

Minutes
Herkimer County Soil and Water Conservation District
Herkimer County USDA Service Center
5653 State Route 5, Herkimer, NY 13350
Regular Meeting
August 14, 2018
5:00 p.m.

- I. **Call to Order:** Chairman Zaleski called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Directors Present:

Bill Zaleski, Chairman
 Mitch Hooker, Grange
 Peter Campione, Legislator
 Linda Coffin, Member at Large

SWCD Staff Present:

Gerry Smithson, District Manager
 Debra Michael, Secretary-Treasurer
 Katie Whitcomb, Natural Res. Conservation Technician
 Bob Tilbe, Conservation Aide

Absent: Bernie Peplinski, Vice-Chairman Cooperating Agencies: Margaret Fusco, NRCS

- II. **Approval of the minutes from July 10, 2018:** Motion: Moved by Director Coffin, seconded by Director Hooker that the minutes of July 10, 2018 meeting be approved with corrections. Motion carried.

III. **Cooperating Agencies:**

- A. Margaret Fusco, NRCS Resource Conservationist reported on the following: **(Appendix 1)**
1. FY19 EQIP Applications and Conservation Planning: On-going in all three counties with anticipation of having a number of plans signed and ready to apply for FY19 EQIP funds.
 2. Implementation: A list of projects that are underway in Herkimer County was provided plus the results of the re-evaluation of a seeding of a diversion built in September 2016.
 3. Food Security Act: Conservation Compliance Reviews are being conducted at the present time. Continuing to receive requires for High Erodible Land Determinations and Wetland Determinations. Majority of requests are in Oneida and Madison County.
 4. WRP/WRE: Monitoring, on-going through the summer, is being done by a not for profit organization Trust for Tomorrow.
 5. Beaver Brook Dam: Annual inspection conducted with Town of Manheim. No issues or concerns were found.
 6. Other: The vacant Resource Conservationist position in the Hamilton Field Office will be advertised sometime in August.

B. NYSSWCC: Written report provided. **(Appendix 2)**

1. CAFO Waste Storage and Transfer System Program Round 2: Applications must be submitted through the SharePoint website by August 6, 2018.
2. AGNPS Program Round 24: Districts can now apply for \$17 Million available under the Round 24 program. All appropriate materials must be submitted through SharePoint by August 20, 2018.
3. Round 16 Farmland Protection Implementation Grants: All farmland protection project proposals must be submitted through Grants Gateway, There is no application deadline.
4. 2018 AEM Award Winner: Lakeview Vineyards and the Schuylers County Soil and Water Conservation District will be honored at Empire Farm Days.
5. 2019 Annual Plan of Work: The deadline for submittal to your AEA is November 1, 2018.
6. Statewide Manager's Meeting – A fall Statewide Manager's Meeting will be held November 14th – 15th.
7. Board Meeting Correspondence: Include your AEA with board meeting correspondence, including agendas, minutes, and reports.
8. Upcoming Events:
 - Empire Farm Days – August 7th- 9th.
 - NYACD Meeting - October 23rd – 25th.
9. Funding Opportunities:
 - Trees for Tributaries Grant Program – Approximately \$525,000 in grant funding is available to help plant trees and shrubs along streams to improve wildlife habitat, water quality and storm resiliency. Applications are due on September 7, 2018.
 - NYSP2i Food Waste Reduction Reimbursement Program – NYS Pollution Prevention Institute (P2I) has funding to provide reimbursement to NYS business, municipalities and nonprofits to reduce or divert food waste from the landfill or incineration.

IV. Treasurer's Report:

- A. Financial reports for July 2018 were presented: **Motion: Moved by Director Campione, seconded by Director Hooker approving the Financial Reports for July 2018. Motion carried. (Appendix 3)**
- B. Abstract #8-18: **Motion: Moved by Director Coffin, seconded by Director Hooker approving the payments on Abstract #8-18 totaling \$19,378.72. Motion carried. (Appendix 4)**
- C. Abstract #8-18 PM: **Motion: Moved by Director Coffin, seconded by Director Campione approving the payment on Abstract #8-18PM totaling \$30,395.44. Motion carried. (Appendix 5)**
- D. Time and Attendance Reports for Pay Periods 14, 15, 16 were reviewed and signed by Chairman Zaleski.
- E. Bank Reconciliation statements for July for all District and Grant bank accounts were reviewed and initialed by Chairman Zaleski.

