



**DISTRICT MEETING**  
**Tuesday, December 15, 2009**  
**USDA Service Center, Presque Isle**  
**MINUTES**

**Supervisors Present:** Leigh Morrow, Bruce Roope, Bruce Wilkins, George Howe.

**Associate Supervisors Present:** Mike Bragdon, Larry Park, Gary Belyea, Steve Sutter, Brent Flewelling, Dotty Dudley.

**Absent:** Ray Harris, Jon Durepo, Tim Scott, Matt Porter.

**Staff:** Linda Alverson.

**Others:** Brian Edgecomb (Supervisor elect), Joe Weber.

*Thanks to Larry and Edith Park for the excellent beef stew.*

**Minutes for November 17, 2009:** *The minutes were approved with a motion from Bruce Roope and second from Dotty Dudley.*

**Treasurer's Report:** The Board reviewed the 2008-2009 year end statement with a \$664.87 net in the operating budget. *The November 2009 monthly financial statement was approved by the Board after a motion from Bruce Wilkins and second from George Howe.*

**NRCS Report: Joe Weber.** Joe submitted a written report to the Board covering his activities during the last month. Irrigation applications and contracts have been completed for the year. The Presque Isle field office received 3 applications for CSP with only one determined to be eligible. The office received 33 EQIP applications (5 apps = irrigation, 5 apps = forestry, 4 apps = pasture, 4 apps = animal waste and 13 apps = cropland) which will need to be ranked and costs associated by February 1. A special fund has been set aside for 2 special initiatives: organic and irrigation. Payment of Technical Service Providers who prepare Conservation Activity Plans will now be on a reimbursement basis. Reimbursements will be based on a fixed amount of funding. NRCS has renewed its contribution agreement with Maine Forest Service allowing NRCS staff to work cooperatively with MFS foresters on forestry plans implementation and installation of practices. This will be an issue for this region if the Aroostook County forestry Districts are consolidated.

NRCS is proposing a program to financially support High Tunnels, a greenhouse-like structure used to extend the growing season for vegetables.

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

- Williams Brook/ Prestile Stormwatcher: The work Plan for the 319 NPS grant has been completed for this project and submitted to Me DEP.
- The Skidder Bridge workshop was a success. We provided the lunches and the new portable skidder bridge is waiting for us to pick up and move. Larry Park has agreed to store the bridge sections at his farm.
- The annual newsletter has been started and should be completed by the end of the year.

- The major projects for 2010 are reviewed and approved by the board.
  - **Stormwatcher Survey for Prestile Stream** (Spring 2010– Spring 2011)
    - Set-up, determine protocol Feb-March 2010
    - Meet with volunteers, training volunteers : Early March 2010
    - Write a proposal to Maine Community Foundation to fund the volunteer efforts: February 2010
    - Data collection and recording – April 1, 2010 to June 1, 2011
  - **Subwatershed Survey of Williams Brook**
    - Ownership maps – Feb 2010
    - Contact owners for permission Feb-March 2010
    - Coordinate on-the- ground survey Late April 2010
    - Data Entry –May, 2010
    - Write report – June-July 2010
    - Meet with landowners – July- August 2010
- **Spring Workshop:** No-till seeder, pasture improvement, no-till crop management – Late April 2010
  - Line up speakers Feb 2010
  - Farm for demonstrations Feb 2010
  - Advertising March 2010
  - Organize workshop April 2010
- **Irrigation Guide Update:** January 2010
  - Updates
  - Link permit section to internet
  - Burn new CD's
  - Mail out updated CD's - End Feb 2010
  - Final report for Me DOA – end Feb 2010

**MACD Winter Meeting Report:** Leigh Morrow, Bruce Roope, Dotty Dudley and Linda attended.

The 2010 Summer Meeting will be held on August 8 – 11 in Portland as part of the New England Regional Meeting.

MeDOA Commissioner Bradstreet reported that budget reductions are cutting deeply into his programs. He is consolidating 4 departments into 3. The Seed Potato Farm management in Masardis will be transferred to the Maine Potato Board. The District budget of \$280,000 is a red flag in his budget and he can no longer protect it. There was lengthy discussion during the 2 day meeting concerning: how we secure our funding, how we can do our job differently to stay solvent, how we can restructure ourselves. Ideas that were discussed were: fee for services, providing construction inspections for development permitting, coordinating biomonitoring for the state, continue being the neutral agency between government and the landowner.

MACD Budget: Tom Gordon and the executive committee have tightened the MACD budget by eliminating sending a delegation to the national meeting. Commissioner Bradstreet has offered to pay travel expenses for sending someone to the national meeting. Juan can set up conference calls for the executive committee which will save about \$1200.00.

Bill Bell's government affairs report stresses contacting legislative members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee and the Natural Resources

Committee. Rep. Jeff McCabe (former SWCD staff) added that there will be new legislation addressing the blight issue that occurred last year from vegetable seedlings sold a big-box stores.

MACD passed the following resolution:  
“BASE FUNDING FOR SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS”

*Soil and Water Conservation Districts continually face financial struggles because of the inadequate level of base funding. This lack of funding limits the abilities of Districts to accomplish their mission. Adequate base funding would allow resources spent on fundraising/grant writing to be better spent on operating programs to fulfill the mission. The lack of base funding has resulted in excessive District staff turnover and limited Districts’ abilities to meet existing service needs or to expand their programs.*

*Federal, state and local government entities call upon the recognized expertise of Districts without reimbursement or at a level far below the current day’s cost of providing services. Competitive grant programs limit the abilities of all Districts to provide appropriate levels of service. Fees-for-service limit public access to District programs. As a result of limited base funding, districts are unable to provide adequate technical assistance to assure the protection of our soil and water resources, as statutorily authorized and directed.*

*The Maine Association of Conservation Districts requests action by the Northeast Region of NACD and the National Association of Conservation Districts to give the highest priority to securing sufficient base funding from county, state, and federal governments for the Soil and Water Conservation Districts operational costs in Maine, the Northeast, and the Nation.*

*In defining “sufficient base funding”, the goal should be to insure:*

- *funding sufficient to allow each District to employ a full-time professional as District manager; and*
- *funding should be equitably shared by Federal, State, and County governments.*

**Election results:** 146 Ballots were received, 3 were void and one was late and not counted.

Brian Edgecomb – 97 votes

Steve Sutter – 45 votes

Brian Edgecomb will replace Bruce Roope on the Board. Bruce as agreed to continue as an Associate Supervisor.

**St.John – Aroostook RC&D:** Steve Sutter was selected to represent the District on the RC&D Steering Committee.

**Joint Aroostook County District meeting:** The joint meeting will be held on Dec. 17 in the Presque Isle Service Center conference room. To be discussed are: State base funding, 319 grants – state discontinuing advance payments, Balancing our budgets, our relationship to NRCS at the local and state level, how we can work cooperatively.

**The Central Aroostook Local Working Group Meeting** will be held on Dec, 16 at the Cooperative Extension Office.