



Board Meeting Minutes

August 18th, 2016, 12-4pm

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Treasurer's report:

- Jackie will be updating the board in the near future as she gathers balances for agreements and fixes up the quickbooks accounting.

Envirothon:

- 2 middle school teams at Envirothon, Moultonborough won first place, went to competition in Ontario.
- Theme is ag soil and water conservation, held in Maryland (national) next year. If anyone has ideas for a site for the competition day, please share.
- Need outdoor and indoor space for a site
- 5/6 meeting rooms for competition
- Teams will focus on specific topics within broader theme.

NACD Report: (Linda)

- Stewardship/education department with NACD sent out printed materials, have gone digital. Have warehouse of print materials, on sale 75% off. Every year they have a theme, in stock is Soil to Spoon, Where does your Watershed go? Local Heroes, Pollinators, Dig Deeper: Mysteries in the soils. Can get all of those to take to schools etc. Anticipating they will go quickly b.c of the quality.
- Usually \$8-12 for packet of 25 books
- Includes teachers guides, community outreach materials, etc.
- Conservation planning boot camp in Nebraska offered by NRCS. 50 seats have been offered, 38 have been taken so far. Linda has heard nothing bad about it. Difficult to leave for that time period. Sept 12-30th, two slots available if there are any district members, expenses are all paid, Grant from NACD/NRCS.
- Also Oct. course with openings Oct 17-Nov 4.
- Title of Training: Conservation planning boot camp. Prereq. courses online on NRCS Ag Learn site. States in the region have a robust program for conservation planning.
- Vicky is all signed up in Tech Reg., Alena and Lenny have one more test plan to do to become
 - “Nutrient Management Planners”
- Cons. Planning partnership initiative with Jason Weller. NE Regional conservationist Gayle Barry talked about this, started to write plans to satisfy contracts instead of landowner goals. Promotion of this planning is to correct that and get us in better position to help landowners.
- Goals: reinvigorate, improve capacity for 1:1 assistance, ensure delivery of technically sound assistance
- 2 slots for Sept, (for whole US).
- NACD was an election meeting for NE Regional, NE goes to W. VA, NJ, PA, NY. New Chair is Dan Ferrand. Farmer in upstate NY, Denise Savageau, V. Chair, CACD. Cal Stewart of Maryland, NE Regional Rep on NACD Executive Board.
- Dorn: NACD present at Soil health annual meeting . NACD has partnership with soil health institute.
- Thinking of asking Beth Mason of NACD to come to annual meeting to talk about Soil Health Champions Network.

Partner Reports:

Rick Ellsmore:

- Excellent success in additional \$\$ for easements, \$25 mil in US NH got almost \$5mil, 7 more farms, 10 tracts for wetland reserve program.
- FYI: nearly a new law passed in state, (house and senate) indicated all easements had to go through gov. council for approval, gov. vetoed it but wouldn't be surprised if it got back on the table. Grouped in Fed. Easements and land acquisition. Lots don't want to see expansion of Umbagog.
- Don't have house bill #, have been working with Lorraine and Rob Johnson, will have a meeting to discuss impacts to NRCS programs. Delegates have indicated we can accommodate, but rules won't change for just one state, and it will effect bid timelines etc. cannot get gov. council approval for every step. Would be very prohibitive.

- Rick will send house bill ### to Linda.
- State cons. Committee will send in comments, NHACD can weigh in.
- Monadnock conservancy getting \$600k for land protection, \$600k for Beebe river, dept. chief of programs here meeting with WMI \$5.4mil over 7 states for young forest habitat initiative for 60ish species.
- Equip program, backlog greater than ever 200 apps not funded, \$4.4 mil
- Southeast Land Trust 1.6 for wetland enhancement program, lower Merrimack.
- NRCS career fair at UNH on Oct 5th, hope to hire 4 ppl.
- Sec. of Ag hiring forums, NH on Oct 17th open to public, at Audubon, him or one of his staffers, issues with dairy in state and region and local food and food safety modernization act.
- Next month Rick is heading to DC as Acting Deputy Chief for NRCS. Beginning second week in Sept. Unknown duration, overseeing soils.

Employees Association: Vicky

- Phone conference with Dea Brickner-Wood about grants, asking questions, find out what SCC is looking for this year.
- Annual Meeting Sept. 8th in Plymouth, Bus. Meeting public library, lunch at covered bridge restaurant in Campton. Theme: planning future projects
- Statewide MOU, a lot of district sign on, NHACD annual meeting could have everyone who could sign, chair of every district should be there but if not, vote for a signer for the MOU to get as many as possible at that meeting.
- Most districts that said “probably” but not everyone that’s voted on it officially
- Vicky will send message out to DM’s so everyone is aware of system.
- Linda: Have you considered joining the NE Regional Employees Association? NH used to be part of it, annual report from last year had NH listed.

