

**MEETING MINUTES - CENTRAL REGION RC&D COUNCIL**  
**Gladstone City Hall - Tuesday, January 4, 2011**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am by Chairman Hampton Waring.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Dave Andersen – MSUE; Renee Barron – City of Gladstone; Howard Haulotte -Delta CD; Ernie Hoholik-Schoolcraft Co Comm Rep; Hamp Waring-Alger CD; Jaime Beranek-Marquette CD; Jerry Doucette-Alger Co Comm; David Silvieus-Hiawatha Natl Forest; Clyde Thoune-Menominee CD; Chuck Harris and Bobbie Klocke -Dickinson CD; Lloyd Matthes-CUPPAD; Tom Tauzer-NRCS; Marilyn Shy-UP RC&D Coordinator/NRCS; Darcy Rutkowski -UP RC&D Council

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES:** The agenda was approved (Andersen/Thoune) with the addition of “Mailing List Update” under business items. The minutes from the meeting of October 5, 2010 were approved (Hoholik/Andersen) as written.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** Treasurer Dave Andersen provided a written treasurer’s report which summarized the activity in the checking account from October 2010 through September, 2011. The ending balance is \$442.58. The only activity was a \$50 donation to the City of Gladstone to help offset the cost of snacks that the city provides for our meetings. The treasurer’s report will be placed on file. It was noted that dues statements for 2011 will be mailed to all conservation districts and counties before the end of January. It was suggested that a reminder be included in the dues request to the Central RC&D Conservation Districts regarding the mini-grant program that was started last year.

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**2011 Annual Plan of Work:** Marilyn distributed the 2011 Annual Plan of Work for the UP RC&D Council that was approved by that group at their December meeting and has been forwarded to the NRCS state office for their approval. The Plan reflects the deletion of projects which have been completed and addition of new projects, as well as the inclusion of active, ongoing projects. The Plan format follows NRCS guidelines. This year NRCS is requiring the Plan to include an estimate of the amount of coordinator time required, and the budget required to complete each project. These items have been included. The Plan is a working document, and will be updated as the year progresses with new projects and notes on the status of each project.

**Mailing List Update:** The Central UP RC&D Council mailing list is updated periodically, and it was done so today with input from members present.

**REPORTS**

**Alger Conservation District:** Hamp Waring read a report prepared by Administrator, Teri Grout. Highlights of the report included:

1. Received a 3-year GLRI grant, provides funding for 4 erosion control projects, and development/expansion of watershed program in county, and funding for an intern.
2. Finished final project under Munising Bay Watershed CMI Grant-culvert installation at Anna River site (included cost-share from Heartwood Forestland and private landowners).
3. CD’s are zeroed out of state budget in 2011(\$100 placeholder). Alger CD is grateful for office space provided by the county while they search for additional funding.
4. Finished work under NFWF Alger Watershed Restoration & Education grant including several erosion control projects, stream inventories, and produced innovative multi-layered Functional Riparian Zone/Wetlands GIS study for the Munising Bay Watershed. A great planning tool-offering workshops to local officials regarding its use.
5. Continuing work on RRIP-IT-UP project, focused efforts on garlic mustard infestation at CCI Basin, purple loosestrife at Joe’s Creek, spotted knapweed along critical dunes, knapweed and black locust at the AuTrain beach.
6. Spring tree sale catalogs out by end of January (this is main source of operational funds for the Alger CD).
7. Sharing a forester with Marquette CD under contribution agreement with NRCS, he is available at no charge for site visits.
8. Seeking funding to continue EAB monitoring (last year no EAB found in county).

9. Jerry Doucette is re-inventing the Brownfield Commission, Hamp Waring and Teri Grout were appointed to this group.

**Alger County:** Jerry Doucette reported that the commission has been working on a budget for 2011, and he was pleased that the employees have helped the county save \$90,000 through changes in their healthcare plans. He is looking forward to increasing brownfield re-development in the county and they currently have two applications (about \$200,000 total) submitted and are waiting to hear if they will be funded. He hopes that state officials will be able to come to the county and educate them about the program.

