

**Eastern Regional RC&D Council Meeting
Newberry – April 7, 2010**

PRESENT: Jill Maki-Luce Co Comm; Dean Reid-Mackinac Co Planning Comm; Dusty King & Wendy Wagoner-Chippewa East Mackinac CD; Nathan Fazer-EUPRPDC; Lisa DenBoer-Luce County Planning/Development; Jonathon Miller-LWMCD; Jim Osenberger-USFS; Jim Pawlowicz-MDA; Marilyn Shy and Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Reid at 1:10 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved with no changes (Maki/Fazer).

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

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

BUSINESS ITEMS:

County Dues Update: Dues notices were sent to all counties January 19, 2010. To date dues have been received from 10 of the 15 counties with Baraga, Gogebic, Ontonagon, Menominee, and Schoolcraft dues still remaining unpaid. Darcy received notice that Gogebic County has approved dues payment already and she has notified county commissioners from the other four counties that the dues have not been received and asked them to follow up with their respective counties.

Legislative Update: Darcy reminded council members that when the President's budget was released in February, the RC&D Program was zeroed out and subsequently we had sent letters to the UP offices of Stupak, Stabenow and Levin requesting that they work to reinstate this funding (\$50.73 million). We were notified that both Stabenow and Levin had signed onto a "Dear Colleague Letter" that was circulating in the Senate. We have not heard back from Stupak's office as to what if anything he did or plans to do to support the RC&D Program. Darcy will follow up with staff in his UP office to determine what action might have been taken by Rep. Stupak.

RC&D Performance Improvement Criteria: Marilyn summarized a new RC&D Performance Improvement Criteria Implementation Process that the UP Council and all other councils in the U.S. are undergoing right now. The National Assoc. of RC&D Councils and NRCS have identified 7 criteria that they are requiring all councils to be compliant with by September 30, 2011. The UP Council is already meeting 5 of the 7 criteria. The two criteria not now being met are 1) Completes Annual Report, and 2) Conducts Annual External Financial Audit/Review. The Council has scheduled an Annual External Financial Review for April 21st and will also be completing an Annual Report during 2010.

REPORTS:

Luce County: Jill Maki and Lisa DenBoer reported that the county did receive funding for expansion to the industrial site and ground-breaking will take place by the end of April. The work will include 31 acres of disturbance, install rail and complete the Community Action Building. Work is being done on the Two-hearted River including stream monitoring, DNR upgrades in parking & boat launch at the mouth with partners including SWP, TNC, Trout Unlimited. There is also a \$50,000 project funded by the DNRE to remediate ORV damage on the lakeshore, Little Lake Harbor has been dredged and more dredging may occur this year.

Chippewa East Mackinac CD: Dusty King reported that they received a new 319 grant for work on the Munuscong River watershed. She showed a group a map delineating the original (pre-settlement) wetlands, the

wetlands that have been lost to agriculture, and they will overlay the WRP areas that have since been put back into conservation practices. They are hiring for EAB work in and around Moran.

Mackinac County: Dean Reid reported that there is an openhouse for the new hospital today.

NRCS: Pat Carr and Kent Dankenbring were not able to attend because they are busy with the GRP audit. The EQIP high tunnels program and the new forestry assistance provided by NRCS has been very popular.

LWMCD: Jonathon Miller reported that they are undergoing a transition of administrators right now – Della will be leaving and Lisa DenBoer will be filling that vacancy on a part-time basis. The tree sale is going well with lots of volunteer help. They will be holding their Annual Meeting in July. They don't have any EAB funds this year and also no funding from MDA. They are losing two board members but have three candidates for those positions. They have submitted a grant request to the NFWF 5 Star Program for funding for Hamilton Lake. They did have an anonymous donor give them \$10,000 for a memorial trail and are looking for more donations to help remediate the parking lot erosion, and other maintenance activities.

