

U.P. RC&D Council Minutes
Teleconference Meeting – February 8, 2013

Members Present: Bob Larson, Ken Marshall, Bob Black -Western UP RC&D; Howard Haulotte & Teri Grout – Central UP RC&D; Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council Executive Director

Members Absent: Aaron Hopper – no response; Nathan Fazer excused for work conflict; two vacancies on board right now (1 Central and 1 Eastern – Jill Maki passed away recently)

Call to Order/Introductions: The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Chairman Larson.

Agenda & Minutes: The agenda was approved with no changes or additions (Black/Grout). The minutes of the previous meeting of December 14, 2012 were approved with no changes (Black/Haulotte).

Public Comment: None

Financial Report: The Executive Director (ED) presented the Financial Report which was a synopsis of all financial activity from January 1, 2013 to January 31, 2013. The balance in all accounts at that time was \$35,522.71. Deficits for all grant funded projects simply reflect the time-lag for getting reimbursed for project activities by the funder. At this point we have unreimbursed grant expenses totaling approximately \$14,000. ED emailed the 990EZ to all board members prior to this meeting and all were in agreement that Bob Larson should complete the signature page and ask Cowell and LaPointe to submit the 990EZ for 2012. Black made a motion, seconded by Grout to place the financial reports on file. Motion passed.

Business Items:

Update on status of Michigan Assoc. of RC&D Councils: Marshall reported that he and Darcy participated in a teleconference meeting on February 5, 2012 where the association voted unanimously to dissolve the MARCDC. The funds in the treasury will be divided equally among the 8 Michigan councils after all outstanding debts have been paid. Darcy will file the 990 E-postcard for the final time and close the bank account. The MARCDC records that are in storage at the UP RC&D Council office can be destroyed (per vote of the MARCDC) except that electronic records for bank accounts should be kept for 7 years.

Draft 2013 County Dues Request: ED had previously sent council members a copy of the draft dues request letter and no council members had any objections to the letter's content, so it will be sent to all UP County clerks.

Discuss Hiring a Part-time Employee: The ED expressed a need for hiring or contracting with another employee to assist with Council and project work. The Council currently has enough grant funds to cover some or all of the expenses of this person. ED has been trying to determine if the Council qualifies to be a Seasonal Employer as much of the funding available is for seasonal invasive plant work. If the council applies to be a Seasonal Employer, there has to be the reasonable, good faith assurance that the seasonal employee will be hired back in subsequent years. It would be difficult and inefficient to try to contract with a person to do the type of work that the ED needs assistance with. It is possible that the Huron Pines RC&D Council will be funded for a new Americorps grant and that they will allow the Americorps employees to be placed in conservation organizations outside the Huron Pines service area. If that comes to fruition, then the UP RC&D could apply to host an Americorps volunteer in our office. There are some financial obligations and the person would not be available until the fall. Further discussion will take place at the next meeting.

Legal Advice/Landowner Permission Form: The ED requested permission from the board to hire a lawyer to review the landowner permission form and herbicide RFPs and contracts for the Phragmites Project. One lawyer that has been recommended is Ellen Kohler with the Watershed Center in Grand Traverse Bay because she is an environmental attorney. A motion was made by Marshall, seconded by Grout to approve this expenditure from grant funds. Motion passed.

Discuss Regional Council Structure/council Sustainability: The UP Council decided not to make any changes to the regional council structure at this time.

Vacant Board Member Positions: There are currently two vacant positions on the board – 1 from the Central Region and 1 from the Eastern Region due to the recent death of Jill Maki. Fazer is working on bylaw revisions which would allow for at-large members to the UP Council with the intention that we might get some new board members that have an interest in the invasive plant work that we are now focusing on. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

UP RC&D Business Plan/NMU request for Assistance: The ED sent a letter to the Business School at NMU to see if any faculty had an interest in assisting us with a business plan. So far we have not received any responses. A motion was made to table this business plan discussion until we hear back from NMU. (Marshall/Grout)

Change Western Meeting Date: The next Western UP RC&D Council meeting is scheduled for March 21 and that conflicts with the Phragmites public workshop that the ED and Grout are hosting in Manistique Twp. The meeting was re-scheduled for Thursday, April 4, 2013.