**Delta Conservation District:** Howard Haulotte reported that their District is also continuing work on RRIP-IT-UP. They have also been very busy doing work in the Whitefish River Watershed to increase woodcock habitat through landowner sign-ups for EQIP funding targeted to that watershed (143 contracts). They also have had significant interest in CSP programs. Howard encouraged all Conservation Districts to make personal contact with their new (and returning) state reps and senators. The MACD provided a template for letters that districts can personalize for their own use when writing to these folks. The district is also working on an MOU with the county to manage the county parks.

**Delta County: No rep present**

**Dickinson Conservation District:** Bobbie Klocke and Chuck Harris reported that the District has three grants from WEnergies. They are a partner in WRISC (Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition) and that group is working on a management plan right now. Their Annual Meeting is scheduled for January 29, 2011 and will have a different format this year. It will be held at Bay West College and several resource professionals will be on hand to interact with the attendees and provide information regarding forest management, invasive species, wildlife habitat enhancement, livestock management, forest pests & diseases, and switchgrass as a biomass & forage crop.

**Dickinson County: No rep present**

**Marquette Conservation District:** Jaime Beranek distributed a copy of their most recent newsletter. They hope to send out newsletters on a quarterly basis. They work closely with the Alger District on a number of projects, in particular their forestry assistance program. The two districts share a full-time forester now that can assist private landowners with their forestry management activities. They held their Annual Meeting in November and Jack Deo and Phyllis Higman were both speakers. Jack has a great collection of historic UP pictures and the ability to create 3D images from them. They recommend him to all districts across the UP that may be looking for a speaker for their Annual Meetings as his photos span the UP. Phyllis spoke on invasive plant issues. The district has lots of great books for sale, and also will distribute their tree sale catalog by the end of January. They have some new offerings this year (ground covers, ferns, raspberries, etc). They are continuing RRIP-IT-UP activities and planning for next field season. They have some interest in invasive plant work along the Iron Ore Heritage Trail working on garlic mustard infestations and partnering with a school in Negaunee on this. They will kick off work at the Trestle Corridor Native Plant Area on April 30<sup>th</sup> and Jaime has applied for a grant for signage for that space. She is also developing a new brochure. They will be sponsoring several workshops this spring (apple tree pruning, etc), but dates and locations have not been finalized.

**Marquette County: No rep present**

**Menominee CD:** Clyde Thoune reported that they are just squeaking by financially. They may approach the school to see if they could partner with their business program to secure an intern to work with them. They just had their no-till drill repaired (at the cost of \$4,000), and will again be renting it out at the cost of \$15/acre. It cannot be taken out of the county. Their Annual Meeting is scheduled for March 12, location to be determined. Their tree sale catalog will be out soon, and Rhonda Gerlach is continuing to work on the RRIP-IT-UP project.

**Menominee County: No reps present**

**Schoolcraft CD:** No members were present from the Conservation District, however, Darcy reported that she and Marilyn will be attending their next board meeting on January 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss the RRIP-IT-UP project with them. We hope to get some invasive plant activities going in that county. The Seney National Wildlife Refuge has a lot of great work going on, but not much is going on outside the federally managed lands.

**Schoolcraft County:** Ernie Hoholik reported that there has been a lot of controversy in the county in conjunction with the jail system which some residents feels has been funded inappropriately at the expense of other county services.

