan for Whitefish Twp, and that local fire departments are working with homeowners to educate them on how to avoid losing their homes when a situation like the Sleeper Lake Fire arises. Once a plan is in place, local fire departments can apply for grants. Jeff Hagan is finishing a USDA Solid Waste (Recycling) Grant which involves educational outreach. It is his understanding that Mascoma has funding now for research and development, but

still needs funding for building. Frontier has given a \$2 million grant to MSU/MTU to study biomass availability. They are trying to get EDA funding (but need spin-off businesses, not just the one big company).

Coordinators Report: Marilyn reported that she and Darcy have been working on and submitted a grant proposal to do an invasive species project throughout the UP. The project if funded would provide funds to conservation districts to develop Rapid Response Teams and also do some demonstration projects. We should know if we are funded sometime in March. She is also working with 8 CD's on a proposal for a invasive species marketing/media campaign which would cover a good portion of the UP called "Know It-Don't Grow It".

NEW PROJECT MEASURES: Dusty described the new project which the CEMCD submitted for approval called "Sault Area Watershed Plan/Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant". Through this project they would work with the City of Sault Ste. Marie and with LSSU to submit a proposal for a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant to implement the St. Mary's watershed plan which is already completed. The goal would be to have the St. Mary's River delisted as an Area of Concern with EPA. The project was approved (Timmer/Fazer).

PROJECT UPDATES:

CEMCD Alternate Energy Project-The committee met this morning to discuss this project.

Les Cheneaux Watershed Project: Pat Carr reported on the Les Cheneaux watershed project which will be completed by year end. A fairly complex survey was distributed to residents (about 1600 people) regarding managing septic systems and they got 800 responses back which is a tremendous response for a survey. This proves how much support they have in the community for this project. They also sent another newsletter/booklet with more information. The final report is due 12/31/09

Superior Shores Trail: Marilyn reported that this trail is proposed to connect the state park in Brimley with the lighthouse, and has been spearheaded by two nurses. They applied for and have been told that they will be getting assistance from Barbara Nelson-Jameson (NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program manager in Michigan). This is a complicated 9 mile project which may have to be completed in segments.

BURN-UP: Marilyn gave an update on the Manistique District Heating Plant Feasibility Study. This project is an offshoot of the BURN-UP project. She, Dave Andersen, 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.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

Meeting was adjourned at 2:05 pm.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 11, 2010 at 1 pm in Newberry with an 11 am meeting for the energy sub-committee. Due to a conflict with the CEMCD meetings, the meeting schedule for 2010 was adjusted. The meetings are now scheduled for March 11, June 10, September 9, and December 9.