

Meeting Minutes, Eastern RC&D Council

April 12, 2005

In attendance: Dusty King CEMCD
 Bob Wiles, Eastern Region Chairman
 Paul Van Ryzin, Coordinator

Meeting begins at 1:10 pm

Minutes of Previous Meeting: Minutes Approved with minor changes.

Christine Bonde is no longer DC at the Soo; has moved to MN. Her position has been filled. Mike LaPointe has pushed through the process; Scott Hughey, in the Oceana/Shelby Township office.

Project Update: “Water Guardians” Program -- Dusty intended to bring grant info; have hired Wendy Wagner to do the job; not able to be here today. Project being implemented; going to senior citizen lunches in the Eastern U.P. to launch the “Water Guardians” program.

Bob- MI Association of School Personnel; they have excellent programs, and possible way to recruit more seniors to get involved.

Chippewa/E. Mackinaw CD annual meeting; was in March this year, 70 in attendance. Next year it will be moved back to January. Introduced Will Bomier and said goodbye to Christine.

Program Update: CSP: about 10 signees. It is crucial to have soil tests, so people had to chop thru the ice to get them back to qualify. One test was high in Nitrogen, it will hurt them in this program. It’s been a good round, and may lead to more in the future. Unless the program re-appears in the Farm Bill, it may not get to all the watersheds in the U.S. It’s a good program in that it rewards people for doing well with conservation measures.

CD would like to help concentrate efforts to apply lime; a way to reduce rates by collaborating with many farmers at once?

WRP- Allows people to survive in retirement. Big acreage in WRP this year.

Walleye operation on Forbes McDonald property; big piece in WRP; raising walleye and setting them loose in the St. Mary’s river; over 200 released.

John Bricker will be coming up to John McDonald’s WRP in May. Have bird observatory shacks on the bonds; various organizations use them for counts.

Staff/Board Member Update:

Darcy Rutkowski new UPRC&D Council administrator; Candace has left.

Bob D. has stepped down from the UPRCD.

Aaron will get Scott Shackleton to take his place as a County rep to RC&D. Dick Timmer with Earl Kay...we will need to find out who’s been appointed to represent the County. Where is Jim Ferraro? Michelle Walk is new to Extension in St. Ignace; she is the Extension Director for the County of Mackinaw.

Will Aaron stay on? Exec Board, yes (Paul thinks) but not on the Regional RC&D board. He is still sitting on one of the boards with the County. He may continue to be appointed by the Commissioners. We will contact Aaron and find out.

New employee: suggestion to get involved with economic development groups (Wiles). The U.P. continues to be viewed as the 'great outback', undeveloped territory, wilderness. If there are ED organizations, if resource development could be included, that could be a potential position. Need to work on publicity; better advertising, promoting resource development. What we don't do well enough is explain what we do. Need to start listing projects. Why don't we have a plaque after a project is done so people will see it and start to realize what UPRC&D does? \$2 aluminum sign; Dusty has connections on that. Costs only \$25 to set up. Send to paper with a picture and a paragraph on the project, for better publicity. Always send a picture! For example, the CEMCD will get hats with Water Guardians on them. May make up signs; at every site where water testing is going on, a CD sign. Wouldn't be permanent at beaches.

Dusty suggestions that we could look at second EPA grant; expand Water Guardians under the new grant to apply for UP-wide program.

New Project Ideas:

Selden worked with Soo Area HS to do a nature trail, plant trees, etc. Don't know if it ever became an RC&D project. Recently, they are looking for trees, need planting plans, need input. Arlen Bell brought in the project to Dusty. They have money, they just don't know how to proceed. Someone in the forestry department? Lynn Sampson, or NRCS state forester? Who could help with selection and planting, etc. Richard Stevenson is a possibility. What about Timbermen Association? It's a park more than a forest. Outdoor classroom is the goal.

Discussion of separate account for Eastern Region.

Need to clearly identify who's on the committee, get them to the meetings.

