

- Approval of Minutes:
 - Motion to approve: approved.
- President's report:
 - Introduction of John Treat, new treasurer from Cheshire County, volunteered
- Treasurer's Report:
 - Been a long learning process of how the system works for invoicing and waiting for money to arrive for federal money to come back.
 - NRCS Grants
 - Project Grants
 - State grant, DES
 - Most of the expenses on top are going to be related to grants, then another section under general expense.
 - Two areas to bring attention to:
 - General Operating Other: \$19000 we're still trying to sort out what it is and who it goes to.
 - Page 3 \$8000 reconciliation discrepancies
 - Balance Sheet: How the accounts are organized,
 - A lot of time working on the citizens bank account
 - Citizens bank: other: the large sum is from transferring money over from the Grant account.
 - Report approved.
- President's report:
 - Came from a low point at the beginning of the year. Appreciate NHACD and district folks who have helped out with this process.
 - Rob Larocque, Vicky Stafford and Stacy Luke have been a tremendous help to us in the last year.
 - Right now Linda is looking at the mission statements from different districts, looking to try to come up with one that suits all of the districts that NHACD can use in our materials.
 - Several projects this year:
 - Demo project is a big one, allows districts to focus on what they really enjoy doing.
 - Applied for and won a conservation innovation grant this year, for landowners to learn.
 - New grant: Long Island Sound grant for \$196400, Sarah Kilbourn of Coos county is the project manager. Meeting on December 6 in Woodstock VT to meet with partners to begin collaboration. This will grow our partnership with our own districts but also working across state borders.
 - INSERT LINK/INFORMATION ON GRANT HERE
 - We're hiring an agronomist which hasn't been done before. They will work with already existing technical assistance providers in the four counties. Will try to hire someone within thirty days.
 - Districts already branching out into new areas, NACD and NRCS urban ag grant. First was 1 million and had so many responses they upped to two million. Hillsborough and Merrimack county won, Kerri will be talking on this later.
 - Hoping we can engage districts more and work together to solve some of the issues these grants are tackling.
 - NHACD had a strong New England Leadership Meeting this year. Vicky Stafford helped a lot. Chief of EPA came to speak.
 - Rick and Linda went to DC in March to visit congressional representatives. A good thing to go to at least once a year to be familiar with one another. Ann Kuster introduced a bill to exclude NRCS contract holders from going through the normal red tape.
 - Attended Northeast Regional Meeting (of NACD).

- Hired Jackie Cullen
- Recommend that we go away from business as usual and look to see what your district wants and needs. Easy to do business as usual. Could each district target a state legislator to be on their board?
- Need to hire an executive director. Recommending we form a committee of a few people to look at the qualifications that we want. Bob Porter has suggested hiring a recruiter to find someone.
- Communications Chair Report: Richard Mellor, Cheshire County.
- Try to encourage district supervisors to talk across district lines in other venues than formal gatherings. Not to view things as competition but collaboration, how to keep up that
- Newsletter, intended to be quarterly.
- Connecticut River is a good opportunity for the four districts to really vamp up their collaboration.
- Wetlands Council
 - 3 years ago there was a vacancy to be filled, composed of dept. heads from various agencies and municipal groups. Try to have an aggregate of interested combined for a fair viewing of issues.
 - First thing is to review appeals from DES decisions, whether denied an application and are appealing the decision. Somewhere around 20 of them occur on an annual basis. We see the ones that are problematic.
 - Screening process to make sure they have legal standing
 - Quarterly was the minimum, we have so far had six meetings.
 - 14 of 15 viable applications for appeal
 - Hearings consists of a court room, council is a jury, cross examinations and deliberations.
 - DES writes rules for itself, which are approved by this council.
 - Share information with Richard if anyone is getting money from the.
 - It is an open meeting but hardly anyone utilizes that.
 - Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund (ARMS)
- Envirothon Coordinator: Sue Kessler
 - Linda is on the Board of Trustees for the National Envirothon Committee.
 - Canon was funding it LOOK UP IN QB!!!
 - Spring events:
 - Envirothon is teams of HS students, NH has started Middle School because there was a desire for that, no one else in the country that we know if has middle school teams.
 - Spring events were a training day, competition day was in Late May.
 - Always looking for Judges and volunteers for competition day
 - Training day will be April 1 or 8
 - Competition day will be May 23 or 24 at NHTI in Concord
 - Do a presentation on the theme of the year. For the first time this year, NH allowed technology use because in 2017 at the national level they can use technology for the first time.
 - 27 teams, a lot of the high schools send a number of teams, some look at it as an intense competition and some look at it as an educational experience.
 - Middle schoolers are very enthusiastic and take it very seriously. The idea of middle school program is that it's a feeder system for the high school program.
 - If anyone has a connection with their local school and sees an opportunity for adding a team, we would love to add more teams.
 - Test in soils, identifying soils, there's a test in forestry, take a written test as a group.
 - Theme for last year was invasive species, theme for 2017 is Agriculture Soil and Water Conservation Stewardship North American competition in July in Maryland.
 - Was Newport team new? There had been Newport teams for years but the advisor moved on.
 - Do they ever work on projects that are so successful that become implemented into a town/city plan?
 - Example of students coming up with goats to remove poison Ivy.
- Lisa Morin Soil Judging