**MSUE:** Dave Andersen reported that the restructuring of MSUE is pretty much complete and by the end of the month they should have completed plans of work for the various focus areas. Many extension agents will have different job assignments, but will probably not be relocated. He has UP-wide responsibility for Planning and Zoning, and most other employees have UP-wide responsibilities. Some employees have retired. He will be retiring on October 30<sup>th</sup> of this year. He also reported that Schoolcraft County has discontinued funding for MSUE and the last day of funding will be 3/31/11. There will be a millage request for 0.42 mils on the February 22 ballot in the county, but even if that passes there will be a period of time when the old funding has ended and the next funding has not started. Currently the county pays much of the operating expenses (office space and office manager), and other salary costs are covered by MSU. There may be other millage requests on the ballot as well. If the millage does not pass, the office will be closed and all services to Schoolcraft County will cease.

**USFS:** Dave Silviesu from the Hiawatha National Forest reported that the federal government is operating under a continuing resolution, so spending has been conservative so far this fiscal year which began on October 1, 2010. There will be some leadership changes on the Hiawatha with Forest Supervisor, Thomas Schmidt, being promoted to the Deputy Regional Forester in Region 1 (based in Missoula) effective 2/28/11. Also, Theresa Chase, Dave's counterpart in the Munising District is moving to Missouri to be a Deputy Supervisor effective January 10<sup>th</sup>. The Hiawatha manages about 900,000 acres with a 2,200 mile road network and they have outlined their priorities for FY2011:

1. Continue workforce reduction strategy (go from 140 to 110 employees by end of FY2012), which is being done mostly by attrition and not filling vacancies.
2. Reduce transportation and road maintenance needs, and match roads to those in their management plan. They are using GLRI funds to reduce the road network while at the same time restoring water quality & wildlife habitat.
3. Working on a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment.
4. Continue their Native Plant Strategy (growing native plants in Marquette utilizing lots of volunteers)
5. Hope to ramp up timber harvest output and use the profits from that to fund other projects
6. Law Enforcement Needs Assessment was completed and indicated their current law enforcement staff (1 officer in the St. Ignace District and 1 officer in Rapid River) is not adequate so will try to increase capacity
7. The Forest Plan (first approved in 2006) is being amended in regards to Research Natural Areas, and Scenery Management
8. Hiawatha hopes to receive more GLRI funds in FY2011 (they had GLRI funds and Stimulus money in FY2010)
9. They would like to increase their abilities in pre-scribed burning, and use that tool on more acres in the forest in fire-adapted habitats
10. Conservation Education programs that they will continue are Kids in the Woods, YCC programs, and hiring 20-30 students during the summer. Funding is lacking but they have some excellent facilities (Clear Lake is one)

**CUPPAD:** Lloyd Matthes reported that he has spent a lot of time on three projects 1) the Ruth Butler Building at the fairgrounds, 2) a silviculture project in Marquette County, and 3) the invasive species lab project that will be discussed under new projects. He also reminded folks that although it's fantastic that the Marinette/Menominee area will be getting many new jobs related to the new naval contract at Marinette Marine, it can also be devastating for an area if they are not prepared for the new needs for housing, utilities, schools, public safety, etc. It is important for the area to try to diversify and not be totally dependent on a few industries – they also need to look at the eventual slow-down or closure of these businesses.

**Coordinator's Report:** Marilyn reported that she will be contacting Dave Silviesu in the near future about the assistance that NRCS will be able to provide to the Sturgeon River Bank Stabilization Project. She also distributed

a handout about the Tahquamenon Outdoor Recreation Complex project which was entered into the Pepsi Refresh grant competition starting this month. This has been an RC&D project for more than 4 years, and the partners in Newberry have been actively seeking funding for this community complex. The UP RC&D Council will send information to everyone on their mailing list about how to vote to support his project. She also informed members that a new grant opportunity through the Sustain Our Great Lakes program of the NFWF was announced today. She distributed copies of the 2 RFP's and reported that pre-proposals are due February 14, 2011. The UP RC&D Council will be inviting the congressional aides for Representative Benishek, and Senators Stabenow and Levin to attend their meeting in February to educate them about the RC&D program in general and the UP RC&D Council projects and accomplishments. This was done a few years ago and was very effective.