PROJECTS: Darcy reported on all active projects. She has submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to the EPA which if approved, would allow us to request indirect cost reimbursement in the amount of \$10,000 from the NFWF for our phragmites grant-funded project. The dates have been confirmed for the 6 phragmites workshops where we will work with conservation district partners to educate the public about that project. The Ontonagon County Invasive Plant contract work for the USFS has been completed, the final reports have been submitted and approved and the final payment of \$4685 has been requested.

Regional Meeting Reports: Nothing significant was reported.

Correspondence: none

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 11 am (Marshall/Haulotte)

Next Meeting Date: April 12, 2013 at 10 am Eastern Time at the UP Council office.

U.P. RC&D Council Minutes
UP RC&D Council Office – April 12, 2013

Members Present: Bob Larson & Ken Marshall -Western UP RC&D; Howard Haulotte & Teri Grout – Central UP RC&D; Nathan Fazer – Eastern UP RC&D; Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council Executive Director

Members Absent: Aaron Hopper – no response; Bob Black was excused due to a work conflict; two vacancies on board right now (1 Central and 1 Eastern)

Call to Order/Introductions: The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Chairman Larson.

Agenda & Minutes: The agenda was approved with no changes or additions (Marshall/Grout). The minutes of the previous meeting of February 8, 2013 were approved with no changes (Haulotte/Grout).

Public Comment: None

Financial Report: The Executive Director (ED) presented the Financial Report which was a synopsis of all financial activity from January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2013. The balance in all accounts at that time was \$29,087.28. The ED noted that she has made payment requests to grant funders in the amount of \$24,762.19 which will reimburse the council for expenses on grants. Marshall made a motion, seconded by Haulotte to place the financial reports on file. Motion passed.

Business Items:

Update on status of Michigan Assoc. of RC&D Councils: The MARCDC has been dissolved and the assets in the bank account have been divided equally among the 8 Michigan Councils. As soon as the other 7 checks have cleared the bank, the final check to the UP RC&D will be generated. It will be about \$2070.

Update on 2013 County Dues: Eight counties have paid dues. We have not received dues from Ontonagon, Baraga, Iron, Mackinac, Schoolcraft, Luce and Dickinson.

Draft Annual Plan of Work for 2013: The ED developed the draft Annual Plan of Work which was approved by the Council (Grout/Haulotte).

Circle of Diamonds Re-authorization: ED reported that she submitted the paperwork for re-authorization of our Circle of Diamonds status and it was approved.

Grant opportunity from NARCDC: A motion was made by Grout, seconded by Marshall not to pursue this grant opportunity at this time because it doesn't fit our mission/focus, but to keep our options open for the future. Motion passed.

Hiring of a part-time employee: ED is unable to fulfill all project tasks and activities and is seeking board approval to hire a part-time employee that would be paid from grant funds to do grant activities. ED has 17 overtime hours and 3 weeks of vacation accrued at this time. Motion by Haulotte, seconded by Grout to pay ED for the 17 overtime hours at 1.5 times pay rate, and to approve hiring of a part-time employee to work at least through September 2013 and longer if grant funds allow. Motion passed.

Discuss Regional Council Structure/Council Sustainability: ED reported that the current structure does not appear to be financially sustainable (greater than \$12,000 budget deficit in UP Council expenses during 2012). This item was tabled for discussion at a future meeting in conjunction with bylaw revisions.

UP RC&D Council presentation at UPCAP: ED will develop a powerpoint presentation and Fazer will facilitate a follow-up discussion at this meeting.

Vacant Board Member Positions/Possible Bylaws Revisions: At this time there is one board position vacancy in both the Central and Eastern regions. This item was also tabled until future bylaw revisions are complete.

