

Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District
October 8, 2009
Board Meeting Minutes

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

Staff present: Bruce Stickers and Renee Weitekamp.

Associate Directors present: Kenneth Kesler.

Natural Resource Conservation Service Staff present: Kevin Donoho.

Meeting was called to order at 5:39 p.m. on Thursday, October 8, 2009.

Eric Suits made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2009 study session and the September 10, 2009 board meeting. Eleanor Blackmon seconded, motion carried.

Eleanor Blackmon made the motion to approve the financial reports for September 2009. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Old Business

Annual Plan of Work – Discussion was postponed and will resume at the next meeting.

Annual Meeting – Staff presented some questions and concerns regarding the annual meeting to start the discussion. The board identified the Annual Meeting goals to include: generate support of conservation and to recognize and people and events that have taken place over the last year. When discussion how to increase attendance and why some other organizations regularly have a large number of attendees, the comment was made that most of our members, don't even know they are members. By remembering this, maybe the district can focus on contacting and assisting some of these people. The theme for the event was also discussed and one idea was SCS – Sustainable Conservation Systems and/or Success for our Community through Service. This year, the district may look at having a featured partner for the event and allow them 5 minutes or so to speak about their organization. The featured partner could be the Forest Preserve, Extension, Parkland, City of Champaign, Champaign Park District, etc. The idea to ask someone from the County Board to talk, perhaps they may mention some of the things they saw on our conservation tour. Staff notes some additional people that should be invited include: people associated with the wind farm, Gwen Koelb (USFWS), IEPA, and Tile Map customers. The Board suggested using the hometown calendar on WCIA to help promote the event and hopefully will be featured on the noon news. A new idea for this year is to have customized placements. For future calendars, the board asked staff to make the calendar into a pdf and make available on our website.

Access to FSA's name and address database – No discussion took place.

St. Joseph Wetland Restoration Plan – A plan is being developed; no further discussion took place.

Strip-till Soil Testing Invoice – Staff recently heard from Dan Schaefer who will be meeting with several potential sponsors in the near future.

Insurance – Nothing new.

New Business

CPP – Discussion took place on the project list dated 10/8/09. Bruce included information about a potential pipe structure with an approximate cost-share of \$6,000 and a possible streambank project that he looked at earlier in the day. Staff talked with Alan Gulso regarding ways to have streambank plans complete without relying on the IDOA technical assistance money.

Midwest Ag Expo/Gordyville – This event will again be held the end of January and the booth rental is \$328. Eric Suits made a motion for the district to pay \$328 and participate in the event. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Fall Strip-till Plans – Staff presented the question if any strip-till will be done this fall due to weather issues and the late harvest. The conversation brought forth the thought that while people wait between bean and corn harvest, some strips will be done. Staff recently learned that Steve Gordon just purchased a strip-till bar.

CRP Filter Strip Re-enrollment Issues – A few farms had small triangle fields, just over 5 acres in size, that were not eligible for re-enrollment due to the change in the FSA infeasible to farm regulations. After discussion with staff and Yvonne, 120' wide field borders were planned for these fields. Landowners and operators were notified of this option.

D.C. Report - is attached.

Kevin has been discussing fall construction with Yvonne at FSA. The fall temporary seeding date is almost over; it sounds like construction can continue, however, CRP may not pay additional monies to rebuild practices if they are damaged this winter or next spring. Champaign County has 2 CSP contracts. The Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative was just announced. This program uses EQIP money for Watersheds and the Salt Fork watershed is one of three in the state that is being favorably looked upon. Once the request for proposals is announced, anyone can apply but those in the three identified watersheds may rank higher. The proposals need a sponsor and the CCSWCD could be that sponsor for the Salt Fork. The project is for NRCS practices to be done in the watershed. Specific information has not been released, but staff are hoping the proposal can be generic and identify acres of strip-till etc, instead of identifying the specific people who will be doing the practice because there is only a 45 day turnaround from request to submission of the proposal. Many questions still exist including whether money will be available for monitoring or how the project will identify any measurable impacts. This will be a four year project. After discussion, the board would like to pursue the option of sponsoring the grant proposal. The new Assistance State Conservationist for Area 5 has been announced as Angela Bigs from Vermont.