### **New Projects: Feasibility Study for Invasive Species Laboratory**

This project was submitted by CUPPAD and the Schoolcraft County EDC and CCUPAD Director, Lloyd Matthes, provided a summary of the project. The project involves finding the funding to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of creating a dedicated laboratory for the creation of products, markets, and legal controls for invasive species control. Lloyd reported that this approach has not been tried anywhere else. The most likely location for the lab at this point is Camp Manistique in Schoolcraft County. The facility fits the needs of the project quite well. If the lab was feasible and came to be, it would be a place where research would be conducted on invasive species and their potential commercial predation controls, markets and barriers to markets for these products, and sustainability (legal controls, monitoring permits, etc). These economic controls would be another tool in the toolbox for controlling invasive species. Possibilities for who might oversee the lab include university personnel, the DNR, or some private enterprise. They are seeking assistance from the UP RC&D Council in finding funds to conduct the feasibility study. The project was approved (Andersen/Hoholik).

### **Project Updates:**

**RRIP-IT-UP-** Darcy reported that since our last meeting the RRIP-IT-UP project sponsored a UP-wide conference on invasive plants that 70 people from all across the UP attended. It was well-received and a committee of RRIP-IT-UP partners is already working with us to plan next year's conference. The first field season has been completed and she and Marilyn are visiting all the conservation districts to review their first season and help them make plans for their second season. Rapid Response Invasive Plant Teams have been formed in 11 of the 13 conservation districts and over the winter we will be working to put in place the capacity to deal with invasive plants in the two remaining districts. We would like to continue this work beyond the December 31, 2011 end of the present project and funding and will most likely be submitting another proposal to the Sustain Our Great Lakes program to try to get additional funding.

**Garden Flood Control Project:** Tom Tauzer reported that the Delta CD is taking a leading role in this project. The possibility exists that a wind farm will be coming to the Garden Peninsula and they are waiting to find out more about that before proceeding.

**Sturgeon River Analysis and Bank Stabilization Plan** – Dave Silvius gave an update on this project and reported that there was heavy rain in September which resulted in additional bank erosion and loss. He estimated that there is may be only 8 feet of bank left between the river and the road.

**Gladstone Marsh Project-** Howard Haulotte reported that the City of Gladstone is working with Stacy Welling from the MDNRE to put in place a 25 year lease agreement between the state and the city to allow the city to manage the marsh area. This was easier to do than actually transferring the land from the state to the city. They continued with buckthorn treatments this fall.

**Manistique District Heating Plant Feasibility Study** – Dave Andersen reported that the feasibility study being conducted by IDI is about half done. The energy audits and energy conservation measure plans will be done shortly and at the next meeting on January 21 they should get information about the recommended size of the facility, the recommended location, a schematic of the plumbing layout, and whether or not Camp Manistique is a desirable location for the facility. At this point it looks like it will be a district heating facility (not combined heat and power) because that is easiest, but at some future point it could expand to be CHP. By the end of January they will know what the scope of the project will be and sometime in February/March they will have estimated construction costs.

By April/May they will know if it is feasible to go forward with the project, and if it is they will then start looking for funding. They are working to develop the legal framework for a “supply cooperative” that would own and operate the facility. The City of Ironwood is in the early stages of looking at the possibility of a similar project and they have called Dave to request advice. As far as Dave knows, they would be the first community-based wood fired district heating system in the state (and one of very few in the eastern US). The Manistique Paper Mill and Cloverland Electric are interested if the project ever expands to a CHP facility.

**Escanaba River Clean-up and Garden Flood Control Projects** – Marilyn reported that she has requested better cost estimates from the Delta CD for this project and has been in touch with them regarding a possible funding source for a portion of the project.

**Correspondence: None**

**Next Meeting: The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 pm and the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 5, 2011 at 10 am at the Gladstone City Hall.**