



New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.
Executive Board Meeting
Holiday Inn
Binghamton, NY
February 13-14, 2014

February 13, 2014

Members Attending

Nichelle Billhardt, President
Aaron Ristow, Vice President
Velynda Parker, Secretary
Kristin White, Treasurer

Guest

Jeffrey Parker, Steuben SWCD
Jim Lieberum, Ex-Officio

Partners

Don Pettit, NRCS via tele-communication
Judy Littrell, NYACD via tele-communication

Division Representatives

Judy Bennett, Division I
Chris Watkins, Division III
Jordan Clements, Division IV
Lenny Croote, Division V
John Persch, Division VI
Polly Weigand, Division VIII

Absent

Doug Kierst, Member at Large
PJ Emerick, Division II
Kristen Brown, Division VII

- I. Called to Order – Nichelle called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.
- II. Approval of Minutes
 - **A motion was made by Kristin, seconded by Judy to approve the December minutes as presented. Carried.**
- III. Correspondence – the following items were received:
 - ✓ Letter from Acting Commissioner Richard Ball
 - ✓ Letter from John Persch regarding the Resource Farm

John recommends the Board that a portion of the fund balance of the Resource Fair line item be set aside in an interest bearing account and that a dollar amount be applied to the annual CDEA budget so that the yearly draws will not likely exceed the normal income from the event. The Board agreed with creating the new account. It was also mentioned to develop a policy to go along with this new account. Kristin W. and John will develop a policy for the Board review and adopt for the newly created account.

- **A motion was made by John, seconded by Velynda to create the account entitled *Resource Training Account* with a starting balance of \$13,789. Carried.**

Polly inquired about the program policy for the incorporation into the By-Laws for annual meeting. This can be done as long as 100 copies are available at the annual meeting. Nichelle asked Kristin and John if this can be done in time and they replied yes.

- IV. Treasurer's Report – Kristin sent copies of the Treasurers report via email to the Board for review prior to the meeting. She reviewed the reports with Board. Kristin also discussed with Board that she has looked into accepting credit cards with QuickBooks Service and Go Payment Merchant. The QuickBooks Service requires an upgrade to 2011 with a fee of \$19.95/month where the Go Payment Merchant is 2.75% plus 15 cents per swipe. Kristin recommends the Board to go with Go Payment Merchant for accepting credit card.
- **A motion was made by Polly, seconded by Jordan to accept the treasurer's report as presented. Carried.**
 - **A motion was made by Chris, seconded by Judy to create an account with Go Payment Merchant with Intuit for accepting credit card. Carried.**
- i. 2014 Proposed Budget – Kristin provided copies and reviewed the 2014 proposed budget with the Board. There were no corrections to the proposed budget. The proposed budget will be include in 2014 WQS packet for approval at the annual meeting.

V. Report

- i. Division Reports
- a. Division I – appended to the minutes.
 - b. Division II - appended to the minutes.
 - c. Division III – Chris mentioned the following:
 - Jefferson County state audit not completed yet; have two new Board members; offering 4HR Contractors training and MS4 Coalition is developing inter-municipal agreements.
 - Lewis County is busy with Ag grants and annual reports.
 - Herkimer County is busy with annual reports, held Cooperator Luncheon, and hired a full-time technician.
 - d. Division IV – appended to the minutes.
 - e. Division V – appended to the minutes.
 - f. Division VI – John mentioned the following:
 - Districts are finishing up their annual reports
 - Working on Tree & Shrub programs
 - Working with Districts on becoming registered with OGS (Office of General Services) to purchase army surplus equipment
 - g. Division VII – no one present, no report.
 - h. Division VIII – appended to the minutes.
- ii. Partnership Reports
- a. NYSSWCC – no one present, no report
 - b. NYACD – Judy mentioned the following:
 - Lobby Days – 24 Districts participated this year – this is down a little from previous year. Everyone was very well received and hadn't heard anything different. \$1 Million increase was approved the Assembly and Senate as proposed by the Governor. The next step is to speak with the Assembly/Senate En-Con and Ag Committee members because their one who sit down at the table to negotiate the numbers for EPF budget. It's anticipated that State budget might be on time this year due to the elections.

- Assemblywoman Romable has agreed to sponsor the Legislative Bills. Currently there are no Bill numbers; however, when they are assigned, the Bills will be forwarded to the Districts to assign on as well. Acting Commissioner Ball spoke at the briefing on Monday night. Acting Commissioner Ball is very familiar with Districts and their capabilities.
 - Joint hearing of the Assembly/Senate on Agriculture on the Environment on January 29 on the budget and pleading our case for the increase line item and also for Nonpoint Source and other programs District participate in.
 - Annual meeting dates have been set for October 21 – 23. The hotel RFP hasn't been sent out.
 - Farm Bureau State Conference will be held at the Convention Center in March. Nichelle mentioned that Ronny Raindrop[®] was requested to attend and looking for a District employee to be Ronny. It was mentioned to reach out to Albany SWCD on if anyone would be interested.
- c. NRCS – Don mentioned the Farm Bill has been passed; however, not totally clear yet and it will be months before there's an implementable Farm Bill. The Farm Bill will stream-line a lot conservation programs from 20 to 13 programs.
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) - CRP is administered by FSA; however, NRCS handled the technical side. The CRP was re-authorized; however, the enrollment cap in FY 2014 at \$27.5 million reduces to \$24 million over the course of this Farm Bill which means there's going to be a reduction in acreage enrollment. FSA is not sure when the next sign-up will take place but the Farm Bill does give FSA the authority to do so.
 - The enrollment of GRP (Grassland Reserve Program) will be rolled over into CRP. Under the NRCS easement side of the GRP, there will be no more rental agreements. If individuals who wants to accomplishment that, they essential need to sign up under CRP. The GRP easement side is now decupable from FSA and is entirely administered by NRCS. In the past, FSA and NRCS jointly administered the GRP program.
 - Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) – The enrollment eligibility has the participates address two priority resource concerns and caps enrollment acreage at 10 million annually. The program has renewal option which would allow those who are at the end of their contract to re-enroll for another 5 years; however, additional stewardship is needed to re-enroll.
 - Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – combines Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Farmland protection Program (FPP) and Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) into one program. The program will have two tracks – one for wetland and one for agricultural & farmland protection. The wetland reserve side, if an individual is interested in enrollment; they need to own the property for at least 2 years with an option to waive that if there compiling to do so.
 - Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) – Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) has been rolled over into EQIP. The program still retains the 60% of the funding will need to go to livestock related contracts/practices. On the WHIP side, it sets 5% of available funding towards island habitat. Historically underserved

