



Finger Lakes
Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.
CHEMUNG, ONTARIO, SCHUYLER, SENECA, STEUBEN, AND YATES COUNTIES, NEW YORK
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Minutes

The Finger Lakes RC & D Council Meeting was held Wednesday, January 18th, 2006 at the Rural Urban Center, Montour Falls, New York.

In Attendance:

Chemung County

Ken Bush, SWCD Rep
Dick Gunderman, Legislature Rep
Karen Tillotson, Member @ Large

Ontario County

Tom DeRue, SWCD Rep

Schuyler County

Jim Ochterski, Legislature Rep
Elaine Dalrymple, Member @ Large Rep
Wayne Dimmick, SWCD Rep

Seneca County

Nancy O' Connor, SWCD Rep
Frank Sinicropi, Board of Supervisors Rep

Steuben County

Lola Tears, Legislature Rep
Greg Heffner, Legislature Rep (Alternate)
Jeff Parker, Member @ Large Rep
Ernie Swift, SWCD Rep

Yates County

Jim Balyszak, SWCD Rep
Al McGuffie, NRCS Rep
Barb McGuffie, Member @ Large Rep
Taylor Fitch, Legislature Rep

RC & D Staff

Dick Winnett, Coordinator, Finger Lakes RC & D Council

Meeting called to order by President, Lola Tears at 1:06 P.M.

Introduction of members

Approval of Minutes of November 16th, 2005 Council Meeting.

Greg Heffner moved, seconded by Ken Bush and carried to accept the Council meeting minutes of November 16th, 2005

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Greg Heffner reviewed the financial statement dated December 31st, 2005. **Taylor Fitch moved to approve, seconded by Nancy O' Connor** and carried to approve the Treasurer's Report.

Communications

Received an e-mail from NRCS last week that Robert Erway, a founding member of the Sullivan Trail RC & D, passed away on January 9th, 2006.

Comments from State Legislators and/or their Representatives

No comments given

Comments from NRCS Representative

Dick reported that Joe DelVecchol, State Conservationist, retired at the first of this month. Steve Machovec is acting State Conservationist.

County Reports

Chemung:

District received a grant through FL-LOWPA to develop a "Stream Guide Book". The book has been written and is the process of going to the printers. The District finished about 4-5 wetlands in the Town of Southport. We are also in the process of writing our newsletter.

Ontario:

- Three new directors coming on board: Mark Van Camp representing the Grange; Rick Pedersen, Member at Large representing the farm community; and Barbara Rose, Member at Large representing the urban, suburban, and rural non-farm landownership.
- We are continuing to make progress under the Base AEM program and should make all deliverables on time.
- We have been notified that under the most recent bond act round, we will be funded under a roadbank stabilization grant for the Mudd Creek/Ganargua Creek watershed.
- The District in cooperation with Yates SWCD will be funded for two Ag non-point source grants under NYSEPF Round XII.
- The District Board continues to struggle with the dramatic increase in the cost for health care coverage for its employees.

Schuyler County:

- District received a mini-grant from the State Committee to do septic tank inspections on properties around the lakes.
- Septic tank cost share program is still available. This program is for landowners around Lamoka and Waneta Lakes with metal tanks to switch over to concrete tanks. This covers \$600 for just the tank.
- Proposed Wind Power Towers for the Towns of Orange in Schuyler and Town of Hornby in Steuben County. A committee meeting will be held on January 25th. There are stormwater issues with these Wind Power Towers. Jeff informed the board that he was contacted by a representative from Albany, Windtower Watch Dog Agency.
- Grassland Bird Project wraps up this month. There will be a public workshop tonight at Tanglewood Nature Center. The educational material is at the printers at this time.
- Working with State Extension Forester on Reforestation Guides for the northeastern United States. These guides were developed in the 70's and are now being updated. This should take about a year to reproduce.

Seneca County:

- Completed the winter SWCD newsletter which includes the 2006 conservation program seedling order form. This year the District added transplants. This is the third year with dealing with a supplier that grows oak locally.
- The newsletter also contains an announcement regarding the AEM Program. Seneca County's SWCD goal is to enroll all Seneca County farmers.
- Frank reported that the Bio-Fuel Plant Proposal is now at the Seneca County Economic Development Council. The Council is in support of this plant but the Town Board has put this on hold due to resistance from landowners. The proposed site is off of 5 & 20 in the Town of Seneca Falls.

Steuben County:

- **Non-point Source Grant:** SWCD received notice of approval for two streambank projects entitled Cohocton River Streambank Stabilization/Aquatic Habitat Restoration and Meads Creek Streambank Stabilization/Aquatic Habitat Restoration and waiting for contract information.
- **Distinguished Service Award:** Harley Mayo, Legislative representative was presented with a plaque for 12 years of service on the SWCD Board. The District started a plaque in the office for directors that have made great contributions to the District.
- **Staffing:** Brad Irvine is off work due to back surgery.
- **AEM Grant:** The District is re-hiring Michelle Pierce to assist with AEM.
- **Presentation:** Jeff did a presentation to the Orleans County Board, County Legislators, and highway Superintendents on the Shared Serviced Program.
- District will be presenting a slide presentation at the Full Legislative meeting next week highlighting the SWCD accomplishments.
- **Wetland Project:** Completed a wetland in the Seeley Creek Watershed with funding from the USC.
- **Grant Programs:** Received word that the District was approved for two grants through the non-ag, non-point source program. This will be for streambank restoration.

