

**Eastern Regional RC&D Council Meeting
Zellar's Restaurant, Newberry – January 18, 2012**

PRESENT: Jill Maki-Luce Co Comm; Dusty King & Todd Insley - Chippewa East Mackinac CD; Dean Reid & Jim Hill – Mackinac County; Jonathan Miller-Luce/West Mackinac CD; Nathan Fazer, EUPRPDC; Darcy Rutkowski - UP RC&D Council

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Dean Reid at 1:06 pm.

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

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:

Update on Strategic Planning Meeting: Nathan Fazer and Jim Hill both attended the strategic planning session to represent the Eastern Council on September 13, 2011 in Marquette. Darcy distributed a copy of the notes which summarized the discussion at the strategic planning meeting (attached). In light of the projected budget deficit of almost \$20,000 the decision was made to cut back the number of regional RC&D Council meetings that the council executive assistant will attend from 4 per year to 2 per year. Darcy pointed out that the Eastern Regional RC&D Council may still meet 4 times per year if so desired, but the agenda and minutes and other meeting administration would have to be undertaken by the Eastern Council board officers. A number of short-term and long-term goals were decided upon at the strategic planning session with an immediate focus on continuing the UP-wide invasive plant work that has been started under the RRIP-IT-UP project and will be continued under the new Garlic Mustard Eradication project. The UP RC&D Council will also be developing an “advertising package” which will then be used to promote the Council.

Set Meeting Schedule for 2012: The Eastern Council scheduled two meetings for 2012, May 9 and October 31. The May 9th meeting will begin at 10 am.

Report on NC RC&D Conference/Outstanding Coordinator Award: Darcy reported that she and Bob Larson and Dave Andersen attended the conference in October in Stevens Point, WI. Former UP RC&D Council Coordinator, Marilyn Shy, was present to receive the award for 2010 Outstanding Coordinator for the NC Region after being nominated by the UP Council. Dave Andersen presented the award to Marilyn at the conference and noted her many great accomplishments during her time serving as coordinator for the UP RC&D Council. Many of the conference speakers were addressing issues related to the transition away from federal funding. Dave listened to Amy Beyer, Executive Director of CRA based in Traverse City. CRA has limited the type of projects they take on and focus on watershed remediation and wildlife corridors. That council brings in millions of dollars of grant funds and also received a large donation of about \$500,000 which they utilized to start an endowment fund. They have a full-time employee who focuses on fundraising and development, and a board structured much differently than the UP RC&D Council board. Dave requested a copy of their business plan and also a document on board member roles and responsibilities. He intends to have the UP Council spend time examining these documents to see if we can garner some ideas of how we might change our own council structure.

Elect Vice-Chairperson following resignation by Wendy Wagoner: Nathan Fazer nominated Jim Hill for vice-chairperson. Dusty Kings seconded the nomination and requested a unanimous ballot be cast for Mr. Hill. Motion and unanimous ballot passed.

REPORTS:

Chippewa County: No members present

Luce County: Jill Maki reported that the county is trying to find a way to not reduce county employees' hours. She feels that they are already underpaid for the work that they do.

Luce/West Mackinac Conservation District – Jonathan Miller reported that they are in discussions with plans to merge with the CEMCD, and that CEMCD has already assumed responsibilities for administration. Their District Conservationist, Roger Quist, is retiring in April or May. They learned that there is a chance that the Michigan Tree Farm Outreach might come back to the districts.

Mackinac County: Jim Hill reported that Mackinac County did ok financially in 2011 and they are trying to find ways to make ends meet in 2012. The Register of Deeds resigned, and the deputy register was appointed to that position. They have a new person in charge of the animal control department. Nathan Fazer will be helping them with some GIS work next week.

Dean Reid sits on the planning commission and reported they will be making a presentation and some recommendations to the county board regarding economic development in early February. He reported that anyone that applies for a forest management plan through EQIP will be automatically funded.

NRCS: Kent Dankenbring and Pat Carr were unable to attend.

Chippewa East Mackinac CD: Dusty King reported that their district is receiving a grant for a Michigan Environmental Agriculture Assurance Plan (MEAP) technician who will be based in their office and be a district employee. Dean Reid is receiving an award from the district at their upcoming Annual Meeting.

EUPRPDC: Nathan Fazer reported that EUPRPDC is busy now beginning grant funded projects that typically last about 18 months and will take them through next fall. They received a Coastal Zone Management Grant for the St. Ignace to Drummond Island Recreation Plan. They plan to develop an interactive website with info about boat launches, trails, etc. They are working on a non-motorized plan for Sault Ste. Marie which will involve looking at existing infrastructure and holding public workshops. They just released an RFP for Little Rapids Restoration work.

MDNR, USFS, MSUE, RD, FSA: No reps present

NEW PROJECT MEASURES: None

PROJECT UPDATES:

EUP CWMA: The new Coordinator is Todd Insley. He reported that they are working to finalize their 2012 work plan.

RRIP-IT-UP: Darcy reported that the project is almost complete and all the deliverables have been exceeded and the match requirement has also been exceeded. A second UP-wide conference was held in November and was well-received and well-attended. She is working on the final report now.

Proposed UP-wide Phragmites Project: Darcy has been working with several CD's (including the CEMCD), the Michigan DNR, the MNFI and other partners to put together a grant proposal to control phragmites in the UP. The biggest infestations are in Delta and Menominee counties, and the most effective control is treating mature plants with herbicide. The deadline for submitting the proposal is February 15th.

Garlic Mustard Eradication Project: This project began January 1 and the CEMCD is one of the main partners. They will be responsible for the control work at the Cut River area. Other large infestations are located in Alger, Marquette, and Gogebic counties.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

Meeting was adjourned at 2:35 pm (Hill/Maki).

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2012 at 10 am in St. Ignace at the Mackinac County Airport. Jim Hill will reserve this space for us.