



**DISTRICT MEETING**  
**Tuesday, April 14, 2009**  
**USDA Service Center, Presque Isle**  
**MINUTES**

**Supervisors Present:** Bruce Wilkins, Matt Porter, George Howe.

**Associate Supervisors Present:** Ray Harris, Mike Bragdon, Gary Belyea, Dotty Dudley, Jon Durepo, Larry Park.

**Absent:** Tim Scott, Tim Hobbs., Steve Sutter, Leigh Morrow, Bruce Roope, Brent Flewelling.

**Staff:** Linda Alverson, Ann Morris

**Others:** Jo Weber, Skip Babineau

**Minutes for February 10, 2009:** *approved with a motion from Ray Harris and Second from Dotty Dudley.*

**Treasurer's Report:** *approved after a motion from Larry Park and second by Ray Harris.*

**NRCS Report: Joe Weber.** Joe reviewed qualification criteria to use EQIP funds for irrigation practices. An applicant must have an irrigation history, completed irrigation plan and the proposed practices must demonstrate an environmental improvement. MeDEP and MeDAg are working together with NRCS to clarify water use regulations. Irrigation practice requests will be evaluated using an Efficiency Model. The Presque Isle NRCS office has been receiving requests for forestry assistance, likely as a result of the Forestry/Farm Bill meetings held last month. The new State Conservationist is Juan Hernandez. Joe presented a brief biography of Mr. Hernandez.

**St. John-Aroostook RC&D Report: Skip Babineau.** Skip has been working on an updated RC&D area plan. This work included interviewing Linda to help establish future work priorities. Skip has been providing support to community wind efforts, Northern Maine Development Commission's Brownfields Project, Aroostook River Stream Bank Erosion at Camp Nomacca, and Presque Isle Downtown revitalization. The St. John Aroostook RC&D is planning a summer tour tentatively on August 14. RC&D raised \$250 from Presque Isle Rotary to help fund the mock and regional Envirothons.

**Executive Director's Report: Linda Alverson.**

- Carbon base-line Project : Finished two farms for this project. We asked to do 20 as time permits.
- We sponsored NRCS's Forestry and the Farm Bill meeting. 16 non-agency people attended
- Closed out the Mantle Lake Trail Design Project

- Our District sold aerial maps at the Ag Trade Show at the Presque Isle Forum
- Our District sponsored two Septic Installer Training Workshops
- We hosted the NRCS Local Working Group meeting

**Environmental Educators Report: Ann Morris.** Ann updated the board on the projects she is working on: Coordinating the Northern Regional Envirothon, Planning the Christina Reservoir Watershed Survey, Writing an EPA 319 NPS grant to fund a Prestile Stream Storm Watchers program and a watershed survey for Williams Brook, a tributary of Prestile Stream. We have permission from almost all of the major landowners in the Christina Watershed. Ann is working on getting permission from the last few. The training meeting for the surveyors will be April 21<sup>st</sup> and the survey will take place the week after. Ann and Linda have been out taking GPS points for potential Storm Watcher survey sites in preparation for the Storm Watcher Survey.

**Local Working Group Results:** The Central Aroostook Local working group recommended the following for the EQIP program:

**Central Aroostook Local Working Group Priorities:**

- Prevention/Reduction of sheet and rill erosion
- Prevention/Reduction of sedimentation ( preventing suspended solids from entering water bodies)
- Increase organic matter in soils (specifically cropland soils)
- Pre-commercial thinning on non-industrial forest land
- Repairing and preventing damage from gully erosion

**Central Aroostook Local Working Group allocation of 250 ranking points**

- Soil organic matter: 90 points
- Wildlife as secondary concern: 50 points
- Pasture/hay improvement: 20 points
- Winter Cover: 30 points/yr with winter cover,  
maximum 3 years 90 points

**Central Aroostook Funding Pools**

Cropland	50%
Animal Waste	15%
Pasture	10%
Forestry	10%
Wildlife	0% (covered by WHIP)
Water Conservation	15%

Funds remaining and not allocated to a funding pool should be transferred to the funding pool with the largest deficit.

The Board discussed the effectiveness of the Local working Group and ways to make the meeting more interesting. Suggestions included holding more than one meeting per year and have resource people their resource issues, particularly in Aroostook County. Ray Harris stressed that the local people's interests are important to the success of NRCS programs and funding. You have to work from the grass roots up. The Washington NRCS staff should be reminded of this.

**Aroostook Soils Project Update:** The Aroostook Soils project is addressing “solutions to gully erosion in Central Aroostook”. The Initial Plan of action agreed to at the Feb 25<sup>th</sup> meeting:”

- Recognize local successful growers who have applied adaptations to prevent soil loss. Use the media and a summer tour with stops to illustrate the BMPs to control soil loss.
- Produce BMP fact sheets on techniques to control soil loss
- Investigate comprehensive opportunities to research, demonstrate and cost share selective practices to decrease soil loss
- Demonstrate selective practices
- Cost share selective practices such as sub-soiling in grain years and mulching headlands.

**Envirothon Update:** Ann Morris. The Northern Regional Envirothon will be held on Tuesday May 19 at Mantle Lake Park. 13 teams have signed up for the Northern Regional Envirothon. We have lined up judges for each of the 5 stations. The Current Issue this year is “Biodiversity in a changing world”. The Presque Isle Elks Club has volunteered to cook a hot dog lunch for participants.

**District Service Award:** *Ray Harris* was presented with the 2008 District Service Award to recognize over 20 years of dedicated service to the District. Although Ray stepped down as a supervisor, he will be remaining an active member of the Board as an Associate Supervisor.

**MACD Summer Meeting:** The MACD summer meeting will be held on July 22 and 23 in Machias. The meeting will include a tour, lobster dinner, and auction. Linda will be looking for auction items to take down.

**MACD Committees:** MACD is looking for volunteers to serve on its standing committees.

There will be no meeting in May due to planting season. We will gather at McKeen Crossing on Sunday, May 31, 2:30 for a spring break and potluck dinner.