groups who are eligible for higher payment rate/advancement payment that other producers are not changes include 1) veterans can receive that preference; 2) advance payments for the purchase of materials up to 50% and they have 90 days to use it; 3) payment limit has gone up \$450,000 per contract

- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) – This new program combines the Conservation Cooperative Initiative Program (CCIP), Ag Water Enhancement Program (AWEP), Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative (CBWI) and Great Lakes Basin Program (GLBP). This allows partner groups to submit proposal for project which is on competitive basis. If selected, then NRCS will conduct a sign-up in their region/watershed of their application to address their resource concerns that were identified in the application. There is expectation that the partners will bring matching funds or in-kind to the table to offset the federal funding. Under this program they can use the authority of EQIP, CSP or Easement programs. The agreements are up to 5 years with the potential of 1 year extension. The projects can focus on water quality, water quantity, erosion, wildlife habitat, drought and flood control. It's possible to use the PL566 Small Watershed program authority, if the entity is looking at addressing flood control issues.
- Dam Watershed Rehabilitation – This is being called mandatory funding of \$250 million national. There are projects in the works for New York under this program. This goes back to the PL 566 dams that are approaching 50 years old and over the course of time something might have happened such as development downstream that cause it to go back in to rehab those dams to make sure their protecting at the current threat level. Several dams are in the planning stage and a few are approaching design stage and ready for construction. The only difficulty is – the local sponsor share is 50%. This is difficult for some towns/municipalities that have the maintenance responsibilities of these dams to afford their share of the project.
- Adjusted Gross Income Eligibility – In the past it was \$1 million of farm income so one didn't have to count their off farm income; however, this Farm Bill puts it at flat \$900,000 no matter what the source of income it is.
- Conservation Compliance – This have been debated due to trying to tie to crop insurance. There will be a lot of producers didn't participate in programs that caused them to be under compliance it will now be under compliance. For instance, vegetable/fruit operators that weren't eligible some of FSA program didn't participated which they weren't subject to conservation compliance. Now because they're eligible for crop insurance, now they needed to be in compliance with HEL & wetland compliance issues. This could cause a huge workload for NRCS on creating compliance plans for new group of producers. There is a certain amount of years for those producers get those plans in place.
- Budget – no budget yet on the appropriations. Looks like its 3 weeks to 1 month away to know what the budget allocation will be.
- Susquehanna Watershed has been selected for funding on forested buffer. The funding incorporates in-stream habitat and streambank stabilization with EQIP funding for \$3.2 million which above the normal allocation.

- Nichelle congratulated Don on his announcement of retirement. Don's last day with NRCS will be May 2. She inquired with Don on the Cooperative Working Agreement status. Don stated NRCS follow-up with State Committee staff and its being reviewed by their legal department because the State Committee was added. Nichelle asked if the Agreement will be ready at the Water Quality Symposium. Don wasn't sure but will try.

Suspended at 5 PM

Reconvened 8:30 AM

Friday, February 14

Members Attending

Nichelle Billhardt, President
 Aaron Ristow, Vice President
 Velynda Parker, Secretary
 Kristin White, Treasurer
 Doug Kriest, Member at Large

Division Representatives

Judy Bennett, Division I
 Chris Watkins, Division III
 Jordan Clements, Division IV
 Lenny Croote, Division VI
 John Persch, Division VI
 Polly Weigand, Division VIII

Absent

PJ Emerick, Division II
 Kristen Brown, Division VII

iii. Committee Reports

- a. Conservation Skill Workshop – Chris stated letters will be sent to NRCS and Empire Society will be sent soon.
- b. Envirothon – No report was available; however, a letter signed by Steve Robinson, Chair of the National Conservation Foundation and Sandy Huey, Chair of the North American Envirothon was provided explaining why the North American Envirothon was cancelled for 2014 – a copy is appended to the minutes. Nichelle inquired about the status of the budget. Kristin stated she has have been receiving registration checks on a daily basis; however, funding is low. Jordan stated Blanche has reached to Chobani on donations; however, they have changed the process on requests. She has submitted a request and waiting to hear if it's been approved.
- c. Frank Bratt – Jordan discussed with his concerns on the ranking criteria. Nichelle asked Judy and the Division Reps to review the ranking questions and to have a draft recommendation by the May meeting. A copy of her report is appended to the minutes. She recommends the Board to approve the following individuals and amounts: Levi Rudd- \$500; Jake Ambrose-\$350; Don Stribick-\$100; Angel Hinickle - \$349; Katie Jakaub -\$100; and Bob Kiley -\$100.
 - **A motion was made by Doug, seconded by Polly to approve the Frank Bratt Scholarship winners as stated. Carried.**
- d. Other Business – no items to be discussed

VI. Old Business

- a. WQS – Aaron stated 110 registrations have been received. Last day to register is Wednesday, February 20. The room assignment for the hospitality room hasn't been decided yet. John stated to date 15 sponsors have signed up and will need 20 tables for the Resource Fair which is down from previous year. Chris will be sending out the notices on the Silent Auction/Bucket Raffle items. Nichelle reminds everyone to send her their reports for the packets. Doug suggested doing reports on what each Division is responsible for
- b. Invasive Species Regulation – Polly stated there is nothing to report at this time.
- c. By-Law – Polly stated the corrections were made to the By-Laws per changes received by the Board.
 - **A motion was made by Doug, seconded by Judy to forward the proposed updated By-Laws to the Water Quality Symposium for approval. Carried.**
- d. Other Old Business – John recommends the Board re-evaluate the fertilizer tablet program because the numbers have been declining over the past several years.