V. District Employee Reports:

A. Rachel Radicello, Soil and Water Resource Conservationist, provided a written report.

(Appendix 6)

1. Letter of resignation submitted. Last day of employment was August 10, 2018.
2. A detailed list of open projects and potential cooperators was prepared to help ease the transition.
3. Agricultural Environmental Management
 - Tier 3 Planning - Completed three farm walks
 - Tier 4 Implementation Projects – Completed two projects and both designs are engineer approved
 - Completed three NYS Grown and Certified forms
 - Finished updating the USC BMP data base

B. Katie Whitcomb, Natural Resource Conservation Technician, presented her written report. **(Appendix 7)**

1. Family Day at Raycliff Farm:
 - Being held on August 25th
 - Fish being donated by Hickling's
 - She and Rachel put the display board together
 - She and Bob will be attending the event
2. Farm Progress Show – First planning meeting was held on July 30th with representatives present from Herkimer, Montgomery, Otsego, and Fulton County SWCDs and the Herkimer NRCS. Booth set up and the work schedule was planned.
3. Japanese Knotweed Inventory Update:
 - She and Gerry are working on the Category 3a 30 hour online courses.
 - Once completed, a 4-5 hour of category 9 training is required.
 - A Core and Category 9 exam must be passed to become certified applicators.
4. Fish Programs:
 - Bass, Catfish and Minnows – order form was in the newsletter. Pick up is scheduled for August 23rd. Two orders so far.
5. Summer Newsletter:
 - Included articles from FSA and NRCS, articles on Round 22, Safety Day, Envirothon, Pond Site Assessments, Cooperators Dinner, tree and shrub program and Conservation Field Day.
6. Hydroseeding: Three sites have been seeded with Bob so far.
7. Fulmer Creek: She will be working with Bob and BOCES instructor Will Carpenter to coordinate willow plantings.
8. Continuing to make GIS maps and hand out water test kits.

V. District Employee Reports: (Cont'd)

B. Katie Whitcomb, Natural Resource Conservation Technician, presented her written report. **(Appendix 7)**

9. Website and Facebook:

- Hydroseeder and fish program posts on Facebook
- Added Soil and Water Resource Conservationist application packet to website & Facebook.

C. Bob Tilbe, Conservation Aide, presented his written report. **(Appendix 8)**

1. Family Day at the Farm – He and Katie will be working on Saturday, August 25th from 10 am to 3:30 pm.

2. Hydroseeding:

- De-winterized hydroseeder
- New truck received to tow hydroseeder
- Received training from Russ Collier of Hydrograss on 7/27/18
- Seeded six sites within Towns of Columbia, German Flatts, and Little Falls for a total of 61,880 ft. ²
- Another five sites, totaling 65,200 ft. ² are in line to be seeded
- Continuing to work with Highway Superintendents to coordinate seedings

3. Japanese Knotweed Inventory:

- Helping Katie input data into iMap Invasives

4. Fulmer Creek Tree Planting:

- A planting plan for site has been provided by Michele Palmer, Landscape Architect of Templeton Landscape Architecture & Planning
- Will Carpenter, BOCES instructor, has been contacted, and the Conservation class will be taken to Fulmer Creek planting site
- Willow stakes will be cut from BOCES property to be used in the planting
- Planting stock will be provided by DEC's Trees and Tribs Program
- Planning for late September tree delivery
- Working with Katie to coordinate remaining details

5. Other Recent Activity:

- Provided photo documentation of progress at Round 23 location
- Assisted with field visits at Keiper and Fisher farms
- Assisted with Tier 3a planning for Hardy. Mapped surrounding wells.

D. Gerry Smithson, District Manager: **(Appendix 9)**

1. Deb's Retirement – Deb will be retiring on December 13, 2018. Gerry will check with other Soil and Water Districts and Scott Fickbohm regarding a starting salary for a replacement. A start date for the replacement was also discussed. Gerry will put more information together for next meeting.