EUPRPDC: Nathan Fazer reported that EUPRPDC is busy as usual. They are considering applying for a coastal zone management plan grant (Greenways/Blueways) and might be seeking letters of support. They are seeking funding to inventory trails, develop a website (sort of a one-stop-shop) for Silent Sports in the area with an emphasis on the St. Ignace to Drummond Island corridor.

USFS: Jim Osenberger reported that the forest is entering a second year of stimulus funding for projects which involve replacing bridges and culverts at 18 road crossings (making the passages bigger). This could cause some challenging detours. Some of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funds that have flowed through to the Forest Service (this began back in the Bush Administration) will help fund two Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMA), with \$100,000 funding the development of the Eastern UP (Chippewa, Luce and Mackinac counties) CWMA (newly created) and \$50,000 for the Central UP CWMA (which is already underway). The CEMCD is serving as the fiscal agent for the EUP CWMA. He also reported on the Secure Rural Schools program which is available to counties that have national forest lands. The county may choose to take receipts from the USFS in lieu of taxes and use the funds to implement projects is the county under the direction of an advisory committee (which includes 5 reps from business/industry, 5 reps from conservation groups, and 5 reps from govt. agencies). They are working hard to get interest in these positions. Chippewa and Delta County have both opted for this with Chippewa having around \$80,000/year and Delta Co having around \$35,000/year. The projects need a tie-in to the USFS and can include fuel reduction, invasive species, recreation, and other conservation projects. They are also working with TNC to see if they can get much needed Community Wildfire Protection Plans in place (5 grants in the UP). They are assisting the EAB efforts by housing some staff in USFS offices. They are also divesting of the USFS building in Sault Ste. Marie, the proceeds will be reinvested in other USFS facilities. Dean Reid mentioned (and Jim O concurred) that some of the past USFS road closures could have been done more effectively and with more sensitivity to the public and landowners. Jim assured Dean that they are aware of these issues and are addressing them. He pointed out that many of the closures were for roads that technically were not public access roads to begin with, but the public had been using them as such.

Les Cheneaux Watershed Council: Wendy Wagoner reported that the Les Cheneaux Watershed council is sponsoring a Frog Festival on July 17th (changed to summer instead of spring to incorporate summer residents). Other partners in the Frog Fest are the Little Traverse Conservancy, LSSU Aquatic Lab and they will sponsor field trips to several preserves. They are seeing problems with Eurasian water milfoil and phragmites. They released weevils a few years ago which are helping somewhat and also “mowing” the milfoil and trying to compost it. They are also continuing hazardous waste collections and incorporating the use of a barge to collect from outlying islands.

Other Partners: Jim Pawlowicz, MDA Environmental Stewardship Director, was in the UP to work with districts who have EAB funding and participate in a public meeting in Garden Corners tonight. He is involved with the SLAM (Slowing Ash Mortality) program of MDA. He mentioned that the Iron Co. CD is hoping to secure funds from the Ottawa NF for a portable boat wash to help fight the spread of milfoil. He said that even though some of the techniques that are being employed to stop the spread of EAB may seem futile for some sites in the UP, they are developing techniques to help fight future infestations as the disease spreads across the nation.

Coordinators Report: Marilyn reported that she is assisting the CEMCD in putting together the Cooperative Weed Management Agreement for all partners to sign and that the UP RC&D Council will be a partner pending approval by the council at Friday's meeting. They are currently gathering ideas for the Plan of Work for the CWMA. She also distributed an updated Annual Plan of Work which shows progress on various projects. She has completed training as a facilitator and is available to help facilitate (not mediate) conservation related meetings for partners.

NEW PROJECT MEASURES: None

PROJECT UPDATES:

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 have received a small grant to help them and have a meeting scheduled for tomorrow with Barbara Nelson-Jameson (NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program manager in Michigan).