VII. New Business

- a. CAFO Workgroup – Chris stated the meeting was cancelled with another meeting to be schedule in April.
- b. Ronny Raindrop – Jordan handed out copies of Blanche H. response on the missing “S” and if it should be on the logo. Once it was discovered, questions were raised as to inquire the possibility of the “S” being added, cost, & trademark concerns and issues. Blanche has contacted five different law firms; however, only two firms actually responded. There will additional fees for altering the trademark and lawyers fees. The picture which was provided for the trademark was so small didn't indicate the letters for the Employees' Association; however, when enlarge it did. Blanche recommends the Executive Board to remove the letters altogether and not change anything on the trademark because the lettering was never included in the trademark. Nichelle inquired if a color digital image of Ronny. Blanche has developed a color version Ronny can be used.
- c. Municipal Subcommittee Meeting Update – Nichelle stated comments were sent it in on the 4Hr Stormwater program and no meeting has been schedule to date.
- d. Water Management Advisory Council – Nichelle state no meeting was held; however, she invited members to attend the Watershed monitoring class at the WQS. She further commented that the State's sets the standards for water quality testing and would like to see more standardize protocols across the state.
- e. Other Business – no items were received.

VIII. Next meeting – The next Executive Board meeting date and location is to be determined.

IX. Adjournment – 11:11 AM

Velynda Parker

Velynda Parker
Secretary



New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.
Executive Board Meeting
Camp Sagamore
Raquette Lake, NY
July 9-10, 2014

Wednesday, July 9, 2014

Members Attending

Aaron Ristow, Vice President
Velynda Parker, Secretary
Kristin White, Treasurer
Doug Kierst, Member at Large

Absent

Nichelle Billhardt, President
Judy Bennett, Division I
Lenny Croote, Division V

Division Representatives

PJ Emerick, Division II
Chris Watkins, Division III
Jordan Clements, Division IV
Ben Luskin, Division VI
Kristin Brown, Division VII
Ann Marie Calabro, Division VIII

Guest

John Persch, Guest

Partners

Bob Brower

- I. **Called to Order** – Doug called the meeting to order at 11:24 AM.
- II. **Approval of Minutes**
 - **A motion was made by Jordan, seconded by PJ to approve the April minutes as presented. Carried.**

Velynda, Kristin, and Aaron arrive at 11:30
- III. **Correspondence** – no items were received.
- IV. **Treasurer's Report** – Kristin sent copies of the Treasurers report via email to the Board for review prior to the meeting. She reviewed the reports with Board.
 - **A motion was made by Velynda, seconded by PJ to accept the treasurer's report as presented. Carried.**
- V. **Report**
 - i. Division Reports
 - a. **Division I** – no one present; however, a report was provided and is appended to the minutes.
 - b. **Division II** - appended to the minutes.
 - c. **Division III** – appended to the minutes.
 - d. **Division IV** – appended to the minutes.

Suspended the meeting for lunch at 12:11 PM

Reconvened the meeting at 12:44 PM

- e. **Division V** – no one present, no report.
 - f. **Division VI** – Ben stated mentioned the following:
 - AgNPS Round 20
 - Tree shrub program are ending for most Districts
 - Working on compliance checks
 - Districts are working on implementation of BMP's
 - g. **Division VII** – Kristen stated reached out to the counties in her division with no response.
Orange County
 - has received 2 AgNPS Round 20 grants
 - Working actively on the Wallkill River with funds allocated from Lee & Irene post flood funding from NYS
 - Purchased a new JD 4-row conservation planter to add to the equipment that is rented to farmers in the County
 - The Lower Hudson Coalition Coordinator is leaving and will be looking to fill the position soon.
 - h. **Division VIII** – appended to the minutes.
- ii. Partnership Reports
- a. **NYSSWCC** – Bob Brower mentioned the following:
 - ✓ **NYS Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program: Rd 20** - All of the projects have been ranked by the reviewers but there was a delay in getting them approved at the May 27, State Committee Meeting. Approval of the ranked list will be delayed until the June SWCC meeting most likely to be held on the 17th. There is still no information at this time as to when the awards will be announced and the Plan of Work process will begin.
 - ✓ **AEM Base Program Due Dates and Documents:**
AEM Base 10 - The program began on May 7th. Happy Planning!
AEM Base 9 - Close out documentation is due by July 8. Close out instructions and forms were e-mailed out to you on March 31.
AEM Strategic Plan Updates – participation in AEM Base 11 (2015 – 2016) will be contingent upon updating your AEM Strategic plan prior to May 6, 2015. Information on the update was e-mailed out the 1st week of May.
 - ✓ **Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Award:** Nominations are still being accepted for the statewide Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Award. It is an opportunity to highlight the outstanding environmental stewardship accomplished by farmers in partnership with their SWCD. In appreciation of this partnership, the winning farm family and nominating District will each receive a financial award to help them continue their programs. I encourage you to consider nominating a farmer that has, or will be receiving, an 'AEM Roadside Sign Award' from your District for this statewide recognition. You are also welcome to update and re-submit a past nomination for consideration again this year. The Nomination Form must be received at the

Department of Agriculture and Markets via email no later than close of business on Wednesday, June 11, 2014 to jodi.shain@agriculture.ny.gov. The form can be downloaded at the following link:

http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/2014_AEM_Nomination_Form.pdf