- Annual Event, Year-round approach. Subset of Envirothon.
 - Competition in the fall to help students become familiar with soils and the types of analysis and assessment they will likely incorporate in envirothon. Often the first time students are exposed to a technical way of looking at soils.
 - Four pits, four tests that go with them. Competition is 2.5/3 hours, schools sometimes send non-competing teams.
 - Has been going on at Kingman Farm in Madbury, and work with the UNH Kingman Farm group.
 - Alena from Strafford, Vicky from Rockingham, Lenny Lord is one of the pit monitors
 - Conant, Conval, Moultonborough and Bellows Falls VT,
 - Winning team was Bellows Falls.
 - Upcoming planning meeting
 - Talked last year about developing a middle school program
 - Maybe finding a more central location in the state
 - Addressing staffing issues and concerns. How much can NRCS assist us in developing more programming, performance assessments maybe the day of. Do we need paid consultants to help with that?
 - Lionell suggests this area as a possible location for HS and MS groups.
 - Funding: lack of funding for busses. Anything we could get to scholarships and paying for transportation is helpful.
 - Pam Gilbert had done some research
 - Does it significantly increase the costs to duplicate the event? Jim Grenier: It's hard to understand how we couldn't find the funding to do this for kids in the north and the south. Troubling that we cannot find two sites.
 - Bob Goodrich: Could be a way to get the conservation commissions involved across the state. There are likely donor advised accounts that would like this
 - Also an issue with Envirothon, the schools that do come have a science teacher, the ones that don't aren't likely to send a team to the competition.
 - Can school board leadership talk on the state conservation level? Bridges need to be built on this topic.
 - B. Goodrich: Might be a good year to do this with the severe drought across the state. Could use it as a foot in the door.
- Statewide MOU Signing to happen in the larger room.
 - 10 million dollar effort from Long Island Sound, concerned by degradation of water quality in long island sound
 - Two tracts; nutrient management and soil health and a forestry/land conservation tract with CT River Watershed council is involved with.
 - Goal to reduce amount of nutrients from entering CT river in the first place. Great opportunity for promoting no-till agriculture.
 - Need to hire a full-time agronomist to do this work, for a 3-year term. A lot of traveling for this position up and down the river (literally).
 - At least 10 nutrient management plans which will be in some ways component of the comprehensive management plan
 - 75 or more resource assessments done.
 - Project will increase our capacity and partner with folks in new ways.
 - Given 200k but one to one match. Need that much in-kind value. Need to put a price on our deliverables, had a good conversation last week but missed that piece. Have a vision of what the deliverables will be
 - Categories: Resource Assessment

- Bob Porter: Goals of USDA to get us all in the habit of collaborating and cooperating?
 - Lionell: down south has seen a problem with up river, collaborating will definitely happen, have already had great meetings with different organizations. VT funding spent both by UVM and.
- These practices will be new and different for many of the districts involved.
- This was included in the farm bill. In keeping with the landscape based initiatives that are happening.
- Dorn: CIG Grant
- Move from county projects to something we can coordinate statewide and have NHACD push into statewide, and have NHACD add to that and not just rely on volunteer time.
- Farmers have been experimenting with rolled cover crop mulch
- DonBiologic has commercialized some of the planning techniques
- Bold approach to bring 4 pieces of equipment available to farmers to try to get coverage to all major growing areas in the state.
- Roller Crimpers can be draft powered, the equipment that we're getting are tow types.

