



Board Meeting

August 17th 1-4pm

In Attendance: Linda Brownson, Jackie Cullen, Bob Porter, Richard Mellor, Kitty Miller, Alena Warren, Dorn Cox, John Treat, Donna Hepp, Lisa Hampton

Table of Contents:

Minutes of May 18th meeting

Alena: NACD NRCS leadership meeting in Nebraska

- Stipend offered from NACD to send an up and coming leader to the meeting.
- Presentations from different states, success stories of different partnerships with various agencies.
 - Nothing was directly applicable but a lot of thought provoking material.
 - Minnesota NRCS/state/cons. Districts put together some information/infographics about funding for conservation projects. Info on investing \$1, getting \$x to local economy. NRCS has that for NH.
 - Article, tourism \$8.7 billion, higher than ME and VT
 - Would be great information to use in applications for grants.
- Presentation/movie about Hugh Hammond Bennet (biography information here: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/about/history/?cid=stelprdb1044395>)
- Differences on learning and communication styles between generations; boomers, gen X, millennials. Interesting point was Gen X and younger like to have info available online. Would be helpful to have information and materials on a workshop available online ahead of time.
- Was it totally worth your time?
 - Two days of flying for one day of presentations but very glad she went.
- NRCS was there and had a meeting with the new administration.

Treasurer's Report

Balance Sheet

- Gives a basic idea of how much cash we have in the bank and how much we hold
- Profit and Loss
 - Income: biggest item is no-till seeder, other smaller grants, outreach 507 grant
- Grants statuses
 - LISW – Bill going for Conservation Management cert. not Nutrient Management, many assessments he's done will lead into plans.
 - We have to invoice on deliverables, but are paying Bill bi-weekly so we will start to balance out in the next quarterly round of invoicing for the LISW-RCPP.
 - Bill meets periodically with them and where they go and who needs plans
 - Demo Agreement has balances that need to be spent down by end of Sept. All DM's have been contacted

- Accounts payable Manifest – will be using going forward, can bring to meetings, Jackie and John to use,
- 2-Row one more will be coming, won't be paid for this year.

LISW-RCPP Update/Agronomist summary

- Bill's write-up: (see attachment)
 - Four or five resource evaluations will be complete in time for the September invoice

CIG Report and Soil Health Update

- Equipment's been going around the state.
- In order to be a success, depended on farmers taking ownership of project
- Most farms using round-up ready corn.
 - Need to look at differences if they're not.
- In general in conventional systems.
- Farmers are nervous about going into the tall biomass. Have a range that we're planting into.
 - Even in those conditions equipment worked fine.
- Remains to be seen what yields are in a tough year
- Generally satisfied with the equipment, still have some questions and concerns but a willingness to work with new systems and put more acreage in next year.
- Willingness to attend Annual Meeting and speak about their experiences.
- Bought three total: two 4-rows and one 2-row.
 - Feedback on the 2-row is that it's not very effective. In conditions it was used didn't have enough weight.
 - Sense is the next one purchased would be another 4-row. Will have a meeting before annual meeting with farmers who participated.
- Changes in ways fertilizer is applied and a few other tweaks that have been recommended before we order another one.
- Does system tamp down weed pressure?
- When you wait longer, more biomass and mulch, more effect on suppressing weeds. Earlier you still depend on herbicides to suppress weeds. Sweet corn at Brookdale and Lavoie's farm. Using later so will probably have more weed suppressions.
- Do farmers have a hard time in backing off on chemical use?
 - It's generally a turning point. Seeing real acreage in a new and different practice.
- Rick: Been working on foregone income, taking risk away by compensating them for doing a trial. They can take the loss to try something new.
- Higher wire worm rates in Coos and Grafton farms which will effect yields. But general sense was they were aware of pest management not blaming on the mulch system.
 - In the future, want to be quicker to identify the problem. Healthy/good report with farmers on the new system.
- Chad has been a rock star on this project.
- Next year: Focus on this year's farmers and expand acreage vs. trying to get a lot of new farmers.
- Adam and Adrien talking a lot about fuel savings etc.
- Thinking ahead to new Demo agreement: hoping we can tie in to demo projects in the next year.
- Grafton county talking about army worm problem: what's connection between that and mulch?
 - County farm feels they should be compensated for the issue that they don't think would happen otherwise.
 - Had too much moisture. Haven't seen it elsewhere, a little bit in Coos.
- Holding moisture usually a good thing esp. this time of year.
- This will help a lot with drought, this year wasn't bad but this time of year is always dry.