Farmland Protection Program: Governor Andrew Cuomo recently announced that New York is restarting its Farmland Protection Program with \$20.5 million in state funding. A competitive grant program is currently available to assist with the protection of viable agricultural lands that are at risk of conversion to non-farm uses. Funding may be used for farmland protection activities (i.e., conservation easement and incentive payment projects). Grants are competitive and proposals need to be received by July 14, 2014. Eligible applicants include counties, municipalities, not-for-profit conservation organizations, and soil and water conservation districts. Current grant opportunity materials are available here: <http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/RFPS.html> Scroll down the page a bit and look for the section entitled: *Farmland Protection Implementation Grants (FPIG)*

Partner Updates:

There have been some changes to the NRCS community recently. Don Petit retired as State Conservationist (SC) on May 2nd. Dennis Deweese has been the acting SC since Don's departure. It was recently announced that Greg Kist has been named State Conservationist in New York effective July 13, 2014. Greg is Assistant State Conservationist for Operations in Morgantown, West Virginia. He is currently serving as Acting State Conservationist in Georgia. Also, there have been some changes at the field staff level. Derek Zerkowski, formerly of Chautauqua County SWCD, is the new Soil Conservationist in Bath. Jim LaGoia is the new Resource Conservationist stationed in Warsaw. Jim Ruppert is the new engineer stationed in the Ellicottville office.

- b. **NRCS** – no one present, no report.

iii. Committee Reports

- a. **Conservation Skill Workshop** – Chris stated Conservation Skill Workshop is scheduled for September 29 – October 3. Classes have been set and working on instructors. The registration cost is remained the same. Working on putting together a proposal for the Conservation Society. It was mentioned there is an invoice from 3 years ago totaling \$500 which was for the concrete work that hadn't been paid yet. This was approved 3 years ago; however, it was lost in transition for payment.
 - **A motion was made by Velynda, seconded by PJ to pay the \$500 for the concrete work invoice. Carried.**
- b. **NYS Fair** – appended to the minutes.
- c. **Empire Farm Days** – appended to the minutes.
- d. **Envirothon** – Aaron reviewed the individuals who have submitted forms to participate on the Envirothon Committee. The individuals are, Alan Fagan, Pat & Bob VanLare, Betsy Urkeritis, Joann Kurtis, Bob Schenk, Blanch Hurlbutt, Bruce Bartlett, Brett Miller; Tiffany Evanchof, Jacqueline Larocque and Kristin White.
 - **A motion was made by PJ, seconded by Kristin W. to approve the names submitted for the Envirothon Committee. Carried.**

T-shirts were provided to the Board for their sponsorship for the scholarships.

Doug mentioned that when he and Sandy were having a conversation that she mentioned that the Envirothon Committee is considering going for a 501 (c) 6 status and graphs were completed showing how this would work. By Envirothon Committee having their own status then donation is a direct donation and no funds would be considered administrative fee. Doug also mentioned that it was felt by the Envirothon Committee that EEF has been doing everything they can on securing grants and this is reason as to why the Envirothon Committee is looking at this status. Velynda asked if this was a whole committee decision or just one person. Doug wasn't sure. Kristin stated that this has not been discussed with committee. Velynda asked if the Environmental Education Foundation was informed that the Envirothon Committee was considering this status. No one knew if the Envirothon Education Foundation knew or not. The Executive Board decided that further discussion needs to happen with both parties, Envirothon Committee and the Foundation on this topic.

- d. **Frank Bratt** – appended to the minutes.
 - **A motion was made by Chris, seconded by Kristin to approve as ranked. Carried with PJ abstaining.**
- e. **Golf Tournament** – Chris stated 6 teams have signed up to date. Another notice will be sent out as reminder.

VI. Old Business

- a. **WQS** – Aaron handed out a spreadsheet depicting the top three (3) hotels – Crown Plaza, Holiday Inn-Binghamton, and Double Tree, Binghamton. Aaron also mentioned that the Crown Plaza's RFP pricing is for two year period. This is the first time a hotel has offered pricing for two years. Doug and Mark B. reviewed the Crown Plaza hotel. This hotel has a covered parking garage, close proximity to DEC/NRCS offices, and has a shuttle service.
 - **A motion was made by Kristin, seconded by Jordan to accept the 2 year contract with an opt out clause for the Water Quality Symposium with Crown Plaza for March 10-13, 2015. Carried.**
- b. **Post Flood Emergency Stream Intervention** – Chris inquired where this training stands. Bob explained if you have an individual who attended the train the trainer class, then that individual is able to provide the training. Chris further explain what if that individual is not comfortable then what. It was mentioned to reach out to other individual to assist in the training.
- c. **Job Approval Authority** – PJ inquired about the status is on moving forward for technical staff to sign off on practices? Bob stated the Tim Clark, SWCC Engineer, has been working on developing webinars along with getting approval under his authority. PJ will follow up with Tim on the status.
- d. **Other Old Business** – no items were received.

VII. New Business

- a. **AEM Workshops** – Tabled until the next CDEA meeting
- b. **Environmental Education Foundation** – Tabled until Thursday when Dave Reckahn can be present.
- c. **NRCS Office Space Optimization** – No one present - will be discussed at the next CDEA meeting when NRCS is in attendance.
- d. **Administrative Management Conference** – The conference will be held at Radisson in Utica on

October 21-23. Aaron stated the Administrative Planning Committee Chair is has not been determined yet.

e. **Other Business**

- i. **DEC 4-Hour Stormwater Training** – Kristen B. inquired what the status is on updating the program. PJ stated the committee is working on the updating; however, nothing has been completed yet.
- ii. **Website** – PJ stated the website has been updated and would like everyone to review it.

