

Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District
May 15, 2008
Board Meeting Minutes

Directors present: Steve Stierwalt, Eleanor Blackmon, Lennie Heiser, Joe Rothermel, and Eric Suits.

Associate Directors present: Kenneth Kesler.

Staff present: Bruce Stickers and Renee Weitekamp.

Natural Resource Staff present: Kevin Donoho.

Meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. on Thursday, May 15, 2008.

Eric Suits made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2008 meeting. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Joe Rothermel made the motion to approve the financial reports for April 2008 and May 2008. Eleanor Blackmon seconded, motion carried.

Old Business

Farmland Preservation Easements – At this time, the Land Conservation Foundation is going to hold the easements. However, the Land Conservation Foundation may turn the easement over to the CCSWCD if necessary.

SAFE program – Signups have not begun. Pheasants Forever will help with program promotion.

CPP (Conservation Practices Program) – Cost-share monies need to be spent by June 2008. At this time, all monies are allocated, but weather may cause some construction delays.

Fish Sale – The spring fish sale is complete. A 5 year fish sale comparison is attached. Largemouth bass were not available for delivery this spring. Several customers who ordered bass will take delivery in the fall.

Financial Situation – FY08 Operations and Program monies have been released and will hopefully be received soon.

IEPA Grant (3 counties working together) – There is nothing to report at this time.

Champaign County Fair – Kenneth Kesler asked for the district's tent to be moved to a new location and is waiting to hear back from the fair association. A decision on whether to participate in the fair does not need to be made at this time.

Burn Class – The board would like to host a prescribed burn informational meeting in the winter. For information on applying for a burn permit, the board may ask someone from IEPA to speak. Other maintenance options for cool season and warm season grasses may be presented as well.

Annual Plan of Work Review – a chart showing progress towards the Annual Plan of Work was distributed to the board. Discussion will continue at the next meeting.

New Business

Potential Computer Costs in the future – At some date in the future, the district may be charged \$3,200 annually by NRCS for each district computer. The computers would then belong to NRCS.

LUC meeting – Champaign County will host the May 29th LUC meeting. The meeting will be held at Philo Tavern at 11:30 a.m.

Contribution Agreement – Work towards the contribution agreement was completed by the March 31, 2008 deadline. An application for another contribution agreement was not accepted; this agreement would have been for CRP work from approximately June 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008.

Cash management – Eric Suits made a motion for the Secretary/Treasurer to work with staff to draft a cash management plan. This plan will be presented to the board at the next meeting.

Tree Sale – Mr. Goodmann volunteered to pick up the potted and balled and burlap trees using his semi-truck. The board and staff will work together on a thank you for Mr. Goodmann.

Summer Conference – The board invited all full and part-time employees to attend Summer Conference. Board members will need to decide if they will be traveling to Springfield on Sunday afternoon/evening.

Other

The board discussed the need for some grant writing assistance and some consultation on how to keep moving projects forward.

The board verified the motion made in March allowing staff up to \$550 to purchase a video camera contingent upon the district receiving the remaining operation funds from the State of Illinois.

To date, the CCSWCD has received \$14,128.00 from the State of Illinois for Operations. The district has paid AISWCD dues in the amount of \$423.84, which is 3% of the \$14,128. Joe Rothermel made a motion to pay the additional AISWCD dues once the remaining FY08 funds are received. The dues will be 3% of the forthcoming FY08 operations money. Eleanor Blackmon seconded, motion carried.

It appears the number of Natural Resource Reports is declining. Staff reported that last year several large projects required NRI's. This year the projects have been smaller/less acreage. Staff will survey neighboring counties to help determine if the fees schedule is reasonable.

Kenneth Kesler and Bruce Stickers gave Pius Weibel a tour of the conservation projects in the county.

D.C. Report - is attached. Champaign County will be undergoing a civil rights compliance review on July 15, 2008.

A.C. Report - is attached. The 2007 Champaign County Real Estate Tax bills for the St. Joseph Wetland Restoration site and the Barnhart Prairie have been received.

R.C. Report - is attached. The St. Joseph Ag Structures class has completed the benches. Staff will pick up the benches. Kenneth Kesler agreed to store the benches until the site is ready.

Watershed Coordinator Report – is attached.

Committee Reports –

Barnhart – The prairie restoration site is enrolled and receiving payments for participating in the carbon trading program. The Barnhart Prairie committee needs to meet in the near future.

IEPA Stormwater Grant – The grant agreement has been extended to June 30, 2009.

Salt Fork – The last meeting was early April and the group discussed the proposed a name change of the Upper Salt Fork River and the Saline Branch.

St. Joseph Wetland – The USFWS (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Pheasants Forever may be able to offer financial and technical assistance as well as equipment necessary to remove some of the Silver Maple trees that are encroaching on the wetland. This project is would take place later fall/early winter. Spot spraying is necessary to control the Reed Canary Grass and other invasive species. Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to authorize staff to purchase a backpack sprayer using wise shopping techniques to keep the purchase price as low as possible. Joe Rothermel seconded, motion carried.

Education – Two schools represented Champaign County in the local Envirothon. The Pond meeting March 31st was well attended with around 70 people present. The U of I Extension and IDNR would like to start plans for a more in depth pond meeting this summer.

MS4 – The annual Boneyard Cleanup event has been held. The MS4 brochure for stormwater won a state award.

Strip-till – The group is looking for another funding source and will be meeting soon.

Public Relations – The main topic for Legislative Day was funding. Joe Rothermel gave a report of the morning events and press conference. Beth Mason with NACD did visit Champaign County. While here, she attended the pond meeting and the Land Resource Mgt Plan meeting. Staff gave her a tour of the county and she reported on all these activities in her report to the NACD.

CCLRMP – The group held two planning meetings where they collected ideas and data from participants. Participants answered a survey and then worked in groups to map areas that were best suited for industry, recreation, conservation, etc.

The next regular Champaign County SWCD Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 18, 2008 at 6:30 p.m.

Eric Suits moved to adjourn the meeting. Eleanor Blackmon seconded, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:01 P.M.

Minutes prepared by Renee Weitekamp for Eric Suits, Secretary
Champaign County SWCD