

Natural Resources Conservation & Development Board
Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 15, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.

This meeting was held by teleconference.

Board members in attendance:

George Woodbury
Cheryl Thompson
Carol Kenley

Others in attendance:

Shana Joy, Executive Director, NRCDB
Franci Havemeister, Director, Div. of Ag
Joni Scharfenberg, Fairbanks SWCD

1. Call to Order – Determination of Quorum

It was determined that a quorum was present and the meeting was called to order by George Woodbury at 9:07 a.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Shana added a new agenda item, Scott Paper donation, following item 10 on the agenda. **Carol moved to approve the agenda as amended; Cheryl seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

3. Approval of July 10th, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Carol moved to approve the minutes as presented; Cheryl seconded the motion. The motion carried.

4. Executive Director Report

Shana provided a verbal report of recent activities.

- The NACD Legislative Conference that she attended in Washington, D.C. did not yield any news that we did not already know regarding the status of the Farm Bill, the Conservation Title funding or the Field Office of the Future effort. The speakers did not offer many details and questions were limited. George asked about drought assistance for farmers. Shana replied that nothing is moving through Congress on this issue as they have recessed – the House was not inclined to pass a Farm Bill extension and contention surrounding where the money would come from to pay for drought assistance was not resolved. Congress will not reconvene until September.
- There will be an NACD Southwest-Pacific Regional Meeting in Boise, Idaho the last week of September. No agenda is available yet but Shana will find out more information and distribute to the board. George attended one of these meetings in the past but would like to see the agenda

before making any decision about attending. Alaska is within the Pacific Region and Shana's understanding is that NACD representatives from the region states, state conservationists, and NACD staff meet and discuss regional issues.

- Agricultural Research Station (ARS) closed in Palmer. Cheryl introduced this topic. Alaska would be the only state w/o a research station and with climate change, that seems short-sighted. Carol confirmed that the ARS is closing up already – a seed bank was maintained there and it was turned over to the UA but they do not have funding to continue it. Carol says that the UA experimental farm took over and the fate of the germplasm bank is unknown. She is trying to put together a grant to secure some funds. Carol said that Dr. Barney is no longer there and he was the researcher in residence. George would like Shana to find out what the UA intends for the ARS, what their recent accomplishments and projects were, and report to the board. Carol will talk to Dave Ianson about it too.
- The SWCD Fall Conference has been scheduled for October 18-20 at the Embassy in Anchorage. A grantwriting class by the AK Funding Exchange will be on Oct. 18th with a banquet that evening. The banquet will be different this year; Shana has been working closely with AACD and the Anchorage SWCD in organizing the banquet. It should be a great networking opportunity and fun too. Regular speakers on Friday will be followed by the AACD board meeting Saturday morning. It was agreed that an NRCDB meeting should be at the conference and Saturday afternoon would be fine. Carol and Cheryl can attend. George may have a conflict but will let Shana know soon.
- The first SWCD Roundtable was held on July 27th. The topic was the proposed DEC pesticide regulations. Shana was not able to participate but feedback has been very positive about the open dialogue encouraged by the roundtable. Participation was very good. A thank you letter from the Anchorage SWCD was provided to the board. The second roundtable will be scheduled at the fall conference.

5. AACD Report

No participants were available from AACD for this meeting.

6. Statute Working Group Report

Shana provided a report on the recent activities of the SWG. The last meeting was held on July 24th – the notes were distributed to the board. Shana has been working with the Dept. of Law on a revolving fund concept for funding flow to SWCDs but no details are ironed out yet about how this would work but they should be available soon. Some resolution was reached on the tax ID and NRCS conservation innovation grants question – districts do not need a unique tax ID to apply for the CI grants. Shana has also been working closely with the Commissioner's office on their process for gathering legislative proposals to provide to the Governor's office. The next SWG meeting will be on August 28th and Shana intends to have language and a framework ready for the working group to have a good discussion about and make a decision on the idea at this next meeting.

7. Annual Work Plans

Homer, Upper Susitna, and Kenny Lake annual work plans have been received. Homer and Upper Susitna were completed before the last meeting but they were not included in the printed packet. These three are complete according to the checklist from the district ops manual. **Carol moved to approve the annual work plans. Cheryl seconded. The motion passed.** The only outstanding work plan is the Fairbanks SWCD; they have been dealing with some unusual staffing circumstances and have not turned in a work plan. Shana is working closely with them on their work plan. The board would still like to review the work plan at the next meeting in October. Joni from the Fairbanks SWCD offered an apology for being so late, it is uncharacteristic of the Fairbanks SWCD to be late, and with a new assistant on board they should be able to turn in their plan very soon. Cheryl noted that we need to keep working with the districts to meet their deadlines on time.

8. FY13 Cooperative Agreement

A draft of this form was provided to the district. It is the same as it has been for the past few years. From the NRCDB's budget, \$2,500 is allotted to each district under this agreement each year to support their operations. The terms are that districts submit the required reporting and if they do so, they are eligible to receive the funds. Shana proposes to execute the forms at the beginning of the fiscal year, track district submissions over the year, and then release the funds if a district meets the requirements at the end of the fiscal year. Carol and Cheryl agree with this plan. Carol moves to approve the form and plan for funds distribution. Cheryl seconded. The motion passed.

9. Southeast Alaska SWCD Formation

A map of the proposed boundaries was included in the meeting packet. The new district proposes to adopt the same boundaries as the SeaAlaska Corporation. One comment in support of district formation was submitted at the public hearing on July 27th. **Carol moved to form the SE SWCD. George asked about the boundaries. The new district would include all of Southeast Alaska without any exclusions. Cheryl seconded. The motion passed.** Shana will now create a charter certificate for the district and work with the local contact to organize a first meeting of the district and appoint board members.

10. Scott Paper Donation

Shana provided some background on this item: Scott Paper Company had run an online promotion this past spring. Scott solicited pledges for people to try the new line of Scott Naturals products for 4 weeks. The state with the most pledges relative to population size would receive a \$50,000 donation for conservation projects. Shana will solicit ideas from the SWCDs for the use of the funds and asks the board members to talk to cooperators and their local districts as well to generate ideas. The

board will take up a discussion of the ideas at the next meeting. Shana said the promotion was advertised on television.

11. Board Comments

Cheryl thanks the board for their interest in looking into the ARS and if there is anything the board can do.

12. Public Comments

None were offered.

13. Next Meeting Date and Location

The next meeting will be in conjunction with the SWCD fall conference, on Saturday, October 20th.

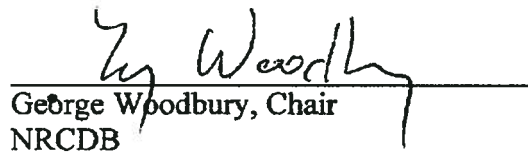
Carol moved to adjourn. Cheryl seconded. The motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Minutes taken by:

Minutes approved by:


Shana Joy, Executive Director
NRCDB


George Woodbury, Chair
NRCDB