Suspended at 4:29 PM

Reconvened at 8:34 AM

Thursday, July 10, 2014

Members Attending

Aaron Ristow, Vice President
Velynda Parker, Secretary
Kristin White, Treasurer
Doug Kierst, Member at Large

Absent

Nichelle Billhardt, President
Judy Bennett, Division I
Lenny Croote, Division V

Partners

Judy Littrell, NYACD

Division Representatives

PJ Emerick, Division II
Chris Watkins, Division III
Jordan Clements, Division IV
Ben Luskin, Division VI
Kristin Brown, Division VII
Ann Marie Calabro, Division VIII

Guest

John Persch, Fulton SWCD
Dave Reckahn, Essex SWCD

VI. Old Business

- B. **Soil Health Update** – Aaron stated he's the CDEA Rep for the committee and planning to meet in the spring. The committee is looking at ways to promote soil health practices to farmers. Most of the promoting soil health is centered on outreach. He further commented that NRCS has rainfall simulator that can be borrowed.

VII. New Business

- B. **Envirothon Education Foundation** – Dave gave explained how the Foundation came about for the Board's information. He further explained that the Foundation is 501 c 3 tax deductible organization and the 15 member board consisting of 5 District Reps – Dave R. Elizabeth M., Jane R., Erica S., and Lisa M.; 3 Executive Board Reps – Ben L., Ann Marie C. and PJ; 5 At Large- George C., Jill C, Malone Teacher, Mike V., and Mark G. and 2 Envirothon Reps – Dean M. and Bob S. He further stated there is \$11,000 in CD which the Foundation holds for the Envirothon Committee who provide guidance on how to use the funds. The Foundation has been actively seeking grants; however, haven't been successful. The CDEA used the Foundation as a conduit for the WQS and in lieu of the 5% administrative fee, a \$1,500 was provided. The Foundation used \$500 to file the CHAR 500. The Foundation received a \$2,500 request in the last two years - \$1,500 last year and

\$1,000 this year. Velynda asked Dave if he or the Foundation was contacted about the Envirothon Committee considering their own 501(c) 3 status. Dave was unaware. The Executive Board would like the Envirothon Committee and Environmental Education Foundation to attend the September meeting to discuss this further.

ii. Partnership Reports

2. NYACD – Judy mentioned the following:

- Copies of draft annual meeting agenda were provided and attached to the minutes
- Award program has been sent out
- Resolutions are due September 1
- Submitting comments on the Clean Water Act by October. PJ will assist in compiling comments on the rule.

VIII. **Next meeting** – The next Executive Board meeting date and location is to be determined.

IX. **Adjournment** – 10:34 AM

Velynda Parker

Velynda Parker
Secretary



**New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.
Executive Board Meeting**

Inn on the Lake
Canandaigua, NY
October 7-8, 2014

Tuesday, October 7, 2014

Members Attending

Nichelle Billhardt, President
Aaron Ristow, Vice President
Velynda Parker, Secretary
Kristin White, Treasurer
Doug Kierst, Member at Large

Absent

Doug Kierst, Member at Large
Jordan Clements, Division IV
NYSSWCC

Guest

Corey Nellis, Montgomery SWCD via telecommunication
Kelly Emerick, Monroe SWCD

Division Representatives

Judy Bennett, Division I
PJ Emerick, Division II
Chris Watkins, Division III
Lenny Croote, Division V
Ben Luskin, Division VI
Kristen Brown, Division VII
Ann Marie Calabro, Division VIII

Partners

Greg Kist, NRCS
Dennis DeWeese, NRCS
Judy Littrell, NYACD

- I. **Called to Order** – Nichelle called the meeting to order at 11:22 AM.
- II. **Approval of Minutes**
 - **A motion was made by Kristin, seconded by Chris to approve the July minutes as presented. Carried.**
- III. **Correspondence** – the following items were received:
 - Letter from Delaware SWCD regarding the EPA Water of the US Proposed Rule Exemption for Spring Development and Pipeline & Trough
 - Empire State Conservation Society meeting on November 21
- IV. **Treasurer's Report** – Kristin sent copies of the Treasurers report via email to the Board for review prior to the meeting. She reviewed the reports with Board.
 - **A motion was made by Velynda, seconded by Lenny to accept the treasurer's report as presented. Carried.**

Kristin discussed with Board the inquiry from Velynda regarding the NACD NE meeting on detail listing of the category which revealed that a 2013 NACDNE expense was credited to this line item. It took the previous payee seven months before they submitted for reimbursement. Submitting for reimbursement needs to be timely and in the same year the expense incurred. She recommends that Steuben SWCD received the remaining balance of \$280 for expenses incurred for the Northeast meeting.

- **A motion was made by Kristin, seconded by Lenny to reimburse Steuben SWCD the remaining balance of \$280 for expenses incurred for the Northeast meeting. Carried with Velynda abstaining.**

Discussion continued on the reimbursement and the timeliness of submittal. Kristin recommends that reimbursement submittal be submitted by December 31st of the year incurred. Kristin will send a new copy of the reimbursement form to all Districts.

- **A motion as made by PJ, seconded by Judy that all reimbursement must be received by December 31 excluding the self sustaining accounts of NYS Envirothon, Envirothon Scholarship, Frank Bratt Scholarship and NYS Fair/EFD. Carried.**

V. Report

i. Division Reports

- Division I** – appended to the minutes.
- Division II** - appended to the minutes.
- Division III** – appended to the minutes.
- Division IV** – no one present, no report.
- Division V** – appended to the minutes.
- Division VI** – Ben stated mentioned his Division is working on the following:
 - AEM Strategy Update
 - Flood Mitigation
 - Stream permits
 - Wrapping up EQIP/AgNPS projects
- Division VII** – Kristen stated she reached out to the counties in her division with no response.

Orange County

 - has received 2 AgNPS Round 20 grants
 - Working actively on the Wallkill River with funds allocated from Lee & Irene post flood funding from NYS
 - Purchased a new JD 4-row conservation planter to add to the equipment that is rented to farmers in the County
 - The Lower Hudson Coalition Coordinator is leaving and will be looking to fill the position soon.
- Division VIII** – appended to the minutes.