A.C. Report - is attached.

A Fish Sale report was included for the board to review. The NACD membership will be on the agenda for next month.

R.C. Report – is attached.

- With the assistance of Kenneth Kesler, staff is coordinating a tour for two County Board members next Tuesday, October 13, 2009.
- A Wetland Delineation tour was held on October 8th for a class of U of I students.
- Windfarm – next week we should receive the final turbine locations. The wind farm company will probably submit their application in November and staff will be starting field visits once crops are off.

Committee Updates –

Education – Robbie Berg with Earth Partners will be involved with the upcoming Environmental Conference for Educators at the I-Hotel on October 14, 2009. She is planning on a conservation tour that will include stopping by a field for rides in a combine; the district will be assisting her with this tour which will also include stops around the county to look at different conservation practices.

The Champaign County SWCD Board will hold the next board meeting on Wednesday, October 28, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.

Eric Suits moved to adjourn the meeting. Eleanor Blackmon seconded, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:21 P.M.

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

Items that need action from the board:

Water Quality

- Filter strip, wetland and riparian buffer plans for CRP re-enrollments (part of our contribution agreement with NRCS).

Soil Erosion

- CRP waterway plans as part of our contribution agreement.

Prime Farmland Preservation

Water Management

Wildlife Habitat

- Assisted with the fish pickup on September 11th.

Education & Public Information

- Assisted with Pond Seminar and Walking Tour on September 22nd. This was a joint project with the U of I Extension and IDNR.
- Participated in Dive In, a water stewardship day at Funks Grove on September 24th.

Watershed Management

District Operations

- Attended NRCS Wetland Training in Vandalia, IL September 15-17.
- Prepared Quarterly Tax Reports.
- Fabian is looking for soil data for a range of points across the state. I am trying to use our GIS system to assist him.

Monthly Board Report
Bruce Stickers
Resource Conservationist
September 2009

Items that need board action:

- The Gordyville show is January 27 & 28. The board needs to vote on the booth cost of \$328 if the board wants to participate.

Items for your information:

Water Quality

We met with the Strip-Till/Nutrient Management Committee to discuss everyone's responsibility for the Conservation Innovation Grant on September 8th. The meeting went well and we have a good understanding how we will track the information for the grant. BASF has agreed to provide some funding for our match needs. The district paid the \$9,000 soil testing invoice and we will seek reimbursement for it. The group decided to submit a scaled back grant to the Fertilizer Research and Education Council to pay for the soil testing for the remainder of the project. This funding can also be used for match.

The USDA announced \$320 million grant program for the Mississippi River basin. We may qualify for applying for some of this money for special projects if we want to.

Soil Erosion control

Mike Hirschi completed 4 site education/inspection evaluations this month.

I submitted a special project for CPP for the Briar Cliff subdivision in Mahomet to make a waterway leading from a detention pond to the Sangamon River that has been eroding significantly. This is a \$10,000 project.

Farmland Protection

The Land Use Management Plan draft proposal will be sent to the County Board committees for action soon. My work on the technical committee continues. I may have an update from our meeting 9/1 if new information comes up.

Water Management

Wildlife Habitat

We helped the Champaign Park District plant 5 acres of habitat on the Boulder Ridge park area on Staley Road. An additional 10 acres of native grasses will be dormant seeded this fall.

Education, Natural Resource Data, Public Information, and Participation

The 5:40 a.m. show this month featured EQIP, Kevin did the show.

Willard Airport and Savoy are installing 3 dry hydrants. We also completed one at the new Dewey Bank site on Route 136 and the Dewey/Fisher Road for fire departments to draw water out of.

We helped McLean County with their "Dive In" water quality field day for 450 students at McLean on 9/24.

We had a pond meeting at Crystal Lake Boat House 9/22. I presented information on shoreline stabilization and Dave Shiley did a shoreline walk around tour pointing out issues and solutions.

The University of Illinois has a Master Naturalist program established in about 15 counties. I worked with them to develop a section about conservation practices in agriculture. Dave Shiley, Mike Gray and Steve Ayres helped modify the document to accurately document ag conservation practices.

I was off one week for vacation.