UP RC&D Council Business Plan – Status of NMU Assistance Request: ED wrote a letter requesting assistance for developing a Business Plan to the Business Dept at NMU which was passed on to professors in the dept. No response has been received.

Change Date of Central Meeting: The date of the Central Regional meeting was re-scheduled to June 11, 2013 to avoid a conflict with a mapping workshop that the ED was required to attend on the same day.

PROJECTS: ED provided project updates.

Correspondence: ED has passed on all correspondence when received.

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 12:25 am (Marshall/Haulotte)

Next Meeting Date: June 14, 2013 at 10 am Eastern Time at the UP Council office.

U.P. RC&D Council Minutes
UP RC&D Council Office – June 14, 2013

Members Present: Bob Larson & Ken Marshall -Western UP RC&D; Howard Haulotte & Teri Grout – Central UP RC&D; Nathan Fazer – Eastern UP RC&D; Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council Executive Director

Members Absent: Aaron Hopper – no response; Bob Black was excused for work conflict; two vacancies on board right now (1 Central and 1 Eastern)

Call to Order/Introductions: The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Chairman Larson.

Agenda & Minutes: The agenda was approved with two additions 1) 2014 Dues Amount and 2) Office Lease (Haulotte/Grout). The minutes of the previous meeting of April 12, 2013 were not available and their approval was tabled.

Public Comment: None

Financial Report: The Executive Director (ED) presented the Financial Report which was a synopsis of all financial activity from January 1, 2013 to May 31, 2013. The balance in all accounts at that time was \$52,356.78. Deficits or positive balances for all grant funded projects simply reflect the timing for getting reimbursed for project activities by the funder. Grout made a motion, seconded by Haulotte to place the financial reports on file. Motion passed.

Business Items:

Election of Officers: Nominations for Chairperson were requested. Haulotte nominated Bob Larson for chairperson, seconded by Grout. Nominations were requested two more times with no additional nominations being made. A motion was made (Haulotte/Grout) to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Larson. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Larson opened the nominations for Vice-Chairperson. Grout nominated Howard Haulotte for vice-chairperson, seconded by Marshall. Nominations were requested two more times with no additional nominations being made. A motion was made (Grout/Marshall) to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Haulotte. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Larson opened the nominations for Secretary/Treasurer. Haulotte nominated Nathan Fazer for secretary/treasurer, seconded by Grout. Nominations were requested two more times with no additional nominations being made. A motion was made (Haulotte/Grout) to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Fazer. Motion passed unanimously.

Set County Dues for 2014: It was noted that the county dues have not increased for at least 8 years. Marshall made a motion, seconded by Grout to increase the county dues amount for 2014 from \$300 to \$350 annually. Motion passed.

Lease for Office Space: The current lease expires on June 30, 2013. Fazer made a motion to extend the lease for another 6 months (at the same rate), seconded by Grout. Motion passed.

New UP RC&D Council Part-time Employee: Rutkowski reported that she hired Jason Schnorr as the new part-time employee to assist with garlic mustard and phragmites project activities. His contract goes through November 1, 2013 and he will be working up to 30 hours/week for that time period.

UP RC&D Council presentation at UPCAP: The ED made a presentation at the recent UPCAP meeting which had to be cut a bit short due to starting a little late. Fazer had hoped to facilitate a discussion following the presentation, but time did not allow.

UP RC&D Role in NAWCA proposal: Marshall, Grout and Rutkowski were invited by DNR and DU personnel to meet to discuss a possible role of grant project administration for a new NAWCA project they are putting together. The UP RC&D would function as the grant recipient and be responsible for grant administration. The budget would include indirect costs for the UP RC&D. Marshall made a motion to authorize the ED to apply for this grant on behalf of the council, seconded by Haulotte. Motion passed.