Suspended the meeting at 12:25 PM for lunch

Reconvened meeting at 1:17 PM

Nichelle welcomed Corey to the meeting and asked if he was ready to discuss his concern regarding the process for wetland determinations. There is backlog of determinations in his county and FSA agency refused to send NRCS any more wetland determinations until they complete the ones they already had. A couple of the farmers have been waiting over 6 months to get a determination in order to install subsurface drains. Now the farmers have to wait another construction season before they can move forward with this installation. Corey further mentioned the statue has changed on certification and the appeal process. The time frame is insufficient among the agencies. Greg stated Corey to contact Ed Henry and Kim Farrel to setup a meeting to further discuss this issue. Greg further stated NRCS is only re-

doing wetland determination from 1985-1990 as needed due to the participant wasn't provided notice of the appeal process. He continued to mention that there is a backlog of determinations to do; however, we are not the only state that has this. NRCS field office can make the determination if there is no need for a field visit. If a field visit is needed, the wetland team will need to be scheduled. Nichelle stated this could be a topic that the 4-Way Partnership could discuss along with development of fact sheet for each agency depicting each agency's role in the process and conduct regional training by the same individual. Greg and Judy agreed this would be a good topic for the 4-Way Partnership. Corey also mentioned that a CCA planner conduct the paperwork then have NRCS staff certify it. Again, Greg agreed it's a good idea and this in turn would help NRCS.

ii. Partnership Reports

- a. **NYSSWCC** – Nichelle stated Victor will be attendance tomorrow.
- b. **NRCS** – Greg mentioned the following:
 - ✓ Cooperative Working Agreements – there are currently 25 Districts that haven't signed the agreement and a supplement to Working Agreement is needed as well.
 - ✓ Office Rent – state optimization plan is to find ways to shrink space where possible. The benefit is for every \$1 give back goes to CTA funding which is an incentive. There are no plans to change the system which is in place. If there are issues/concerns they will be addressed by case by case basis.
 - ✓ Financial – the budget is flat line
 - ✓ Administration is taking a transformation due some of the State Office staff has been re-assigned as National Staff.
 - ✓ Re-organization has taken place. NY has reduced from four (4) administrative offices to three (3) administrative offices.
- c. **NYACD** – Judy mentioned the following:
 - ✓ Handed out a copy NYACD comments to the EPA Waters of US Proposed Rule and a final copy will be distribute to Districts
 - ✓ Thanked the members of the committee for serving
 - ✓ Thanked Velynda for the assistance on obtaining sponsorship
 - ✓ Friday is the last day to register for the annual meeting
 - ✓ 3-4 resolutions have been received for the annual meeting to vote upon
 - ✓ Looking into hosting regional training opportunities for District employees
 - ✓ Encourage everyone to attend the Thursday lunch because Pat Hooker will be the speaker
 - ✓ Conducting a survey monkey on possible training topics for the administrative and managers

iii. Committee Reports

- a. **Conservation Skill Workshop** – Chris stated participants are down this year from last year. Participants included 74 District; 10 NRCS and 7 outside agencies totaling 91 attendees. The committee is considering having stand alone class for Monday – Friday which may encourage more participants. She would appreciate the evaluation to be completed to help the committee to move forward towards next year's classes.
- b. **NYS Fair** – Appended to the minutes. Kristin would like to provide a Certification of Appreciation to Tom Brady for creating the Ronny Raindrop ® coloring poster for 15 years. She would like

Nichelle to sign as NYSCDEA President. She further commented that next year's theme might be "Invasive Species".

- c. **Empire Farm Days** – Appended to the minutes.
- d. **Envirothon** – Appended to the minutes.
- d. **Frank Bratt** – Appended to the minutes.
- e. **Golf Tournament** – Chris stated 12 teams participated. Doug and Russ have been great asset to the committee on generating sponsor funding which ran through the Environmental Education Foundation. The funds collected will remain with Golf Tournament to help build-up the account base for next year's event. Castlewood is most likely next year's location.
- f. Other
 - 1. Entertainment – It was mentioned if you have any ideas on possible vendors to send them to John Persch. Some vendors have been contacted already and additional letters will be sent out shortly.
 - 2. Fertilizer Tablets – Ben reviewed information on past sales. The vendor rep was contacted; however, he was out of the office. Ben will contact Mark Burger on having the fertilizer tablets delivered to his office since it's close to the hotel. He will be researching more on the different tablets types available for low phosphorus.

Suspended the meeting at 5:13

Wednesday, October 8, 2014

Members Attending

Nichelle Billhardt, President
Aaron Ristow, Vice President
Velynda Parker, Secretary
Kristin White, Treasurer
Doug Kriest, Member at Large

Division Representatives

Judy Bennett
PJ Emerick, Division II
Lenny Croote, Division V
Ben Luskin, Division VI
Kristen Brown, Division VII
Ann Marie Calabro, Division VIII

Absent

Doug Kierst, Member at Large
Jordan Clements, Division IV

Partners

Victor DiGiacomo, NYSSWCC

V. Reports

B. Partnership Reports

- 1. NYSSWCC – Appended to the minutes. He further stated there's a State Committee on October 28 in Utica to discuss AgNPS related to procurement issues for District and landowner conducting the work.

VI. Old Business

- A. **District Reimbursement/Performance Measure Discussion** – Nichelle mentioned that Oswego has concerns regarding with Performance Measure 1 on directors meeting the obligation. Performance Measure 1 is hard to fill by Districts. Nichelle stated that State Committee has modified the requirement to help Districts to qualify for this measure.