RRIP-IT-UP: The UP RC&D Council was notified that their project was funded at \$150,000. Darcy attended the grant presentation event in Grand Rapids yesterday. The project will bring many of the folks in the UP that have been working to control invasive species together to collaborate and get training. Rapid Response Invasive Plant Intervention Teams will be formed in all 13 conservation districts, two UP-wide workshops will be held and 8 training sessions, and 4 demonstration projects will be implemented during this 18 month project.

BURN-UP: The Phase II extension was completed March 31, 2010. All remaining funds have been received. Engineering pre-feasibility studies were completed at the Republic-Michigamme School and also for select buildings at the Ford Center. A grant proposal was submitted to the USFS for "BURN-UP Phase III" which would continue the current work being done and expand activities with new partners in northern Wisconsin (Lumberjack RC&D Council, BEREC). A final report is due to the USFS by June 30, 2010.

Grand Marais Harbor Breakwall: Marilyn reported that she had been contacted by partners in this project and they are hopeful that the Army Corp. of Engineers funding for this work might become available this summer.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 10, 2010 at 1 pm. Darcy will talk to Dick Timmer about the possibility of meeting in Brimley at BMCC (include food?).

**Eastern Regional RC&D Council Meeting
Sault Ste. Marie - June 10, 2010**

PRESENT: Jill Maki-Luce Co Comm; Dean Reid-Mackinac Co Planning Comm; Dusty King - Chippewa East Mackinac CD; Nathan Fazer-EUPRPDC; Dick Timmer & Don McLean – Chippewa Co Comm; Marilyn Shy -UP RC&D Council

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Timmer at 1:10 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved with no changes (Reid/Maki).

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

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

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Legislative Update: Marilyn reminded council members that when the President's budget was released in February, the RC&D Program was zeroed out and subsequently we had sent letters to the UP offices of Stupak, Stabenow and Levin requesting that they work to reinstate this funding (\$50.73 million). There has been no recent news concerning this item.

RC&D Performance Improvement Criteria: Marilyn passed out copies of the 2009 Annual Report for the Upper Peninsula RC&D Council. The comments were very positive. All agreed that the report was attractive, had great photos, and a nice balance of written summaries of the projects along with the pictures. All agreed that a color report was an excellent way to describe the accomplishments of the RC&D. Depending upon cost, it was requested that Darcy make a copy for each county commissioner in the entire UP, and mail out packets to each county. However, the group would understand if cost is a factor and it is not feasible. It was also asked that a copy be sent to each library in the UP. Possibly this could be done electronically.

REPORTS:

Chippewa County: Dick Timmer reported that Mascoma hopes to be breaking ground during the second quarter of next year. There were some rumors about a disagreement between the EDC and the railroad. The railroad bed will need a heavier gauge steel put into it, and at one point there was a discussion about a separate rail line. Mascoma needs to communicate better about what is going on, and for that reason they are now sending a person on a quarterly basis to the county commission meetings. Soon they will have a person housed at the EDC office. Timmer stated that he liked seeing the new stakes for the windbreaks that were recently planted by CEMCD. Unfortunately, there was a fire in the right-of-way that took out some of the trees. Dusty stated that the owner will have to replant, if not, he will be charged with having a fire in the right-of-way, which is against the law. Don McLean reported that he met with the St. Mary's River Sportsmen's Club. They usually raise money to do some fish stocking in the river, but this year the DNR will not allow it as they are doing a study on natural reproduction. Don asked the group if they had any ideas on how the money could be used this year, especially ideas for habitat restoration. Dusty thought there might be a site that could be remediated in the Munuscong or Barbeau area.

Luce County: Jill Maki reported that the local Chamber of Commerce sponsored a business after hours meeting featuring a tour of Northern Wings Repair, and had an outstanding turnout – about 55 people attended. Northern Wings has received one of three awards in the state for innovation; they were nominated by Michigan Works. They do milling of aviation parts for Boeing and NASA. It is great to have them here in northern Michigan. Jill is still working to do something about blight in the county. There are on-going discussions about “place-making” and how important first impressions are to attracting bright, young people to an area.