- D. Gerry Smithson, District Manager: **(Appendix 9) Cont'd**
2. Soil & Water Resource Conservationist - Position has been advertised. Although there are 2 names on the Civil Service List, we are not required to hire from that list since it has less than 3 names. The application deadline is August 30th. Board will be informed once the applications have been ranked.
 3. Conservation Aide Position – Bob Tilbe started on July 16th. He has already taken ownership of the hydroseeding program, has been on 2 field surveys and is entering knotweed sites into the IMap Invasives website. His background check should be completed soon and he will be officially enrolled on the USDA system.
 4. District Manager – Experiencing issues with his computer and needs approval to purchase a new desktop.
 - **Motion: Moved made by Director Coffin, seconded by Director Campione, authorizing Gerry to purchase a new desktop. Motion carried.**
 - Gerry informed the board that since he is getting married in October, he will be taking time off and will be unavailable for a couple weeks. He will work with Katie and Bob as much as possible to prepare them for the possibility of construction during that time and will also ask NRCS for help if needed.
 - He is on the Ag and Markets hiring list and was called in for an interview last week. He requested that he be able to give a month's notice if offered a position.
 5. Round 22:
 - Close out was conducted, final payment was made to the farmer, final claim for payment and closeout documents were mailed.
 - Closeout has been approved and we should receive the final funds soon.
 - The District will receive \$8000 for personal services.
 - A secondary venting system is being used while the registration form for registering the flare for emissions is being worked out.
 6. Round 23:
 - The concrete waste storage is nearly completed
 - Pipe installation for waste transfer is still needed along with final grading and seeding
 - Required procurement forms will be filled out before the final closeout
 7. Round 24:
 - An application will be submitted for a concrete waste storage by the August 20th deadline.
 8. Climate Resilient Farming:
 - Cover and flare for existing farmstead waste storage
 - We are waiting for the master contract
 9. CAFO Waste Storage Funding:
 - The next round of funding has been announced.
 - Applications were due August 6th.
 - An application was submitted for a concrete waste storage.

D. Gerry Smithson, District Manager: **(Appendix 9) Cont'd**

10. Farmland Protection Plan:

- He wrote the narrative for a grant proposal to update the Herkimer County Farmland Protection Plan.
- Sheri Ferdula has entered all information into Grants Gateway.
- Letter received from Ag and Markets indicating that we were awarded \$57,086.50 with \$21,586.50 of in-kind services, minimum of \$7,000 cash match from the County, and \$28,500 awarded from the state.

11. Ag District Merge:

- The decision has been made to merge all Ag Districts in Herkimer County
- Sally Deming sent a mailing to all individuals currently enrolled in an Ag District, including the application to update tax parcel and farm specific information
- He is the listed contact and has received numerous calls about filling out the application
- The mailing went out to 300 individuals and he will be involved with assisting in the completion of the applications

12. District Vehicles:

- With the previously approved purchase of a Part C truck, bids were received and the bid from Robert Greene Auto and Truck was accepted for a truck on the lot.
- The 2018 RAM 3500 was delivered, registered and insured on July 26, 2018.
- The vehicle has already towed the hydroseeder to numerous sites for seedings
- The new vehicle came with a spray in bed liner but approval is needed to purchase step bars.
- **Motion: Moved by Director Coffin, seconded by Chairman Zaleski approving the purchase of step bars for the 2018 RAM 3500. Motion carried.**
 - We need to have the 2016 RAM detailed and placed on Auctions International and to request bids through OGS for the new ½ ton extended cab.
 - This vehicle is an eligible expense under Part A of the NYS Reimbursement Program.
- **Motion: Moved by Director Coffin, seconded by Director Hooker to proceed with selling the 2016 RAM and with buying a 2019 ½ ton extended cab. Motion carried.**

13. Hydroseeding Program:

- County Attorney Lorraine Lewandrowski reviewed the hydroseeding release form and made a few changes. A final version was agreed upon.
- Bob provided the release form to the Town of German Flatts for hydroseeding the sites on private land where spoil material taken from the Fulmer Creek floodplain bench will be placed .
- The release form also indicates the town will be charged for seeding materials used on private land

D. Gerry Smithson, District Manager: **(Appendix 9) Cont'd**

13. Hydroseeding Program:

- The lease for renting one bay of the pole barn has expired. An annual lease needs to be approved and signed.
- **Motion: Moved by Director Coffin, and seconded by Director Campione authorizing Chairman Zaleski to sign the annual lease for the rental of one bay in the pole barn for the storage of the hydroseeder and seeding materials. Motion carried.**

14. Japanese Knotweed:

- He and Katie have both been working on completing the 30 hour online pesticide certification course
- He does not have the time to complete the course. The remainder of the course will be transferred to Bob.