Communications

- Calendar Invites are helpful and should continue whenever possible.
- Cindy Jones videographer for Channel 9 lives in Lee volunteering to video soil health series, interested in providing services.
 - Linda has apt. on the 23rd to talk about it.
 - Newsletter, include videos
- Betty from NRCS can send distribution list to add for newsletter distribution.
- Dorn: Calls/scheduling has been going really well.

Grants:

RCPP:

- 4 counties in CT river watershed, submitted proposal about what to do with \$\$ already appropriated to us, haven’t heard back yet, Linda met with counterpart in CT and it appears everything will go fine. Needed proposal to come up with a contract to do what we’re able to do.
- Had some issues/concerns from Tom Beaudry in Cheshire County, Richard reports that there’s been an excellent meeting and concerns were addressed.

Paperwork/accountability, something real for the farmers. Matching funds might be more workable as separate grants for equipment. 6 mtgs per district as part of deliverables seemed like a lot. Replacing admin time with other matching grants, could be doable. Didn't want to alienate Tom

- Timeframe on an answer: Linda expecting it any day.
- Rick: Don's reviewed it and 99% sure we'll get it. Seems to just be a matter of waiting out formalities.
- Mike Lynch says a lot of people out there that would love this job [the position we would put out for this]
- Call with Lorraine from 8-9 about this, and she's really on board. Tom had sat down with her.
- Who will do the hiring for this position?
 - Probably a committee of three, district manager, Dorn, Linda, Don Kierstead as advisor to meet rules/regs
- Lorraine brought up a point that messaging with farmers is so important, have had issues in VT with farmers in Lake Champlain. Public response to farmers has become very negative.
- Richard: Tom suggested this program might be something of a ground truthing, is this a way to document the truth? Is there a way to collect data to demonstrate that they weren't the guilty party.?
- Soil scanning, compile the information, something that this 3 year position can do this.
 - A big part is documenting physical soil characteristics for both the farm and the watershed. Collecting all of that data, capacity, infiltration in addition to nutrient analysis.
 - Soil Scan Unit will be at the annual meeting for a demonstration. – ADD TO NEWSLETTER AS A BULLET POINT

CIG Grant: Dorn:

- Conservation no-till planting using Dawn Biologic roller system, crimps while it plants. Focus on demoing around the state and distributing until we have full state coverage, less than 40 min. of someone using one. Will enhance rental programs, managed by districts who have already started rental programs.
- Letters of commitment from at least 3-4 farmers in county areas where equip will be to do demos as well as monitoring.
- Ownership: NHACD equipment administered by individual districts.
- Planters: 2 and 4 row planters set up with roller crimpers and fertilizer hoppers. Discussing if there will be some seed metering documentation as well.
 - Production ready, not experimental,
 - 2 row for sweet corn and pumpkins where success growing on the mulch.
- Rolling mulch is rolling down crops like winter rye cover at planting time. Doesn't preclude use of herbicide in addition, if done at the same time greatly reduces or eliminates need for herbicide at the time of planting.
- Much more effective than single roller-crimpers that we've demo'ed across the state. Prone to not crimping well, not as aggressive as these which have enough pressure to cut the crop.

- Allows you to plant directly into cover crop. Uses: sweet, salvage, ear corn or pumpkins. Planting into winter cover crops: rye, wheat,
- Also rolling in the farmer-to-farmer communications and incorporate into annual meeting. Use that meeting as a way to get producers working on these projects connecting so they're not working in isolation.
- Where are locations?
 - Yet to be finalized.
 - Cheshire/Sullivan, Grafton/Carroll, Hillsborough/Merrimack and Rockingham/Strafford (thinking in groups)
- How many machines in state?
 - Adrienne LaVoie buying one on his own right now (Hillsborough)
 - These will be the first that we know of for lending.
- Districts should be made aware of their role of management/rentals that they will be involved in.
- Focused on getting 4 for across the state because operations will be different with different soils.
- Audience is people who have been doing it a different way.
- Get into the hands of farmers who are part way there and start to put them together.
- Hoping to include in equip pay list so assistance is available.
- Sharing issue: time competition since planting is always at the same time?
 - This program is for farmers planning ahead. Have to be planting cover crop this fall to use it next spring. As it becomes something that's lent out will require more coordination. Not meant to substitute for farmers own equipment, meant to get them used to it and encourage them to get their own.
- 4 and 6 rows is common for corn planting.
 - 2/4 for sweet corn/pumpkin, 36" row
 - Equipment is production scaled in that manner.
 - 4 row would need a 40hp tractor.
- Dawn Biologic units built in Canada
- Can they be retrofitted to existing planters?
 - Yes, purchase yourself \$2000/row and would customize to any planter.
- Kerry Rickrode's event had 50 farmers, great event hoping to get Adrienne to present at annual meeting.
- Potentially eliminates need to put any roundup on crops. 2-3wk window to kill without herbicide.