Add Water Guardians to the Annual Plan!

Next meeting July 12; meet in Cedarville to hear about the Water Guardian program.

MINUTES

Eastern Regional RC&D Council Meeting
Creekside Herbs & Art, Cedarville, MI 49719
July 12, 2005 1 pm

Present: Forbes McDonald, Chippewa Co. CD(alternate), email update: forbes@sault.com
Pat Carr, CEMCD, email update: pat.carr@macd.org
Jim Farero, Mack Co. Commissioner
Richard Price, Luce Co. Commissioner
Sharon Brown, L/WM CD
Michelle Robbins, Chippewa OES (office of emergency services?)
Richard Serfass, CEMCD
Wendy Wagoner, Water Guardian program, Les Cheneaux Wtshd Council
Dusty King, CEMCD

Minutes of the previous meeting accepted (Dusty/Wendy).

Forbes: Walleye Rearing: in conjunction with the Soo Tribe; raised over 1 M; agricultural pursuit; been doing this for over 30 years; filled with snowmelt.

DNR used to be partner; now Sault Tribe; occasionally get eggs from DNR; our ponds produce better than anyone in the state. Part of efficiency....can catch 300,000 in a few hours.

Reports & Business Items:

Annual Plan/Council Membership

Paul's discussion of 2005 Annual Plan; available on the web at www.uprcd.org (go to Eastern Region Page, scroll to bottom of page, look for '2005 Annual Plan'. [Note: Annual Plan was distributed in hard copy at April meeting, which was only attended by 3 members.] Plan reflects the EXECUTIVE BOARD'S desire to focus our efforts based on Board members' criteria for ranking projects. Board is also concerned about lack of participation of County and Conservation District Board members at the Regional level. The RC&D boards are planning entities which give power to local people; the Executive Board is concerned that this opportunity is being lost due to lack of participation.

The Board has discussed the option of recruiting at-large County or CD representatives to replace those appointed reps who are unable or unwilling to attend Regional meetings on a regular basis. If you are an appointed County or CD Board representative and are unable or unwilling to attend regular quarterly RC&D meetings in the Eastern Region, please contact Paul (226-7487) so that our office can recruit interested and active representatives. Review of the structure of the UP RC&D: Regions elect two representatives to serve on the Executive Board. Request for volunteer to be the second Eastern RC&D representative, with Aaron Hopper (fmr Chippewa Co Commissioner), replacing Bob DeVillez (an at-large representative from Luce Co).

Ferraro: why do we attend meetings if we don't know what we are there for? Anecdote provided regarding another board that was enjoyable until new people began to try to formalize the meetings, at which point the meetings were no longer enjoyable and the board had trouble retaining members.

Discussion about the philosophy of RC&D as a business vs. a government program. Transitions with NRCS from RC&D program that distributes soil conservation funding to local units of government to the newer direction as articulated in the 2002 Farm Bill to require RC&D Areas to become independent nonprofit entities and improve basic business functions and practices. NRCS evaluation mechanisms for assessing effectiveness of RC&D Areas is changing, we need to keep up to make sure we are supported.

Paul will mail out copy of Annual Plan: Rick and Jim will need hard copies; everyone else can get via email.

County Reports:

Chippewa- Dusty and Water Guardian program; Pat's 319 project in Sault; opportunity for District to work with NRCS and their programs. Announcement not official, but CSP (payments to those already doing conservation on their lands) likely funded in Chippewa Co. this year, which is a large amount. Encouraging for those farmers who have been doing right for many years.

Forbes: in Chippewa Co, CD has been funded; \$4 million; we are 4th highest in the state; NPR has been covering conservation programs in US and other countries; in other countries, farmers being paid to conserve scenic vistas. A way to move from farm subsidies to conservation subsidy.

A desirable method: purchase of development rights.

Luce County: None

Mackinac County: No, but regarding the local board. We should ask people why they are not attending meetings?