15. Other Field Visits:

- Parry Novak, Town of Herkimer, advise on relocating a ditch
- Callahan Farm, Town of Norway, location of temporary manure pile

16. Family Day at the Farm:

- August 25th, Raycliff Farm
- Katie and Bob will be earning comp time while participating

17. NY Farm Progress Show:

- September 12th and 13th at the Len-Lo Farm
- Gerry organized the parking crew
- Layout will take place on August 29th and August 31st.
- We will put up all the parking fence as we have in the past
- Katie is organizing the joint NRCS/SWCD booth

18. Performance Measures:

- If directors don't complete a training topic and attend regional meeting we will not qualify for the full Part C funding
- District Law training may be needed

19. WQCC: Written report acknowledged.

E. A list of landowners assisted during the month of July 2018 was provided for review. (Appendix 10)

VI. Old Business:

A. Annual Audit: Scheduled for after the September meeting

B. NYACD Update:

1. Board Meeting - Teleconference being held on August 16, 2018
2. Award nominations are due to Blanche Hurlbutt by September 20, 2018
3. Sponsorship – Financial support for the Annual Meeting is due by September 25, 2018

VI. Old Business: (Cont'd)

4. Annual Training and Meeting – October 23 – 25, 2018, Hampton Inn, Cazenovia. Reservation deadline is Friday, September 14, 2018.

- **Motion: Moved by Director Hooker, and seconded by Director Campione authorizing Gerry's attendance of the Annual Meeting and taking one training topic. Motion carried.**
 - **Motion: Moved by Director Coffin, and seconded by Chairman Zaleski authoring Director Hooker to attend the Annual Business Meeting and the District Module 1 and 2 on Wednesday, October 24, 2018. Motion carried.**
 - Raffle and Silent Auction Items
 - **Motion: Moved by Director Campione, and seconded by Director Hooker to donate a cash prize of \$50 to the Raffle or Silent Auction. Motion carried.**
5. District in the News Awards – Deadline for entries is October 1, 2018.

VII. New Business:

A. Reserve Account – Gerry discussed establishing a reserve account to separate funds that are earmarked for a specific purpose. He also raised the question about including these amounts in the annual budget.

- **Motion: Moved by Director Campione, seconded by Director Hooker approving the establishment of an official separate reserve account. Motion carried.**

Gerry will research the requirements for setting up this type of an account and will check with Vice Chairman Peplinski about excluding it from the 2019 budget request.

B. 2018 Budget Request – is due to the County by September 14th.

C. Amendment to Petty Cash Policy – An amendment is required to the Petty Cash Policy to specifically state the maximum amount allowed by the District Board.

- **Motion: Moved by Director Hooker, seconded by Director Campione to amend the Petty Cash Policy to state that the maximum amount allowed by the District Board is \$200. Motion carried.**

IX. Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 11, 2018 at 5 p.m.

X. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned by Chairman Zaleski at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by:

Debra Michael, Secretary-Treasurer
August 21, 2018

Approved by:

William Zaleski, Chairman
September 11, 2018

Attachments:

- Appendix 1: Notes from NRCS – Margaret Fusco
- Appendix 2: NYSSWCC – August 2018
- Appendix 3: Financial Reports – June 2018
- Appendix 4: Abstract of Audited Vouchers No. 8-18
- Appendix 5: Abstract of Audited Vouchers No. 8-18 PM
- Appendix 6: Rachel Radicello, SWRC Report
- Appendix 7: Katie Whitcomb, NRCT Report
- Appendix 8: Bob Tilbe, Conservation Aide Report
- Appendix 9: Gerry Smithson, District Manager Report
- Appendix 10: Landowner’s Assisted – July 2018