

Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District

May 19, 2014 - Board Meeting Minutes

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

Directors absent: Eric Suits

Staff present: Jonathon Manuel and Renee Weitekamp

NRCS staff present: Kevin Donoho

Additional people present: Kenneth Kesler

Meeting was called to order at 12:22 p.m. on Monday, May 19, 2014.

Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to approve the March 25, 2014 minutes with corrections (under statements of economic interest change the word not to now). Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Joe Rothermel made the motion to approve the financial reports for April and May 2014. Eleanor Blackmon seconded, motion carried.

Old Business

Cover Crops Plot Planting Service – American Farmland Trust (AFT) and NREC are willing to help support this project financially. Through a grant, AFT will provide the district \$20/acre for all acres planted in cover crops. Dan Schaeffer, NREC, will provide funding to purchase the tractor and supply the tractor driver the first year. In return, they will be able to use the tractor when needed for a project in McLean County the second year. The equipment will be added to the Troxell Insurance policy. Arends Hogan Walker (AHW) will allow the district to lease the tractor and 15' drill for \$13,541/year for three years. After discussion, Joe Rothermel made a motion to enter into the 3 year lease agreement with AHW for the tractor and drill. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Delta's Nitrogen Credit Program – Representatives are willing to attend a CCSWCD board meeting to provide additional information. This is a basic incentive program; if producers reduce their Nitrogen they can get money. Producers are not obligating themselves to reduce N every year; if weather conditions, etc do not allow a reduction in N, the producer will not be penalized in any way. The Delta Institute will cover the expense of a mailing if the district is willing to mail information on the Nitrogen Credit Program to producers. If sign-ups are received in this area, the Delta Institute may hire the district to perform the audits. Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to cooperate with Delta and mail out their information to producers. Joe Rothermel seconded, motion carried.

Statements of Economic Interest – One online form covers any and all positions where a statement of economic interest is required. Since the County did not have the CCSWCD set up properly, there will be a grace period for completing the form past the deadline.

Gifford Tornado Tree Placement Program – The Farm Bureau project to purchase and plant trees in Gifford was a huge success. The joint project with Vermilion County SWCD to purchase 1 gallon potted trees to replace damaged windbreak trees also went well. Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to pay half the cost of \$829.50 with Vermilion County SWCD paying the other half. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Pamphlet Sales – The wetland, woodland and prairie laminated identification pamphlets are in and will be sold for \$10 each.

New Business

Partners for Conservation (CPP) – The district received \$10,000 for FY14 cost-share. Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to approve the 8 projects totaling \$5,041.84 on the attached page. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Farm Conservation Easement – The conservation easements for the two parcels of ground in the Foosland area have been written. Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to approve the two easements as presented. Joe Rothermel seconded, motion carried.

Summer Conference – Summer Conference will be held at the Northfield Inn on July 28-29. Staff will reserve a few rooms and directors need to decide when and if they are attending.

Pond Meeting – A pond meeting is being planned for July 15, 2014, at the Urbana Sportsmen's Club in Mahomet. Mike Garthaus, IDNR, will perform a pond shocking and talk about fisheries. Aeration will be discussed and staff is working on securing a conservation officer to talk about license and permits.

Drainage District Meetings – Partnering with Farm Bureau, plans for two drainage meetings are underway. The first will be June 26, 2014 and the second is tentatively scheduled for August 28th. Items for discussion include: Hypoxia, water table management, bio reactors, drainage law and more.

Newsletter – Several grant monies will help pay for a newsletter, so staff will be compiling information on the drill signup, pond meetings, drainage meetings, cover crops, etc. The Cover Crop signup will need a lot of direct media including: Farm Bureau, Della at the News Gazette, Dave Gentry, WDWS, and more.

Annual Meeting – Staff will look into January 23 or January 30. This year, the goal is to offer more for the sponsors.

Prevailing Wage – The prevailing wage ordinance needs to be adopted and published in the paper during the month of June. Since the regular board meeting is so close to the end of the month, it is difficult to publish in the newspaper in June. After discussion, Lennie Heiser made a motion to approve the prevailing wage ordinance, effective June 1, 2014. Eleanor Blackmon seconded, motion carried.

Audit – After discussion, Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to have LeCleir Yerem perform an audit for FY14. Joe Rothermel seconded, motion carried.

Strip-till CIG – During the project, Eric Rund used his equipment and it recently needed some repairs. Joe Rothermel made a motion to reimburse Eric Rund \$10,000 for equipment repairs/rental of the strip-till equipment used over the last 7 years. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

BLWR Grant Agreement Amendment – The CCSWCD received a grant amendment for additional monies for the cover crop initiative we are helping them administer.

Mileage – In the past, directors have been reimbursed for mileage. After discussion, Joe Rothermel made a motion to authorize travel/mileage for Associate Director, Kenneth Kesler. Eleanor seconded, motion carried.

National Strip-till Conference – The National Strip-till Conference will be held in Cedar Rapids in July.

Lady Landowners – the district would like to hold an event for lady landowners. Jen Filipak with AFT is working with Douglas County on an event. Staff was directed to contact Jen and Paula Zwilling, FB Women's Committee, to discuss possibilities.

Reports

High Capacity Water Wells – see attachment.

D.C. Report – is attached. Kevin Donoho discussed the sole source aquifer designation.

A.C. Report – is attached. May is Wetlands Month. Jonathon wrote a request for a second cover crop plot. The BLWR accepted the application and will provide an incentive payment for a cover crop plot on North Prospect, just north of Aldi and Walmart. The events with EP and parkland for Champaign K and 3rd grade students will be coming up in September and October. Proving financial reports to BLWR for Cover Crop Initiative. Envirothon wrap-up; Mahomet-Seymour FFA team placed a very close 2nd at the state competition. A new water conservation practice includes recycling sump pump water for outside watering purposes.

R.C. Report – is attached. AFT would like CCSWCD to be present at the SWC Society Annual Event. The Boneyard Cleanup field site, just 3 days after the pickup, looked like it did before the event. The Salt Fork Transect Survey will be done again this year.

Associate Director's Report – The field cleanup during the Boneyard Cleanup yielded 25 bags of bags/trash. Kenneth and staff have been working at the Farmer's Markets and the Grand Prairie Friends Sale to promote the district and sell granite bricks for the wetland education center.

Other-

Garden Walk - The Garden Walk is June 21st and staff will not be available for the event, but it is a good event to be involved with.

WCIA – Jonathon is doing more and more morning shows. Events and volunteers are needed to help.

Salt Fork – The next Salt Fork meeting is scheduled for June 5, 2014.

Cover Crops – An Equipment Seeding Field Day is being planned for June 20 as a partnership with three adjacent SWCD's (Vermilion, Iroquois, & Ford). Sponsors are signing up. This is the first event for Iroquois County on Cover Crops, so they are excited.

LUC – A meeting still needs to be planned.

The board will hold their next meeting on June 25, 2014 at 9:30 am.

Eleanor Blackmon moved to adjourn the meeting. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:40 P.M.

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