Mackinac County: Dean Reid reported that since the county has no EDC director, they are meeting with Northern Lakes Alliance to see what is happening below the bridge. They have entered into an agreement with the Alliance in order to build up public/private partnerships. Single counties often cannot afford to hire a quality person as EDC director, and the Alliance has 6-7 quality people on board. Don McLean stated that the eastern UP often identifies strongly with the northern lower peninsula, and needs to capitalize on that regionalism. He was glad to hear that Mackinac County has stepped up to tap into the expertise that the Alliance can provide. Dick Timmer asked Dean about any news on wind projects, and Dean stated that Rudyard is moving ahead. There is a company coming in from Iowa that manufactures wind turbines that is meeting with folks to buy up wind rights.

Chippewa East Mackinac CD: Dusty King reported that crews are on site in the Moran area working on the EAB project. The emphasis is not so much on trapping of EAB, which is discouraging. There will be trapping for other bugs, like the sirex wood wasp. They are being told that what they are doing now will be most helpful to other states in their efforts to combat EAB. Pesticide applicators will need to come from below the bridge, as there are none in the area.

NRCS: Pat Carr and Kent Dankenbring were not able to attend.

EUPRPDC: Nathan Fazer reported that EUPRPDC is busy as usual. He continues to work with Whitefish Township on their wildfire protection plan. A Fire Wise Committee is being formed.

US Forest Service: Dusty reported that the USFS is closing their office in the Soo. However, they would still like to have a presence in the area, and they are interested in partnering with the District. They would like to have a desk at the USDA Service Center. However, the CEMCD would like to have the US Forest Service donate the old office to the District. Right now the plan is for the USFS to sell the building and put the money into their office in Raco. Dick Timmer reported that he was part of the 13th annual federal forest clean-up. In past years, they would fill a truck and trailer full of trash; this year there were only 2-3 bags full.

Coordinators Report: Marilyn reported that most of her activities for the past quarter were related to the RC&D projects currently underway (see project updates below).

NEW PROJECT MEASURES: None

PROJECT UPDATES:

RRIP-IT-UP: Marilyn handed out a flyer describing the project and reported that workshops were held in May at three locations: Marquette, Brimley and Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. In addition, a training session was held earlier in the week for the Districts across the UP who will be forming Rapid Response Teams. A Steering Committee is being formed and will meet by teleconference next week.

Dean Reid asked if a list of invasive plants for the state could be provided to him as the Tree Farm program wants to incorporate the control of invasive plants into their criteria.

Eastern UP Cooperative Weed Management Area: Dusty reported that CEMCD is the financial manager for the project, and that Wendy Wagoner has been hired to be the project leader. There has been a fantastic response by partners with federal, state, and local governments as well as private interests enthusiastically represented. A process is underway to have a Memorandum of Understanding signed by as many groups as possible. To date, seventeen have indicated that they are interested in signing.

Les Cheneaux Watershed Project: Has been completed.

Superior Shores Trail: Marilyn reported that Barbara Nelson-Jameson (NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program manager in Michigan) met with a small group at Bay Mills Community College, and indicated that there was funding to hire a summer intern. Unfortunately, it was not accomplished in time. Barbara said that the money can still be used to hire an intern next summer. Barbara will contact the project leaders to find out what they would like to do next.

BURN-UP: Marilyn reported that the millage for the St. Ignace Schools to install a biomass boiler was defeated by 11 votes. The millage will be on the ballot once again in November. A grant proposal was submitted to the USFS for "BURN-UP Phase III" but was not funded.

Grand Marais Harbor Breakwall: Marilyn reported that she had been contacted by Jack Hubbard, Burt Township Supervisor, who said that the Army Corps of Engineers has signed the FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) which is the next step in finding funding for this work.

