

SALT FORK RIVER WATERSHED IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

A sub-committee of the Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District
2110 Park Court, Suite C
Champaign, IL 61821 (217) 352-3536 ext. 3

Minutes from the Implementation Committee Meeting of February 4, 2010 – 3:30 PM NRCS State Office – 2118 W. Park Court, Champaign

Present:

Tim Bachman – Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District	Mark David – UIUC
Brad Bennett – City of Urbana	Al Wolfe – Salt Fork River Partners
Tom Berns – Berns, Clancy and Associates	Lloyde Esry, Drainage District Commissioner
Clark Bullard – Prairie Rivers Network	Fabian Fernandez – UIUC
Jim Hoyt – Grand Prairie Friends	Kenneth Kesler – CCSWCD
John Schuler – USDA Lincoln Heritage RC&D	Bruce Stickers – CCSWCD Staff
	Renee Weitekamp – CCSWCD Staff

Bruce Stickers called the sub-committee meeting to order at 3:33 p.m.

No agenda changes were requested.

The minutes from November 5, 2009 were reviewed.

The Champaign County SWCD has recently experienced problems with the server and all information/data has been lost. CCSWCD Staff asked committee members to look for and send back an electronic copy of the fertilizer brochure.

The Water Quality Monitoring Sub-committee is still planning a field trip to the Phillips tract gage. This trip will probably happen in March with a specific time and date being set in the near future.

The Champaign County SWCD received a bill from the USGS requesting a quarterly payment by the end of March. The FY09 payment was made in a lump sum payment around October 1, 2009 with the understanding future payments would be made annually. Further investigation will be done to see if the agreement is set for quarterly or annual payments. The group also discussed the need to find additional sources of funding for future years since the current two-year agreement will expire in October. After October, there will be a shortfall of funds of around \$25,000/year. Mr. Bachman will work with the USGS to find out if another cooperative cost agreement can be reached where USGS contributes funds. The group would again like to approach the drainage districts and their attorneys to ask for support. The monitoring stations record quantity and velocity data which can be beneficial information for drainage districts. Another letter to the drainage districts will be drafted expressing the need and benefits of these monitors. In addition to letters, perhaps an informational meeting can be held. The CCSWCD has held meetings focusing on information for drainage district commissioners in the past, or there may be a need for a meeting when more information on the Mississippi River Basin Initiative is released.

Mark David reported on the status of the USDA CSREES project. Richard Cooke is still looking for sites for the tile drainage portion of the project and the group is busy conducting brief interviews with any interested persons in the watershed. The project is still in the early stages; however, the water monitoring is still underway with samples taken twice a week.

The Nutrient Management Sub-committee is still working on revisions to the Lawn Fertilizer Brochure. Despite the weather issues during the fall, work continues on the strip-till nutrient banding project recently awarded a USDA Conservation Innovation Grant. This project involves Dr. Fernandez, U of I, and Illini

FS. The goal of the project is to demonstrate how water quality is affected by banding and injecting fertilizer in a strip-till cropping system.

More information will be forthcoming on the Mississippi River Basin Initiative, but in general, this initiative has arrived due to the Nitrogen and Phosphorus issues contributing to the Hypoxia zone in the Gulf of Mexico at the outlet of the Mississippi River and west. At this time, USDA-NRCS has identified a few choice watersheds in the state to start their focus and the Salt Fork is one of them. Request for proposals may be coming soon. It is not know whether this initiative will focus mainly on cost-share for farmers for conservation practices, or whether more projects like those funding through the CIG grant and other water quality projects will be allowed. The American Farmland Trust has been in contact with the CCSWCD and expressed interest in becoming partners and offering assistance to our efforts. It is thought the Salt Fork is one of the focus watersheds because of the existing data and the active watershed group.

During committee reports and information sharing, Mr. Bennett discussed the recent changes in law to stormwater discharge requirements. By December 2011, developments greater than 20 acres will be responsible for water quality monitoring, with the tract size threshold decreasing in subsequent years. It is believed by late 2011 to early 2012 a new program will be released addressing phase I and II federal stormwater regulations (NPDES). These changes may include onsite detention and infiltration requirements.

During the recent election, the Village of Sidney defeated the vote to extend municipal sewers. This is a detriment to the water quality efforts in the Salt Fork.

The next meeting was scheduled for April 1, 2010 with the chairman of the sub-committees meeting at 3:00 pm and the sub-committees meeting at 3:30 pm, at a location to be announced.

Bruce Stickers adjourned the meeting and the attendees broke off into groups with the rest of their sub-committee for independent discussion.