DNR – No

Misc Rpts – No

New Project Measures – Cancellations – Completions:

Hamilton Lake- County will dedicate 60 ac as nature area; formed an oversight committee; received \$1000 for signage; next step is ordinance hearing about rules and regulations of the property. Then will move forward to look at other funding. Grant from NFWF was not awarded, notified about 6 weeks ago.

Water Guardians- Ties grandparents and kids together. Were on teleconference, one other was called water guardians, and several were doing the same kind of monitoring project. Funding covered water monitoring equipment, part-time employee; EPA has another grant out there now to townships who want to do water quality projects; now that we have that project model, we could expand to all across the Upper Peninsula; it would be an easy grant to write. Pending deadline? Dusty will check in.

M-123 Heritage Route – Currently a route is designated on M-123, about 26 miles long; MDOT is driving the extension from M-28 Newberry to M-28 Eckerman. Hamilton Lake will then be a key site on that route. Civic Center project in Newberry: have raised over \$300,000; If Heritage Route is extended, then many different projects are eligible for funding.

Paradise Marina – no one present, although they are moving ahead with the project; a long, slow-moving project. They have potential sites. Water Guardians testing at two sites up there; will help later groups to provide baseline environmental data. The group in Paradise is very enthusiastic and could become a watershed council. Toxic waste dump, near the community center; there is a pipe that goes directly out into the lake. Toxins coming from an historic dump site. Oil sheen. The State knows about this site and has for years, but has not yet cleaned it up.

Discussion of M-28 Visual Enhancement Program progress

Discussion of NAWCA; Fall Michigan Association of RC&D Councils meeting includes October 4 publicity event to recognize partners in Chippewa Co NAWCA wetland restorations, implemented by Ducks Unlimited, administered by UPRC&D

Biomass Discussion: Did not get funding; State call for increased recycling; Jim: alternative methods of heating; years ago, used oil was the push, but there was limited supply.

UP Council Executive Board Representation:

Request regarding Executive Board appointee. Dusty's mid-August newsletter: Paul will write blurb; Newspaper search for board member: need to first expand on what RC&D is and does. Association meeting tie-in. Mid-September, the article should show up.

In newsletter, another avenue is St Ignace News weekly will insert into paper for \$500, will hit 6000 people.

UPRC&D Executive Board requested to provide funding for advertising; want to request for funding to support joint marketing effort.

This is one of the best things about RC&D...new ideas, people working together.

Next Meeting: Thursday October 6, 1 pm. Location - haven't been down to Engadine area or Naubinway. DNR/Forest Service staff. Trout Lake...Invite township supervisor from Trout Lake; Sharon's board member with farm; Trout Lake pavilion or town hall; city park with pavilion. Dusty will look into a place for the meeting. Dusty will bring a portable grill. Everyone bring a dish to pass. Dusty will inquire about space for meeting, tomorrow.

Ruffed Grouse society field day at Selden Collins' place, Saturday...

Adjourn 2:30

EUP RC&D Meeting Minutes

October 13 1pm Brimley State Park

Attending: Scott Hughey, Pat Carr, Dusty King, Will Bomier, Sharon Brown, Richard Serfass (CEMCD Director), Karen Serfass, Bernie Huetter (MTU EAB Program and Schoolcraft District Forester), Wendy Wagoner, Richard Stevenson (MDNR Forester), Aaron Hopper, Bur Mitchell (Brimley State Park Forester), Richard Timmer (Chippewa County Commissioner) and Carol ? (MDA-EAB Program)

Meeting opened with a potluck luncheon. Vice Chair Sharon Brown facilitated the meeting. Scott Hughey will be the acting coordinator for the EUP RC&D as Paul Van Ryzin has accepted a new position with NRCS.

Committee reports were given by the members.

The EUP RC&D needs another member on the UP RC&D Council. Richard Timmer accepts the position.

Bernie Huetter presented the program. Topic- the emerald ash borer finding at the Brimley State Park.

The next meeting will be scheduled for a date in January, that will be announced at a later date.