Tahquamenon Area Civic Center: The TARA (Tahquamenon Area Recreation Authority) has 2 new members, and they are currently thinking seriously about applying for a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant. Sharon Brown is the new project director. She will be attending the next meeting of the MNRTF board in Indian River on June 16th to discuss it with them

CORRESPONDENCE: None

Meeting was adjourned at 2:45 pm.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting is scheduled for September 9, 2010 at 1:00 pm in Brimley. Dick Timmer will find us a location and set up a lunch and tour of the hoop house at Bay Mills and other items of interest.

**Eastern Regional RC&D Council Meeting
Bay Mills Community College, Brimley – September 9, 2010**

PRESENT: Jill Maki-Luce Co Comm; Dusty King, Wendy Wagoner & Corey Jerome - Chippewa East Mackinac CD; Nathan Fazer - EUPRPDC; Don McLean – Chippewa Co Comm; Pat Carr & Kent Dankenbring – NRCS; Marilyn Shy & Darcy Rutkowski - UP RC&D Council

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Dustine King at 1:45 pm after finishing a wonderful tour of the hoop houses led by Steve Yanni. The chairperson and vice-chair were not in attendance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved with the addition of one business item, “Silent Auction Item and Fall MARCDC Conference in Traverse City” (Fazer/Maki).

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

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

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Legislative Update: Darcy Rutkowski reported that both the House and Senate have restored the RC&D funding at the \$50.73 million level (no change for several years).

Silent Auction Item & Fall MARCDC Meeting in Traverse City: Darcy distributed information about the Michigan Association of RC&D Councils fall conference in Traverse City which is being hosted by CRA on October 28-29. CRA is offering a special rate of \$10 for a single afternoon for any interested partners to learn more about the Boardman Dam Restoration project. Darcy mentioned that since the location is relatively close to the EUP, possibly some partners could take advantage of this opportunity and that CRA has a record of doing excellent stream restoration work. Also, CRA is hosting a silent auction and requesting that all Michigan Councils donate at least one item for this. If anyone has any sources of silent auction donations, please contact Darcy.

REPORTS:

Chippewa County: Don McLean reported that the Frontier project is still progressing, but the communication between the company and the county is not always the best. Frontier has decided to rent space from the EDC at Kinross and have more of a presence in the area.

Luce County: Jill Maki reported that the EDC accepted a bid on the second phase of the industrial park work and the bid was awarded to Oberstar of Marquette.

Mackinac County: No one present.

Chippewa East Mackinac CD: Dusty King reported that they are having a fall tree sale and she recently finished up spending the week at the Chippewa County Fair. Corey Jerome reported that the Munuscong Watershed Association is sending a survey to residents to gauge their current knowledge and they have a non-point source grant to determine where problems exist in the watershed. They are responding to the RFP for a new 319 planning grant. They are also working on developing a partnership with BMIC for work on the Waiska River.

NRCS: Kent Dankenbring reported that they are busy with the construction season for many of their contracts. All NRCS employees are also beginning to complete the “ABC” process where they have to itemize how much

time they have spent on various activities. This will be a very time consuming project. They received more than 1000 applications for the new hoophouse (high tunnel) program and only 1 in their area was funded.

EUPRPDC: Nathan Fazer reported that EUPRPDC is trying to organize a UP-wide GIS group and they have 22 folks interested so far. They are continuing work on the wildfire protection plan for Whitefish Twp and forming a Firewise committee. They have been able to obtain quite a bit of information from the DNRE. In Luce County, the wildfire protection plan work is beginning. They have also submitted a Coastal Zone Management grant application to create a “one stop shop for Lake Huron Shoreline information”. Their grant made it through the initial review cut. He reported that some of the Chippewa County Commissioners are interested in adding one more person (primary duties would be GIS) and they are looking for other stakeholders to fund this position with the EUPRPDC serving as a GIS clearinghouse. This would require expensive equipment down the road. LSSU has started a BS program in GIS and one requirement is that the student complete an internship, so there will be lots of demand for GIS in the future.