B. Water Quality Symposium – Aaron reported the following:

- ✓ Hotel 2015—2016 contract has been signed with the opt out clause
- ✓ Mayor has been confirmed for the opening ceremony
- ✓ Mark Burger obtained an extra sponsor for \$1000 which will run the Environmental Education Foundation
- ✓ Planning meeting will meet to determine classes
- ✓ Registration will be online again using Google doc

C. NE NACD Meeting – Covered under the Treasurer's report.

D. Other – no items at this time.

VII. Other Business:

- A. Training Modules** – Nichelle stated training modules are being completed by Tim Clark and are being forwarded to all Districts by Judy Snyder. She further stated that she is in the process of compiling email lists for managers, administrative and technical to help disseminate information.
- B. NRCS State Quality Assurance Reviews** – Kristen stated that when NRCS Quality Assurance is being conducted, the AgNPS projects are being reviewed as well. Its speculated the reasoning is because the AgNPS projects are built to NRCS standards and specifications.
- C. Report Forms** – It was mentioned that an individual tried accessing the State Committee website for updated forms without any success. It was further mentioned that it wasn't just this individual but others as well. The Board feels it's important to have access to the updated forms available when reporting for the different programs.
- **A motion was made Kristin, seconded by Kristen to send a letter to Division of Land & Water Resources regarding a general online access or a folder which holds all the necessary forms readily available to District. Carried.**

VIII. Next meeting – The next Executive Board meeting date is to be determined and location will be at Crown Plaza in Syracuse.

IX. Adjournment – 12:21PM

Velynda Parker

Velynda Parker
Secretary



New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.
Executive Board Meeting
Crown Plaza Hotel
Syracuse, NY
December 11 -12, 2014

Thursday, December 11, 2014

Members Attending

Nichelle Billhardt, President
Aaron Ristow, Vice President
Velynda Parker, Secretary
Kristin White, Treasurer
Doug Kierst, Member at Large

Absent

Jordan Clements, Division IV
NYSSWCC
Greg Kist, NRCS
Judy Littrell, NYACD

Division Representatives

Judy Bennett, Division I
PJ Emerick, Division II
Chris Watkins, Division III
Lenny Croote, Division V
Ben Luskin, Division VI
Kristen Brown, Division VII
Ann Marie Calabro, Division VIII

Guest

John Persch, Fulton SWCD

- I. **Called to Order** – Nichelle called the meeting to order at 11.30 AM.
 - II. **Approval of Minutes**
 - **A motion was made by Kristen B, seconded by PJ to approve the October minutes as presented. Carried.**
 - III. **Correspondence** – the following items were received:
 - Letter from Fairfax County, VA acknowledging the receipt of CDEA letter regarding Ronny[®] Raindrop trademark
 - IV. **Treasurer's Report** – Kristin W. sent copies of the Treasurers report via email to the Board for review prior to the meeting. She reviewed the reports with Board.
 - **A motion was made by Velynda, seconded by Lenny to accept the treasurer's report as presented. Carried.**
- 2015 Proposed Budget Review** – Kristin sent copies of the proposed budget to the Board prior to the meeting. She reviewed the proposed budget with Board and recommends the Board to conduct an outside audit every other year and when the CDEA Treasurer change occurs.
- **A motion was made by Kristen B., seconded by Kristin W. to have an outside audit every other year and when a change in CDEA Treasurer occurs. Carried.**
 - **A motion was made by Lenny, seconded by PJ to move the 2015 Proposed Budget to the annual meeting at the Water Quality Symposium (WQS). Carried.**

Suspended the meeting for lunch at 12:21 pm

Reconvened at 1 PM

Doug inquired about reimbursement for the NACD Northeast meeting due to reviewing a reimbursement form submitted by another county for the same meeting. It was stated that the Board approved Jeff Parker as the CDEA Northeast Rep; therefore, the CDEA will reimburse CDEA Rep for expenses incurred for attending the NACD Northeast meeting up to amount approved in the budget. Doug inquired if the CDEA Rep doesn't attend the meeting, would the CDEA reimburse the other county as an alternate representative? The Board agreed this would be feasible.

- **A motion was made by Kristen B., seconded by Kristin W. to reimburse the CDEA appointee for the NACD Northeast meeting and if funds are remaining, those funds will be available to the alternate rep. Carried.**

Nichelle stated that Aaron will be stepping down on December 31st as Vice President due to taking a position with another organization. She further mentioned that she spoke with PJ on filling the vacancy as Vice President and he is willing to fill the position left by Aaron. The By-Laws were reviewed regarding the replacing the Vice President. It doesn't reflect in the By-Laws on how to replace the vacant position; however, the Board felt the vacant position should follow the policy established under the Officer Guidelines and Responsibilities, Section III - Coordinate the Flow of Association Business regarding the resigning of Division Representative. Nichelle appointed PJ Emerick as the interim Vice President effective January 1, 2015.

V. Report

i. Division Reports

- Division I** – appended to the minutes.
- Division II** - appended to the minutes.
- Division III** – Chris mentioned the following:

Herkimer County

- Gerry Smithson is the new District Manager
- Technician position notice is out

St. Lawrence

- Forestry
- Soil Health mini grant
- Planning

Lewis

- Will be signing contract with DEC for ag plastic recycling
- Working with Emergency Management/Planning Office on updating gauges for flood protection

- Division IV** – no one present, no report.
- Division V** – appended to the minutes.
- Division VI** – Ben mentioned the following:
 - ✓ Division meeting was held at the Carrot Barn, Schoharie County
 - ✓ Construction is wrapping up
 - ✓ Few training class were forwarded to Aaron
 - ✓ He has taken the technician position with Washington County

- g. **Division VII** – Kristen stated an email was sent out; however, there were no responses and Orange County is status quo.
- h. **Division VIII** – Ann Marie stated an email was sent out; however, there were no responses. She continues to mention that Districts are wrapping up construction season. She further commented that George Priois will be stepping down on all his committee appointments and the District Manager will have 30 years with District.