Urban Ag Grant: Linda

- NACD/NRCS \$1mil grant program, doubled it to \$2mil.
- Kerry sent some language about what the grant is:

"The Hillsborough County Conservation District (HCCD) will use its award to hire an urban agriculture technical assistant to serve the refugee/immigrant farmers and underserved populations in the predominantly developed areas of Manchester and Concord, and the developing area of Bedford. Four site locations have been identified with two potential sites to be added (Franklin and Dunbarton) that would benefit from urban agriculture technical assistance. HCCD and the Merrimack County Conservation District (MCCD) will partner to begin working at these identified

sites. Locations have a variety of needs, including garden plot expansions, environmental site assessments, soil tests, nutrient management, pest management solutions, water conservation, invasive species management, on-site water availability, construction of seasonal high tunnels, and general garden/land management. Outside of the growing season, workshops will be planned and hosted addressing the aforementioned needs of individual gardens and gardeners. Workshops will not only spread valuable agricultural knowledge by demonstration, but potentially engage more members of the community and raise interest in conservative agriculture. Additionally, the technical assistant will write conservation plans and help coordinate farm planning for the next growing season, considering the needs of each garden and community it serves, during the non-growing seasons. Assisting these producers will allow for better, more conservative use of land and resources, potentially leading to healthier soil, more sustainable agricultural methods being utilized, higher yields, and more community involvement via plot expansions and workshops.”

Demonstration Projects:

- Sullivan: via Lionel, demo project with a couple of hoop houses, in partnership with Colby-Sawyer. Study of two types of cover on hoop houses, one is a German product solar wrap, the other a conventional plastic. Second year of growing different crops and measuring quality/quantity to see which coverage is the best one. Goal to advise if it's worth it to pay extra for solar wrap.
- Pam: working with Grafton county farm and corn. Planted with Coop Ext. 4 trials going on, one plot aerial seeded with a helicopter June 20th and conventionally seeded at the same time. Been comparing the two as they go along hoping for an early start on the cover crop. Just looked at it and there's nothing with the aerial seed. Other two sections. Once short day corn comes off, two cover crops will be planted to see how they do.
- Tullando Farm did aerial seeding at the same time. What they had did looked better but their soil seeding was different.
- Keyline demos in Sullivan/Cheshire and Strafford counties. Keyline Vt, Mark C. gave workshops on those three locations First part a lecture on general soil health and Keyline principles. Manage excess water and dry areas and use gravity to move water across the landscape. Workshop included setting up transits, effective in showing that it sounds intimidating but as a group when you do it, the mystery goes away and you realize you can do the whole process in one afternoon (with right equip). Last part was demo of the equipment to rip the keylines into the contours.
- Outcomes of moving equipment across the state and logistics, gave a greater capacity to finding truckers, components, welders. All of the things tied to having equipment and moving around. Being able to do that and do it well. Still have some refining to do.

ANNUAL MEETING:

- Goal for the week: registration forms out to counties.
- Logo for the theme:
- Trying to have a broader audience, technical discussion to draw farmer-cooperators.
- Jackie get list from Rick for state Technical committee.
- Hoping to bring people in the room to answer questions and share experiences, so the next meeting we can discuss the progress from that.

- Next state Tech Meeting 14th of September,
- How to get our supervisors to attend?
- Note: Common Man sits literally in the Sugar River.
- Rick: in the past have offered to pay for all costs and still hard to get people to attend.
 - Paying for DM's registration and lodging.
- Market as ongoing grant projects. If you're involved in these grants, you need to be there to share information, present etc.
- Have multiple grants that can likely cover the speakers' fees. Not trying to profit, just break even.
- Districts, some, cover for supervisors to go. Hoping that most districts would cover the costs.
- Some of this can go on outreach agreement. Speaker fees etc.
- Two-tier level if you're only attending Friday?
- Steve should be available for all of Friday for those who didn't attend Thursday Banquet.
- Are we in a position to take the loss if
 - \$75 for Friday
 - \$150 for two-days
- No breakfast, just coffee, costs would go down.
- Subcommittee discussion after looking at grants etc.
- NRCS sponsor w/ a table: \$1000,