- Can continue to monitor and see differences.

Other initiatives:

Soil Health Partnership

- Had impromptu meeting to discuss developing custom cover crop mix that Soil Health Division is releasing this fall for on farm trials.
 - Met to discuss tool that Brandon Smith has developed
 - Seed that came through is treated, so only works for conventional growers.
 - Also SARE soil health group: partnership between Extension and Districts, have some meetings coming up this fall. ***get dates from Dorn** Nov. 29th
 - Reserving Audubon center for full day on cover crops
- Cheshire got a specialty crop block grant to work on no-till systems.
- Foremost farmer researchers will be here in September, trying to get him on schedule for workshops.
- Round-up ready seed means you can spray after it comes up and won't affect the corn as much. GMO crops. Some growers trying to get away from GMO's, still using herbicides but moving away from GMO varieties.
 - Can do this technique organically, but rely on higher biomass, which means you wait later to plant, and depend on heavy mulch layer.
 - Herbicides are only for wheat crops.
 - People are talking about adding additional legumes into winter mix.
- Stewart, Adam and Adrien will all already be at annual meeting, suspect more will be willing to come.
- Soil Health Division just putting together some more projects. Will be available to districts in the coming year, just getting to the point where they can announce. Will have either funding or subsidized project. Will be all over the country but we'll be eligible.

Partner Report

- New Outreach Agreement signed this morning for \$250k
- Demonstration agreement put together by Don, hoping it's approved quickly also, easement monitoring and Demo projects.
 - Who is approving authority? Now working with someone from Oklahoma, wants more specific which is difficult in a five-year agreement.
 - Hard to know how many people will attend a workshop etc.
- In the future, NHACD is reporting to more distant reps, not Patty in Dover.
- OK, works for USDA.
- New Administration hoping farm service agency, NRCS and risk management are co-located where possible. Farm Service in Concord, NRCS in Dover. May try to move one or the other. Hoping Dover doesn't get moved to Concord.
- Staffing will be very different. In the past have been given a budget, now doing things more at corporate/national level. Certain # of staff we can have, if NH has two people retire, will look nationally where to fill those jobs, may be a higher need in CA for example.
- Putting together a workload analysis for new administration, determine staffing numbers for NRCS NH
- Interesting talking with admin folks. When we talk about successes, they ask how it helps local business and how it helps tax payers. One example Rick gave, we pay a % for a forest management plan. Money to producer, 100% to a local business, creates a logging operation, then to make chips/furniture etc. Illustrate ripple effect to local economy.
 - Approval for 2 soil conservationists in Orford.
 - 5 summer pathways that for the most part worked out very well.
 - Still have vacancies in Concord and Milford.
 - Have 11,500 NRCS employees, 8700 vehicles. Have to reduce that by 2500 by 9/2018

- Will they pay mileage for POV's? Think we can manage that.
- Rep. Ann Kuster had a Farm Bill listening session yesterday, two next week, Colebrook and Dartmouth and attending both.
- Serious talk right now about a shutdown, email this morning to all Gov't managers.
 - Last shut down was 2013.
 - Unless you have a separate entrance that's non-government, if not whole building shuts down including whoever else shares the building.
 - Have heard farmer's dollar turns over more times in local economy more than anyone else's
 - Rick has a lot of statistics on farmer impact on economy
 - Tougher: not big on regulation/endangered species. Still trying to determine how much that can help the local economy.
- Secretary Purdue traveling and visiting field offices
- Any other internal fall out from soil health comments about the memo sent out discussing climate resilience and not climate change?
 - Feb/March NRCS staff sent out an email that if working on climate change had to change verbiage to "extreme weather" etc. but would still conduct same modeling. Someone forwarded that to administration, FOIA'd the memo.
 - Google "the guardian NRCS", very damaging to NRCS.
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/aug/07/usda-climate-change-language-censorship-emails>