Suspended the meeting at 5:04 PM

Reconvened at 8:26 AM

Friday, December 12, 2014

Members Attending

Nichelle Billhardt, President
Aaron Ristow, Vice President
Velynda Parker, Secretary
Kristin White, Treasurer
Doug Kierst, Member at Large

Division Representatives

Judy Bennett, Division I
PJ Emerick, Division II
Chris Watkins, Division III
Lenny Croote, Division V
Kristen Brown, Division VII
Ann Marie Calabro, Division VIII

Absent

Jordan Clements, Division IV
Ben Luskin, Division VI

Guest

John Persch, Fulton SWCD

Partners

Judy Littrell, NYACD via tele-communication
Scott Fickbohm, NYSSWCC
Greg Albrecht, NYSSWCC via tele-communication

ii. **Partnership Reports**

- a. **NYSSWCC** – no report was provided. Kristin Brown attended the State Committee on behalf of Nichelle. She stated that there may be changes to the AgNPS Procurement area for Round 21. These changes will be moving to the TAC committee for review first. The committee also reviewed Orange County's AgNPS Rd 20 project with a manure storage under a barn and decided to fund the underground manure storages. Due to the extreme weather events lately as well as the work NEDPA is working on; SWCC will allow roof gutter to be used as match. Roof gutter will be needed to be installed so that roof water could either go to the storage when needed for agitation or a save outlet away from the storage. Round 21 will be going thru the Gateway program. The Committee also talked about SIRIS which is a web GIS mapping program that has 550+ layers; however, it was mentioned that the program might not be user friendly for Districts and GIS has more capabilities. Mike Latham is the lead person for user license agreements.

Nichelle reviewed the letter that she received from Schuyler County SWCD on the AgNPS program regarding if Districts should be allowed to implement projects in their own grants, and how it relates to the procurement policy. She further stated that State Committee staff is looking into changing the procure policy to allow Districts to perform task associated with AgNPS projects and a draft policy has been developed exempting Districts from the bidding process. The Board felt it should be left up to those individual District if choose to implement projects under the AgNPS.

- **A motion was made by Doug, seconded by Aaron to authorize Nichelle to draft a letter regarding Districts are capable of implementing AgNPS projects as long as their District Board are in agreement. Carried.**

b. **NRCS** – Greg was unable to attend, no report available.

c. **NYACD** – Judy mentioned the following:

- ✓ There is a teleconference today regarding Legislative Days dates – looking at Feb. 9-10; Feb 24-25 or March 2-3.
- ✓ No news on Encon Committee Chair
- ✓ Need to work on District Law changes to include rent as an eligible expense for reimbursement
- ✓ There is no word on the position replacement for State Committee

iii. Committee Reports

- a. **Conservation Skill Workshop** – Chris stated there is nothing to report at this time.
- b. **NYS Fair** – Appended to the minutes.
- c. **Empire Farm Days** – Appended to the minutes.
- d. **Envirothon** – Appended to the minutes.
- d. **Frank Bratt** – Judy stated that one person has submitted request for payment and there are currently two active recipients totaling \$841. She further discussed the possibility of changes to the application such as adding email address and if the training was received on the topic and if yes, when. Also setting a deadline on successfully completing the course. She provided a copy of the Frank Bratt Scholarship Application to the Board noting the changes in red.

- **A motion was made by Judy, seconded by Kristen B. to approve the Frank Bratt Scholarship Application with changes noted. Carried.**

VI. Old Business

- A. **Water Quality Symposium** – Aaron reviewed the hotel cost for WQS and discussed registration fees. He realizes that budgets are getting tighter; however, in order to keep up the pricing of the WQS, he recommends the Board to increasing the registration fee a small amount.

- **A motion was made b Velynda, seconded by Kristen B. to raise the registration fee \$10 across the board. Carried.**

Aaron reviewed a draft schedule with the Board. He stated that the HydroCAD class would cost \$200 plus \$65 fee and it was suggested not to pay the cost. The Board agreed not to pay the HydroCAD expense. He further stated that certificate of training being provided to participate is being researched and the Board will be kept apprised on it.

Aaron stated he asked Greg to participate in the discussion regarding the CNMP class being offered at the WQS training. Greg stated he would like to see the CNMP class offered this year then going into every other year. He further stated he checked with Dale Gates, NRCS and he's on board on offering the CNMP class every other year. The private sector wasn't pulled; however, if there is a need in the off year, then it could be offered at Conservation Skill Workshop as stand alone class. He continued to mention there should be language in the packet on the course being offered every other year.

Aaron mentioned the following:

- ✓ Keynote Speakers – Covanta; Syracuse Mayor
- ✓ Master of Ceremony – Phil Griswold
- ✓ Jim Lieberum – Nominations
- ✓ DJ is provided every night compliments of the hotel
- ✓ Dean is working on hockey again

B. **Administrative Manual** – Nichelle state a lead person needs to appointed and no word from State Committee on their appointing a staff member to the committee.

C. **NRCS Wetland** – Chris asked what the status is. There has been no activity yet; however, the Board is still concerned and would like a concise and informative information to be provided to the clientele that both Districts and NRCS work with. Nichelle stated she would be bringing this concern up at the State Committee meeting.

D. **Technical Training** – Nichelle stated the technical training curriculum is status quo. Lauren is still tracking courses that fit into the curriculum. Discussion took place on courses being taught versus video training. The Board felt there are some courses that can be taught by video; however, there are some courses that can't be taught by video those classes need to be in a classroom style.

E. **Other** – John mentioned that he has received 5 confirmations from vendors on being at the Farmer's Market. 100+ flyers have been sent out.

VII. **Other Business:**

A. **NACD Conference** – Nichelle discussed with Board on attending the NACD Conference in New Orleans on behalf of the CDEA.

- **A motion was made Aaron, seconded by Velynda to authorize Nichelle to attend the NACD Conference in New Orleans on behalf of CDEA. Carried.**

VIII. **Next meeting** – The next Executive Board meeting date is to be determined and location will be at Crown Plaza in Syracuse.

IX. **Adjournment** – 12:59 PM

Velynda Parker

Velynda Parker
Secretary