Coordinators Report: Marilyn reported that she recently assisted at the SWCS meeting which was held in the Eastern UP and the group visited the BMIC hoophouse that we saw earlier today, and also the CD property where they are growing hybrid poplars, and Greg Zimmerman’s farm.

NEW PROJECT MEASURES: None

PROJECT UPDATES:

RRIP-IT-UP: Darcy distributed a handout on project accomplishments to date. Eleven of the 13 Conservation Districts have been sponsoring activities and many have exceeded match expectations. The UP-wide conference they are sponsoring is scheduled for November 3 in Marquette, and they are very excited about the speakers they have lined up. Rachel Miron from the Delta CD manned the RRIP-IT-UP booth at the UP state fair where a raffle was held and 232 people stopped by and signed up, with 64 of them requesting more information on invasive plants. The contact information was passed on to the appropriate CD for follow-up.

Eastern UP Cooperative Weed Management Area: Wendy Wagoner reported that the next meeting for the EUP CWMA is scheduled for September 24 at 10 am in St. Ignace at the USFS office. The afternoon portion of the meeting will be held at Straits State Park where the group will receive training on buckthorn identification, mapping and possible treatments. They have had activities assisting the Les Cheneaux watershed council, have developed a postcard for citizens to report infestations which has been well received, and created laminated id cards for field use.

Superior Shores Trail: Marilyn reported that the project is somewhat on hold until next year.

Tahquamenon Area Civic Center: Sharon Brown is the new project director and the project has been scaled back a bit to an ice arena instead of a full community center.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

Meeting was adjourned at 2:40 pm (Fazer/McLean).

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2010 at 1:00 pm tentatively in Curtis. Jill Maki will assist in helping find a meeting location.

**Eastern Regional RC&D Council Meeting
Chamberlain's Ole Forest Inn, Curtis – December 9, 2010**

PRESENT: Jill Maki-Luce Co Comm; Dusty King & Wendy Wagoner - Chippewa East Mackinac CD; Dean Reid – Mackinac County; Mike LaPointe– NRCS; Marilyn Shy & Darcy Rutkowski - UP RC&D Council

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Dean Reid at 1:15 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved with no changes (Maki/King).

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

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

BUSINESS ITEMS:

County Dues Update: Darcy reported that 2010 dues have now been received from all 15 counties. Ontonagon and Schoolcraft counties both paid their dues since the last meeting. Schoolcraft County has zeroed out the UP RC&D in their 2011 budget.

Set Meeting Schedule for 2011: Quarterly meetings were scheduled for 2011 on March 17, June 16, September 15, and December 15. The meetings were shifted from the second Thursday of the month to the third Thursday to avoid a conflict with the Mackinac County Commission meeting dates.

Circle of Diamonds: The UP RC&D Council recently applied for and received Circle of Diamonds designation from the National Association of RC&D Councils. This program requires that councils are in compliance with best management practices for non-profit organizations, have effective working relationships with several partners, council boards represent the diversity of the population of their service area, have up-to-date bylaws, annual plans of work, and strategic plans, and are effectively communicating with their constituents by means of outreach documents such as newsletters, and annual reports. There is no cost to be a Circle of Diamonds member, however, the application must be resubmitted each year. The UP RC&D Council is only the second out of eight councils in Michigan to receive the designation.

Annual Plan of Work for 2010: Marilyn distributed copies of the 2010 Annual Plan of Work where recent progress on various projects was highlighted. Several projects have been successfully completed during the year and others that are still in progress will be carried forward to the FY2011 Annual Plan of Work for which the draft has already been developed and will be considered for approval when the UP RC&D Council meets tomorrow.

REPORTS:

Chippewa County: Dusty King reported that Dick Timmer may be appointed to fill a slot on the Chippewa County Road Commission. She also learned that the USFS building will be removed and replaced by a roundabout.