- **Municipal Shared Services Program:** Speaking with a Senator Winner's aide & was informed that there was a program for shared services. The District, along with the county highway department, put an application in for a track mounted excavator.
- **FSA Plan:** Velynda has been assisting FSA & NRCS in completing farm plans for landowners who signed up to participate in the USDA programs
- **NRCS Programs:** AMA & EQIP sign ups are coming in. Staff members are working on develop applications.
- **Wycoff Gas Storage:** Old abandoned gas wells that are going to be re-drilled for gas storage. This company is out of Oklahoma.

Yates County NRCS:

- **Farm Bill Programs:** There are about 53 active contracts in Yates County that require work within the next 2-3 years. Approximately 75 conservation practices. EQIP there are 8, AMA there are 27, WRP there are 9, WHIP there are 2 and CRP & CREP there are 7. There are for 20 more applications for these programs.
- **Sign Up for New Farm Bill:** EQIP and AMA signups are due by February 15th.
- **Cost Share:** NRCS will now pay a statewide flat rate for conservation practices.
- **EQIP:** Split the way Counties fell into watershed areas for this program.
- **USDA-Farm and Ranch Land Protection:** Yates County had their first request for a farm to be entered into this protection program. If so, USDA would contribute up to 50% of the cost of conservation easements. This would restrict the use of the land. The cost of the easement is the difference between the value of the land and that if it was developed.

Yates County SWCD:

- **Round XII AG Grants:** Submitted a joint grant with Ontario County and looks like they ranked high. Looking forward to working with them and developing a plan of work.
- **AEM:** This has a May deadline and the District has been working on this during the winter months.
- **Non-Ag Grant:** This multi-county grant is within the Flint Creek Watershed with Yates and Ontario County to do road work in 4 towns in Yates and 3 towns in Ontario. Funding is \$230,000 in state money to do road ditch stabilization on about 5.2 miles of road.
- **Stormwater Gap Analyst:** This grant is open and it looks at local municipalities on how their laws and ordinances may or may not match up with DEC's new MS4 activities.
- **Non-Ag Grant RFP's:** Requested by two towns to assist them with application for salt storage facilities.

Coordinator's Report:

- **Venison Donation Coalition:** As of 1/10/06 27,579.5 pounds of venison has been processed and distributed though New York's Regional Food Banks. This equates to 110,318 meals served. Projections for the number of pounds of venison donated through the 2005 season appear to be behind the 2004 season. This can be attributed to a lower deer harvest than 2004 as well as that figures from some of the Regional Food Banks are still outstanding. The New York Federation of RC & D Councils has received a \$100,000 grant from NYS DEC for the 2005-2006 seasons.
- **NY Environmental Protection Fund Round 12:** The initial ranking for the Round 12 Agricultural Non-Point Source Abatement Control Program applications have been released. Thirty-five applications were accepted by NYS Ag & Markets. The preliminary cut-off has been identified @ #31, however, the final allocation from NYS Ag & Markets is still pending. The two applications expected to be administered by the Finger Lakes RC & D Council were ranked as follows: #15-Chemung River Basin Prescribed Grazing Project, Phase 5 (\$194,625.00) and sponsored by the Steuben. The second application Finger Lakes Prescribed Grazing Project, which is sponsored by the Seneca County SWCD (\$192,300.00) was ranked #26. Congratulations to both Ontario & Yates S&WCDs which had applications ranked #4, 5 & 7.
- **National Fish & Wildlife Grant Application:** The preliminary application entitled "Cost Effective Nutrient Reduction in the Upper Susquehanna River Watersheds: Integrated Incentive Driven Implementation & Research Driven Evaluation of Prior Practices:" has been accepted. The final application must be submitted to the NFWF by 1/27/06 (\$1,000,000.00). Partnering with the RC & D Council are the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, Binghamton University & SUNY Oneonta Biological Field Station.
- **Great Lakes Commission Grant:** The dead line for this is March.

Old Business:

Update on temporary secretary situation: The NRCS secretary position is still vacant however the Agency is proceeding with the necessary procedures to resolve the issue at hand. The Board at a previous meeting has authorized the RC&D office to hire a temporary secretary on 15-20 hours per week with pay at \$12-\$15 per hour.

Nat'l RC & D conference in Savannah, Ga. 6/18-6/20/06: Jim Ochterski will attend and will present a PowerPoint on Grassland Birds Program if accepted by the conference organizers. NRCS is holding a training workshop that Dick will attend. Ken and Virginia plan to attend also.

Upper Susquehanna Coalition Grazing being sponsored by Finger Lakes RC & D: Working with Jim Curatolo and plan to get this in by next week.

New Business:

Donation of copier from Steuben SWCD & maintenance agreement: *Taylor Fitch made a motion to accept the copier from Steuben Co. SWCD and enter into agreement for a copier maintenance package for \$300.00. Seconded by Greg Heffner Carried*

Liability Insurance: Received an offer from United Way for Directors and Officers liability insurance. Currently member of Council Community Services and pay \$880.00/year. The rate we are at was the lower rate.

Other Business:

Annual Meeting: This is in March and will need to present a budget. Need to set up a budget committee. Greg and Taylor agreed to sit on this committee. Also need to set up a nominating committee, which meets after this meeting. Barb, Jim O., and Ken agreed.

Approval/Cancellation Projects (measures): 2006 Venison Donation Program

Motion to accept the Venison Donation Program for 2006 was made by Tom D. and seconded by Jeff P. Carried.

A motion was made by Greg at 2:20 to move out of regular session and move into an Executive Session and seconded by Ken.

A motion to enter back into to regular session was made at 2:35 by Wayne and seconded by Ernie.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 15th , 2006 at the Rural Urban Center, Montour Falls, NY.

Greg made a motion to adjourn at 2:40 and was seconded by Tom. Carried.