Bylaw Revisions/Board Member Positions: After much discussion of the current structure with the 3 regional councils and acknowledgement that this structure is really not working and we don't have the funding to support it, the group concurred that it made sense to drop the regional structure and instead move the UP RC&D Council meetings around the UP. The current board would travel to various parts of the UP 3 times a year (making sure to move the meeting around) and all current county commissioners and conservation district members would be invited to the UP Council meetings 6 times per year (3 by teleconference). It was suggested that we try to include some type of field trip, presentation or training event with each meeting. Nathan will begin to modify the bylaws to fit this structure. The next meeting will be a face-to-face meeting in Marquette where we can discuss this in more detail before bringing this new structure to the regional councils.

PROJECTS: No formal project reports were made at this meeting.

Regional Meeting Reports: No formal regional reports were made at this meeting.

Correspondence: ED has passed on all correspondence when received.

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 12 noon (Marshall/Haulotte)

Next Meeting Date: August 9, 2013 at 10 am Eastern Time at the UP Council office.

U.P. RC&D Council Minutes
Teleconference Call – November 1, 2013

Members Present: Bob Larson, Bob Black & Ken Marshall -Western UP RC&D; Howard Haulotte & Teri Grout – Central UP RC&D; Nathan Fazer – Eastern UP RC&D; Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council Executive Director

Members Absent: Aaron Hopper – no response; two vacancies on board right now (1 Central and 1 Eastern)

Call to Order/Introductions: The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am by Vice-Chairman Haulotte.

Agenda & Minutes: The agenda was approved with one change – the discussion of the bylaws was moved to the top of the business items. (Black/Marshall). The minutes of the previous meeting of June 14, 2013 were approved with no changes (TG/NF).

Public Comment: None

Financial Report: The Executive Director (ED) presented the Financial Report which was a synopsis of all financial activity from January 1, 2013 to October 29, 2013. The balance in all accounts at that time was \$57,151.77. Deficits or positive balances for all grant funded projects simply reflect the timing for getting reimbursed for project activities by the funder. Grout made a motion, seconded by Fazer to place the financial reports on file. Motion passed.

Business Items:

Modification of Council Bylaws: The draft bylaw revisions were discussed with several changes being suggested. Nathan Fazer will modify the draft bylaws per the discussion and distribute the updated draft to the entire Council. It is hoped that the bylaw modifications can be finalized at the next meeting and that approval by the regional councils can begin in early 2014.

Extend Part-time employment for Jason Schnorr: Jason's contract expired today. The ED requested that Jason continue to be hired to work 16 hours/week until December 31, 2013 as there are grant-funded tasks that he could assist with. A motion was made by Fazer, seconded by Grout to extend the current contract with the change in the number of hours per week to 16. Motion passed

Schedule Next Meeting Date: The next meeting which was previously scheduled for Friday, December 13 has been changed to Friday, December 6, 2013. A decision was made to postpone the upcoming Central UP RC&D Council meeting which was previously scheduled for Tuesday, December 3 and re-schedule this meeting for a date after the bylaws have been finalized so the Central Council can take a vote on the changes.

MIPN Board Position: The ED has been invited to represent the state of Michigan on the MIPN (Midwest Invasive Plant Network) board of directors. This would be a 3 year term which would begin in January 2014. She would be one of two Michigan representatives on the board which meets quarterly (2 times/year in person, 2 times/year by teleconference call). A motion was made by Grout, seconded by Fazer that the ED be allowed to serve on the MIPN board as long as the UP RC&D has the resources available to pay for any expenses involved (primarily travel). Motion passed.

AmeriCorps Position: The ED is required to travel to Huron Pines in Gaylord on December 13 to interview candidates for the AmeriCorps position we have been awarded. She will also have to attend a required training for host site supervisors on December 18. The volunteer selected to work in our office will report on January 13, 2014 and will work full-time for 10 months.

PROJECTS:

UP-wide Garlic Mustard Project: All fieldwork has been completed and final reports are being received from conservation districts contracted to conduct garlic mustard education and control activities in their counties. The final reports are being put together and the budget and match calculations are being made. All reports must be

submitted by December 31, 2013. The final \$30,000 payment will not be released until all reports have been approved.