Review of New Demo Agreement

- Section 5: Expected accomplishments and deliverables:
 - Go through each of these with your districts, which areas are possibilities for district to do?
- What's the next step?
 - NRCS needs to discuss and decide a fair/equitable process but need to hit NRCS priorities. Some things have come up in question are how are farmers selected for these projects?
 - Could have an official nomination process through the conservation districts. Need to make sure we're not leaving someone out but also can take 1000 applications for example.
- Included in Milestones:
 - Mentioned that we work with partners, work begins in Summer of 2018.
 - Easement monitoring:
 - Have over 300 easements, have to do wetland, half are farmland and can be contracted out. Most in Strafford/Rockingham/Merrimack/Hillsborough. Visited very three years, other two years can look at aerial photography.

Xerces society commitment

- Almost at our \$35k goal for match, due in Sept. Eric from Xerces is going to spend a full week going through all of the districts, maybe not Carrol.
 - Anticipate after that week, Eric's coming with another specialist who specializes in farming with beneficial insects. Some already have contracts with pollinator habitats, some are just starting

NACD

- Great NH contingent in Burlington this year.
- Some districts moving into being in a regulatory role. Some in PA have been asked by state agency to do that, others in Delaware/Maryland have been asked and refused.
 - VT being thrown into that because of regulations imposed on farmers. Required to write a report because of a fine to farmers.

- SAM registration: submitted resolution two years ago. Progress being made on the bill, continuing to gather co-sponsors. Goal is to get it into the farm bill. Anne Kuster was our sponsor.
- Asked others in NH but they didn't come through and not sure why. Should call again as a reminder of past conversations.
- Handout on S.364 and H.R. 1163

Envirothon

- Sue Kessler.
- National event happened in Maryland
- 20 teams participating, Conant took 1st place in NH. Represented NH in international event in July
 - Includes Canada and China now.
- Card sent to NHACD thanking us for support.
- Asking for our input on an issue topic. This year is difficult because the issue challenge is Rangeland
 - Grazing/hayland systems. Grassland includes haying and grazing, can then include wildlife. Granite State Grazers

Annual Meeting update, Keene, NH 11/2-11/3

- Second time we'll have our state annual meeting in conjunction with a District, this year is Cheshire.
- Coincidentally NACD is doing the same w/ national/state.
 - Allows for a better program overall.
- 8 workshops and a tour, already hired a bus for that tour to avoid parking issues.
 - Recent amendment to the program was to include a veterans program, in conjunction with that a sponsor gave a donation for that cause. A way to network to get foot in the door in farming if they want to get into it.
- Right now confirming speakers, have topics and tentative speakers and commitments.
- Monthly conference calls, started early which has been helpful to the process.
- Sponsorship is a big plus:
 - 2-tiers, statewide and local.
 - Usually have 100 at annual meeting anyway so hoping for 200.
 - Have Agrimark on board, supplying cheese for beer/wine tasting.
 - Monadnock food Co-op catering, Agrimark providing cheese for catering as well.
 - Over \$10000 in local sponsors and another \$5000 from state level orgs.
- David Montgomery is keynote speaker, have a grant to pay for his travel costs and fees
 - \$4000 fee plus transportation
 - As part of humanities grant he'll be talking to a class at KSC, KSC will provide videographers
- Will also have a local artist on display

Other business

- Rail trail system relies on fed funding. Expanding a great deal in NH,
- Claremont had pushback, tried to get rules changed to allow ATV's on trails. Making an end run, approached Shaheen's office and under the radar the ATV community has asked for support to allow motorized use on existing rail trail network, perhaps with town by town approvals. At stage right now of a report to come out and state a legislative change. Would affect the whole country.
 - Rail trail system was set up in 50's as an alternative to fed highway system to have a non-vehicle area. Also keeps rails "open" if they are turned into rail once again.
 - Claremont city asked fed gov't for exception and got a "no", and this is their next attempt. City isn't promoting it.

- NH Rail Trail association. Lead people for trails in the state is pushing this because ATV's. Pushed as economic issue.
- National off-road vehicle group is having national meeting in Manchester very soon.