

St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District
1942 Old DeKalb Road, Canton, NY 13617
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
For February 19, 2009, 7:30 PM

Board Members Present: Robert Andrews, Jr. (Chairperson), Ed Hadlock (Vice-Chair), Dave Martin (Treasurer), Clark Decker, Fred Morrill, and Tom Grow.

Board Members Not Present: Tom Nichols.

Staff Present: Dawn Howard (Manager), Katie Maloney (Technician), Aaron Earl (Forester), and Raeanne Dulanski (Secretary).

Guests Present: Steve Sherwood, DEC Private Land Service Forester.

I. Call to Order & Introductions

II. Minutes of the Previous Meeting: January minutes were **approved**.

III. Treasurer's Reports: January Treasurer's report was **approved**.

IV. Reports

A. DEC Private Land Service – Steve Sherwood, DEC

1. Programs that Sherwood is working on include Forest Stewardship Plans, EQIP-Forestry practices, 480a Forest Tax Law Administration, and General Forest Health.

a. Forest Stewardship Plans

i. Since being hired last year, Sherwood has written approximately 11 plans for about 935 ac. throughout the County.

ii. Sherwood visits with the landowners and walks the woods with them to determine their interest and plan direction (sugaring, timber, wildlife habitat...). He has walked about 64 properties.

b. EQIP – Forestry

i. Sherwood partners with Jim Pullano, USDA – NRCS, to administer the program. Sherwood manages the practices that the participants have while Jim manages the paperwork and payments.

c. 480a Forestry Tax Law

i. There are 58 people in the program.

ii. Highlights of the program that Sherwood shared: State law designed for continual forest production. Must be in the program for 10 years. Must have 50 contiguous acres of forest.

iii. Benefits of the program: Up to 80% of taxes relieved per year. Promotes practicing sustainable forestry and improving the forest. With the tax break, every time that a commercial sale is completed (as designated in the required plan prepared by a consulting forester), 6% of the sale goes to the County.

d. Forest Health

i. Sherwood tries to educate the general public about the invasive species and disease that are in the area and a threat to their woods. An example is the Emerald Ash Borer which is less than 50 miles away from St. Lawrence County, specifically the Massena area. The Emerald Ash Borer causes 100% mortality to all Ash.

e. Other Activities

i. Sherwood recently participated in the Maple Expo that took place at Potsdam High School.

ii. Motion to contact Cooperative Extension about participating in future Maple Expos **approved**.

B. NRCS – Jim Pullano (Appendix A)

1. Pullano was not able to attend the meeting, but sent a report for the Board's review.

C. NYACD – Clark Decker

1. Legislative Day was attended by Decker, Maloney, and Howard. They met with six representatives in Albany. They were able to thank them for previous funding and not cutting SWCD budgets this year, and ask them for help with next years funding. The group also informed the representatives about the CDEA's plan to set up a training plan and hire four engineers state wide. There was a positive attitude about what was done while they were in Albany.

2. Howard added that thank you notes were sent to the people that they meet with for their time and attention.

V. SWCD Reports

A. Manager's Report – Howard (Appendix B)

1. RC&D

a. Ag Plastic Baler will be in St. Lawrence County April 3-6.

b. Insurance Service Office (ISO) ratings workshops with fire departments being set up to reduce homeowners' insurance premiums and improve fire protection.

2. Mail folder

a. 2009 Tax Tips for Agricultural Producers is out.

b. Soil Survey PR has been developed.

c. \$25 spent on FFA annual promotion.

d. Ag Value Assessment training provided to SLC Assessors.

e. Dredging of part of the Massena Canal will be taking place this year.

f. Snowmobile money from the State is doubled.

3. Round 15 Nonpoint Source Grant results are not available yet. There was no quorum at the SWCC's last meeting.

4. Authorization to pay: **approved**.

a. RC&D annual dues - \$500

b. Forestry Paint - \$635.38

5. Staff will be attending training at the Water Quality Symposium March 10 – 13.

B. Forester's Report – Earl (Appendix C)

1. Howard informed the Board that the issue of firewood on County land has come up again and gave Grow a brief background of the situation.

C. Technician's Report – Maloney (Appendix D)

D. Secretary/Assistant Treasurer's Report – Dulanski

1. Tree Program orders have started coming in.
2. About 45 Ag Value Assessments have been completed with about 12 left to do.
3. Work has started on WRP 50/50 and NRCS mailing list of potentially WRP eligible landowners.

VI. Old and New Business

A. Investment Policy – New policy has been turned into the County Attorney for review. Nothing back yet.

B. Insurance Policies – One addition quote was received. Should be receiving three more. The Board decided to wait until another meeting, to see if the additional quotes come in before a decision is made.

C. Flexible Work Schedule –

1. Howard presented the Board with a flexible work schedule proposal. The proposal stated that employees must work during NRCS Core Hours (currently 9:30 – 2:30).
2. The proposal for a trial period reflected Howard, Maloney and Dulanski's desire to change their starting and ending time in an eight hour work day. Earl would like to change to a ten-hour, four-day workweek.
3. Motion to have a trial period, until 12/31/09, for a flexible work schedule as outlined by Howard **approved.**

D. County Trail Coordinator Position

1. Reiteration that if the position of a Trail Coordinator was to come to the District, then it would be a District employee. The position would be under the direct supervision of the District Manger and answer to the Board of Directors. The Trail Advisory Board would advise the District Board.
2. The position would also have to be completely paid for by the County. The District is not currently in a position where we can hire and financially support this employee.

E. Training Plans

1. The Board was presented with their Training Plans for review and signature.
2. Howard's Training Plan is also completed and will be signed by Andrews and Howard.

F. EPF Letter

1. Andrews read a letter to our four NYS representatives regarding EPF funding and Districts. Motion to authorize Robert Andrews to sign the EPF letters on the Board's behalf **approved.**

G. Mary Rutley

1. A letter to Mary Rutley, to thank her for her years of service on the Board of Directors, was read aloud. The Board approved and the letter was passed around to be signed.
2. A recognition from the Board of Legislators regarding her service is also being worked on.

3. A luncheon with Rutley and all available Directors and staff will be planned for March 8 at 1PM at McCarthy's Restaurant in Canton. It will be dutch-treat with Mary and her husband being paid for.

H. FOIL Policy – Adoption of the County's FOIL Policy for SWCD use **approved.**

VII. Correspondence: Mail Folder was available for the Board's review.

VIII. Announcements: None.

IX. Time and Date of Next Meeting: March 19, 2009, 7:30 PM at the SWCD Office.

X. Meeting Adjourned: 9:28 PM

Robert Andrews, Jr., Chairperson

Date

Raeanne Dulanski, Secretary/ Assistant Treasurer

Date

Attachments: Appendices A-D