Sustainable Invasive Plant Collaboration n Michigan's UP/Pulling Together Grant: This \$51,466 grant supports all 5 CWMAs in the UP. Grant funds were used to hire a weed crew for KISMA, and a Coordinator for WePIC this season. The grant also supported training for CWMAs on standard mapping protocols and covered Jason's time to act as conference registrar and serve on the conference planning committee. These activities have brought lots of positive recognition to the UP RC&D for our leadership role regarding invasive species issues in the region. Funding continues until the end of 2014.

UP Phragmites Project: This project is wrapping up for the season. Contractors mapped over 1300 acres of non-native phragmites in Delta County and about 600 acres in Menominee County. Contractors sprayed over 500 acres with herbicide. We are in the process of filing the required DEQ reports for the work this season, and verifying all the contract work so contractors can be paid. The cost of the herbicide treatments this season is estimated to have been more than \$103,000. This project continues for one more year.

Proposed NAWCA Project and Proposed EPA Phragmites Project: We have still not received any notification as to whether or not we were successful in obtaining either of these grants. We anticipate finding out about the EPA proposal in the very near future and about the NAWCA proposal in the spring.

Regional Meeting Reports: No formal regional reports were made at this meeting.

Correspondence: ED has passed on all correspondence when received.

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am (Marshall/Haulotte)

Next Meeting Date: December 6, 2013 at 10 am Eastern Time at the UP Council office.

U.P. RC&D Council Minutes
UP RC&D Council Office – December 6, 2013

Members Present: Bob Larson & Ken Marshall -Western UP RC&D; Howard Haulotte & Teri Grout – Central UP RC&D; Nathan Fazer (by teleconference) – Eastern UP RC&D; Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council Executive Director; Renee Leow – Guest/Marquette County CD Administrator

Members Absent: Aaron Hopper – no response

Call to Order/Introductions: The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am by Chairman Larson.

Agenda & Minutes: The agenda was approved with no changes – The minutes of the previous meetings of April 12, 2013 and November 1, 2013 were approved with no changes (KM/HH).

Public Comment: Renee Leow, MCCD Administrator, informed the UP RC&D Council that the MCCD intends to apply for a grant from the Cliffs Foundation. The foundation has about \$4 million dollars at this time. They have done some brainstorming about the possible uses of the funds, and hope to apply sometime between mid-January and mid-February 2014. They wanted to know if the UP RC&D Council would be interested in possibly being the grant recipient as it's required that the recipient be a non-profit organization. They could also use the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts as the grant recipient. The Council was somewhat interested in playing this role and would like to see the foundation proposal when complete before making a final decision. Council acknowledged that UP C&D must receive sufficient funds to cover council expenses, including ED time.

Financial Report: The Executive Director (ED) presented the Financial Report which was a synopsis of all financial activity from January 1, 2013 to November 30, 2013. The balance in all accounts at that time was \$97,530.33. A large advance payment of more than \$63,000 was received recently from the NFWF and several large payments to project partners and contractors have not cleared the bank. After all outstanding payments are completed, the balance sheet will reflect a much lower balance – closer to \$30,000. Deficits or positive balances for all grant funded projects simply reflect the timing for getting reimbursed for project activities by the funder and payments made to project partners. Marshall made a motion, seconded by Grout to place the financial reports on file. Motion passed.

Other finance matters discussed included the necessity of the finance committee (Black & Fazer) to meet with the ED (by teleconference) to develop a draft budget for 2014.

Darcy Rutkowski, Phragmites Project Coordinator, has accumulated 207.5 hours of over-time through October 4, 2013, and also accrued 5 weeks of vacation time. Her rate of pay for phragmites project work is \$20.00/hour, therefore the overtime rate is \$30.00/hour. She requested that the UP Council approve the donation of the value of 69 hours of this overtime to be used as match for the phragmites project. The value of the 69 hours is equal to \$2,228.36. She will be paid for the remaining 138.5 hours at \$30.00/hour plus payroll taxes. A motion was made by Haulotte, seconded by Grout to accept the donation of time to the UP Phragmites Project with the stipulation that Rutkowski submit a letter to the Council documenting her donation of the 69 hours of time as match for the project. Motion passed.