Luce County: Jill Maki reported that the dedication of the new Community Action Building recently took place and many citizens attended. Funding was included in the 2011 budget for the Economic Development Director. That position is currently staffed by Lisa DenBoer. Lisa is also the part-time administrator at the LWMCD but has not been working lately due to some health issues. She may return to work next week.

Mackinac County: Dean Reid reported that the Mackinac County Planning Commission has started to work with the Northern Lakes Economic Alliance which covers the 4 northern counties in the lower peninsula and is based in Boyne City. They probably will not fully join this Alliance, but may contract with them to do a survey of Mackinac County needs. They may be able to take advantage of some brownfield development funding. Wind energy development is ongoing and Element Power went to Marquette Township and helped them develop some ordinances related to wind development.

Chippewa East Mackinac CD: Dusty King distributed a handout on the Munuscong River Watershed Planning Project that is underway in their district. Corey Jerome is the project coordinator. She also distributed a handout detailing the soil

erosion and sedimentation control activities for the period October 2009 through October 2010 which are being handled by the district. During that period 71 permits were closed out and there are currently 55 active permits. District personnel made a total of 226 site visits. The handout had several “before and after” pictures that demonstrated the importance of these erosion control activities. Dusty also reported that the CD is looking into getting involved in permitting for activities in critical dunes areas within the district. Many local conservation-related organization and agency personnel have been getting together periodically for a “conservation lunch” to facilitate information exchange and cooperation. Folks representing LSSU, MDNRE, USFS, tribes and the conservation district have participated. One concern that is common to many of the groups is the desire to identify brownfield sites.

NRCS: Area Conservationist, Mike LaPointe, reported that to date he has not received information from the NRCS state office regarding the FY2011 budget. Congress passed a continuing resolution for the budget so funds are being allocated at the same level as FY2010. The UP will probably not see any significant changes in the number of NRCS personnel. Roll-out of the programs just occurred this week and DC’s are still in the process of familiarizing themselves with this new information. Several programs provide forestry assistance for the PNIF landowner for developing forestry plans and then implementing those plans. There is also some cost-share available for treating invasive plants. Mike mentioned that individuals may sign up at any time of the year, so if the upcoming deadlines cannot be met, folks should still apply and can possibly get funding in the next round.

EUPRPDC: No reps present

Coordinators Report: Marilyn did not have any additional items to report on that were not already covered when she discussed the Annual Plan of Work, or that won’t be covered under project reports.

NEW PROJECT MEASURES: None

PROJECT UPDATES:

RRIP-IT-UP: Darcy reported that she and Marilyn are visiting each of the conservation districts to review their activities and accomplishments during the first field season and to discuss their plans for the next field season. These visits have been extremely helpful in generating ideas that can be shared among all districts. The number and variety of partnerships that have been developed in the districts is amazing. The first UP-wide conference on invasive plants was held in early November and was a huge success. It was attended by 71 people and plans are already underway for the second conference to take place next November with several conference participants volunteering to sit on a planning committee. Over the winter districts will be making plans for next field season and the steering committee will also be awarding at least 4 mini-grants for invasive plant demonstration sites which will be installed by next fall. The applications for these mini-grants are due on February 28, 2011.

Eastern UP Cooperative Weed Management Area: Wendy Wagoner reported that their CWMA is working on a strategic plan and also on developing mapping protocols that will be standardized with MISIN. She encouraged folks to check out their website which is constantly updated and has many resources for partners dealing with invasive plants. They may submit an application for an invasive plant demonstration site.

Tahquamenon Area Civic Center: Sharon Brown is the new project director and the project has been scaled back a bit to an ice arena instead of a full community center. They just found out that they were accepted to participate in the Pepsi Refresh grant program and that will begin in January 2011.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

Meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm (Maki/King).

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting is scheduled for March 17, 2011 at 10:00 am in Newberry. Jill Maki will assist in helping find a meeting location.