



DISTRICT MEETING
Thursday, 26 August 2010
USDA Service Center, Presque Isle
MINUTES

Supervisors Present: Leigh Morrow, George Howe, Brian Edgecomb

Associate Supervisors Present: Gary Belyea, Steve Sutter, Jon Durepo, Larry Park

Absent: Mike Bragdon, Dotty Dudley, Bruce Wilkins, Bruce Roope, Ray Harris, Tim Scott, Brent Flewelling

Staff: Ben Lynch

Others: Joe Weber NRCS

Meeting called to order by Leigh Morrow at 6:01PM.

Minutes for 13 July 2010: *Approved with a motion from Steve Sutter and second from Gary Belyea. All in favor, motion passes.*

Treasurer's Report: *Approved with a motion from Jon Durepo and second from Gary Belyea. All in favor, motion passes.*

NRCS Report: Joe Weber. Joe gave an update on Farm Bill program application deadlines and applications the Presque Isle office has received, including 56 for EQIP. He also updated on current projects including about 1 mile of waterways and diversions, a heavy use area, five center pivots, and a livestock bridge among others. Expired general CRP contracts will be rolled over and there is a chance there will be a demand for the no till drill to establish grassland cover. There was a comment that DEP had been receiving complaints about the Aroostook River having excessive pumping and reduced flows near Washburn and Joe informed the Board that all irrigation practices approved and funded by NRCS are in compliance with Chapter 587.

St. John & Aroostook RC&D Report: Skip Babineau. None

Executive Director's Report: Benji Lynch.

- **Christina Watershed 319 Projects:** The grant contract was signed on 23 August and is now waiting to be encumbered. One landowner have decided to start construction and risk not getting the 319 grant funding due to work before the grant is encumbered. The landowner was informed of the risk and felt that construction would still be going on after the funding comes through.
- **Irrigation Guide Update:** Benji met with representatives from the Maine Potato Board and Maine Potato Growers to gather information to update Section 7: Costs and Benefits of the guide. Benji also edited Sections 3 and 6 and will soon send it out for revisions and comments to the appropriate parties.
- **Williams Brook Watershed Survey/Prestile Stream Storm Watchers:** Meetings have been held with NRCS and most of the landowners involved in the Williams Brook Watershed survey to discuss the findings. Due to the lack of rain in the past month, there has been no storm sampling. Benji did gather low-flow stream depths for baseline data.



- **Biomass:** Benji is continuing discussions with RC&D, UM Extension, and UMPI to develop a grass biomass production project that would take currently underutilized grasslands to harvest and pelletize/briquette **for** use as a fuel for residential heating.

Audit/Review: Cliff Rhome gave an estimate of \$1300-1600 to complete a financial review for FY 2009.

Municipal Assessment Update: The District has received assessments from Caribou and Presque Isle during August.

NRCS Natural Resource Assessment: Benji described the Resource Assessment Project that the NRCS is asking each District to complete by March 2011. The project will involve gathering data on natural resource concerns and solutions in our district as viewed by the public. We will be required to hold one public “brainstorming” meeting that will follow a template developed by the NRCS and MACD advisory committee. This information will then be compiled into a report written by the Districts with assistance from MACD and NRCS. The District will then hold one Local Working Group meeting, in addition to the traditional LWG meeting discussing Farm Bill issues, to review and provide comments to the draft report. The final reports from all Districts will be compiled and used to develop Maine NRCS five year plan. Funding of approximately \$4000 from the NRCS will be provided to each District to complete these tasks.

NRCS Outreach: NRCS is requesting the three Aroostook County Districts to conduct a pilot project to increase NRCS and SWCD outreach to clients we typically do not work with. The project will involve organizing a public outreach meeting to “advertise” the SWCDs and NRCS. There is potential funding from the NRCS to the District to cover the costs of renting space, providing food, advertizing and organizing a meeting.

Regional NACD/MACD Summer Meeting: Benji and Joe gave a brief overview of the meeting. At the MACD Employees meeting, there was discussion of creating a sub-committee on District Sustainability. Benji will be representing the northern region on this committee which has tentatively scheduled a meeting in September. There was a discussion of the District’s role in land use changes in Aroostook, specifically the increase in demand for agricultural land due to increased rotation and other factors. The District may have a place in helping improve marginal land to create land better suited for crop production.

Next meeting will tentatively be set for the 19th of October 2010.

Motion to adjourn from Gary Belyea and a second from George Howe at 7:44PM.