Business Items:

Office Lease Renewal: The current lease between the UP RC&D Council and the UP Children's Museum will expire on December 31, 2013. Haulotte made a motion, seconded by Grout to renew the same lease for another 6 months (through June 30, 2014) at the same monthly rate of \$224.00/month. Motion passed.

RC&D GeoLab (information sent to Council members previously): This fund-raising opportunity will be explained in several upcoming webinars (December 11, 12, 13 and 14). ED requested that Council members log in to the webinars to see if they are interested in this opportunity so it can be discussed at the next Council meeting.

AmeriCorps Position Update: The UP RC&D Council received 22 applicants for the AmeriCorps Invasive Plant

Specialist member position that will be hosted at our Council. The maximum number of candidates that may be interviewed is 6 and those applicants were chosen by ED with input from Jason Schnorr. The interviews are next Friday, December 13 in Gaylord. ED is also required to attend a host supervisor training in Gaylord on December 18. The successful applicant will begin their term of service on January 13, 2014 for 10 months.

Modification of Council Bylaws: The most recent version of the draft bylaw revisions which Fazer put together were discussed with minor changes being suggested. A motion was made by Grout, seconded by Haulotte, to approve these draft bylaws. The ED will attempt to schedule regional RC&D meetings in early January to take input from the regional council members on the bylaw revisions, and explain to these regional councils the future UP Council meeting format, and membership structure. The Council intends to vote on the new bylaws at their February 2014 meeting.

Schedule Regional/UP Council Meetings for 2014: Dates were chosen for the next Central and Western UP RC&D Council regional meetings. The Central Council will meet on January 7, 2014 in Gladstone, and the Western Council will meet on Thursday, January 9 in Kenton. ED will confirm meeting location availability and advertise these meetings to the regional members and send out copies of the current bylaws and proposed bylaw revisions by email prior to Christmas. ED will work with Fazer to come up with some dates for the Eastern RC&D Council meeting which works for both of them and then circulate those dates to the key partners and most recent conservation district and county commission members.

PROJECTS:

UP-wide Garlic Mustard Project: No change from the November 1, 2013 minutes - All fieldwork has been completed and final reports are being received from conservation districts contracted to conduct garlic mustard education and control activities in their counties. The final reports are being put together and the budget and match calculations are being made. All reports must be submitted by December 31, 2013. The final \$30,000 payment will not be released until all reports have been approved.

Sustainable Invasive Plant Collaboration n Michigan's UP/Pulling Together Grant: No change from the November 1, 2013 minutes - This \$51,466 grant supports all 5 CWMAs in the UP. Grant funds were used to hire a weed crew for KISMA, and a Coordinator for WePIC this season. The grant also supported training for CWMAs on standard mapping protocols and covered Jason's time to act as conference registrar and serve on the conference planning committee. These activities have brought lots of positive recognition to the UP RC&D for our leadership role regarding invasive species issues in the region. Funding continues until the end of 2014.

UP Phragmites Project: This project is wrapping up for the season. Contractors mapped over 1300 acres of non-native phragmites in Delta County and about 600 acres in Menominee County. Contractors sprayed just under 500 acres with herbicide. All DEQ reports required from the UP RC&D Council have been submitted, and we have also helped the Delta Conservation District submit their required reports. Most contractors have now been paid for their work. The UP RC&D will develop an RFQ for mowing/shredding the larger stands that were sprayed with herbicide this season. This project continues for one more year.

Proposed NAWCA Project and Proposed EPA Phragmites Project: We have still not received any notification as to whether or not we were successful in obtaining either of these grants. We anticipate finding out about the EPA proposal in the very near future and about the NAWCA proposal in the spring.

Regional Meeting Reports: No formal regional reports were made at this meeting.

Correspondence: ED has passed on all correspondence when received.

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm (Marshall/Haulotte)

Next Meeting Date: TBD