PARTNER REPORTS

Rob McAfee NRCS State Conservationist

- NRCS staff: Steve Pytlick from Walpole, Don Kierstead, state conservation, Wendy Lord Soil Conservation. Jade Nield Dover office, Chad Cochrane, Heather Foley, Kelli _____ Lancaster
- We are here to listen to your needs, please talk to us during the social hour etc.
- 7 additional staff planned to be hired across the state, a few engineers.
- Contracts that help spread our work around,
- 15% of that allocated to soil health practices and aerial seeding. Steve Groff will have more to offer on that topic with what he has in store.
- AMA had only four contracts, opportunity to build that bigger, expecting \$75000, plan to devote all to irrigation practices and drought mitigation.
- Easement program: \$7.6 million moves through the easement program. Is a partner intensive program to get off the ground.
- Agreements:
 - CIG and RCPP we've already heard of
 - Nature Conservancy Oyster Restoration in Great Bay
 - Bebe River had a great project on stream restoration and fish passages,
- Changes:
 - Budget looks pretty good
 - Conservation Stewardship Program has been overhauled, comes directly from feedback in NH and across the US on some dissatisfaction with the overall process. A lot of new enhancements available. The way you're evaluated and get into the program has completely changed.
- Drought:
 - Provide technical evaluation on this program
 - Website has a section on drought resources on NRCS NH website, short and long term approach.
 - Clarification: FSA program, are their programs for veggie programs,
 - Not right now. Forage program, but right now it's orchards and livestock.
 - FSA does have short term low interest loans that they're pitching right now as an option.

NACD: Eric Hansen, Northeast Representative

- Started less than a month ago with NACD.
- 4 things:

- Soil health Champions network: 130th champion mark, have three from NH including Dorn. Still looking for more. Focused on recruitment up until now, trying to build the network and now we get to switch focus more and look to how we can use and support that network.
 - Opportunities to network across the country
 - Educational conference calls
 - Scholarships available to attend meetings
 - Regional/national speaking opportunities available right now.
- Urban Grants: awarded \$2mil in NRCS grants, projects are great
 - Connections bridged between urban lawmakers and areas why ag bills can work for them. A lot of interest in that is generating right now.
- DUNS: in the past this has needed to be renewed each year
 - SAM system: designed because of big contractors, congress wanted to be able to track what they were doing. Changed because they wanted to track everyone. Not designed for farmers
- Conservation Planning boot camps offered with NRCS.
 - Nebraska, three week long class. NACD has spots held for district employees and its all expenses paid. Just got confirmation we'll be doing that for the next five years. Next one is in October.
 - How many per year? Not sure.
- NACD annual meeting in Denver at the end of January (28 – Feb 2).
 - Northeastern Session at the meeting
- Members: Dues paying members are great, and we urge you to consider paying your dues, significant part of the funding stream, non-restricted. Fiscal Year started October 1st. Every district got a letter about re-upping for the new year.

Election of Officers: Bob Porter

- Linda Brownson for President (final year).
- Jack Parker 1st VP
- Dorn Cox 2nd VP
- Treasurer John Treat
- All were approved and re-elected.

District Showcase:

- Dorn: one of the most important parts of the meeting, we don't need a meeting like this to share ideas but it's a great opportunity to share and celebrate the work that's been done over the last year.
- Belknap County:
- New program called adopt a town. Made a commitment to meet with each town as individual board members, meeting with planning commissions and conservation commissions to check in, see what's important in their town, what their priorities are etc.
- Working on expanding our volunteer base, work parties on a wetlands walk project that had been done 20 years ago. Three work parties, now have a recruit for new assoc. board member.
- Information meetings on aquifers, getting a lot of interest for potential projects.
- Delegation reduced funding by \$12,400 for fiscal year 2016. Strong support from commissioners but not delegation.
- Established a NH Gleans position and has been very successful, will likely almost double amount collected from last year.
- Number of Demo projects, worked with local prison program.
- Water Quality and Land Use:
 - Existing grant to work on restoration. Working on Gunstock Brook. Major grant this spring N. England Forested Rivers Fund, augment existing work that we were short on.

- Gunstock is county owned, through N. England Forest Rivers fund have been able to do some revision and teeing up restoration stream projects. Put in a couple of moose plate grants based on leveraging those dollars.

- Cheshire: see Slides
 - Offering granite state market match: if you're on SNAP programs, you can double your dollar at the farmers' market. Keene farmers' market has bene doing it for years, started a buyers club with Keene Housing, started a delivery to a Keene Housing site. Also working with Piccadilly farm CSA
 - Partnership with Hannah Grimes Center and community volunteers, to help kids to go to a farm camp that have financial need. 25 this year.

- Coos County: See Slides
 - Sarah Brady is new last name.