

Natural Resources Conservation & Development Board
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 29, 2010 at 9:00 a.m.

This meeting was held by teleconference.

Board members in attendance:

George Woodbury
Cheryl Thompson
Carol Kenley
Bernie Karl
Al Poindexter

Others in attendance:

Shana Joy, Executive Director, NRCDB
Franci Havemeister, Director Div. of Ag.
Ken Marsh, AACD
Joan Hope, AACD
Steve Hicks, AACD

John Schirack, Wasilla SWCD
Eric Wade, Palmer SWCD
Ryan Stencel, Anchorage SWCD
Jerry Norum, Fairbanks SWCD
Herman Morgan, MYK SWCD

1. Call to Order – Determination of Quorum

It was determined that a quorum was present and the meeting was called to order by George Woodbury at 9:03 a.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Al requested that several items be added to the agenda: January 19th House Resource Committee hearing, tribal conservation districts, the board's travel budget, and requesting a meeting with the Commissioner. These new items will appear following item #7 on the agenda. Carol moved to approve the agenda as amended. Cheryl seconded. The motion carried.

3. Approval of June 16, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Carol moved to approve the minutes as presented. Cheryl seconded. Al Poindexter abstained from voting; he was not present at the June meeting. The motion carried.

4. Executive Director Report

Shana Joy provided a summary of the projects she has been working on. A printed report was provided to the board.

5. NRCDB/Alaska Soil and Water Conservation District Discussion

A perceived conflict of interest exists between the two forms of the NRCDB: the NRCDB and the Alaska SWCD. Although the NRCDB no longer takes any action whatsoever on matters regarding the Alaska SWCD, the perception still exists. Shana Joy proposed that the NRCDB enter into a memorandum of understanding with each of the organized districts, offering the other districts the ability to provide assistance to

landowners outside of their own district boundaries. The NRCDB would retain approval authority for any projects that the other districts may determine are needed within the Alaska SWCD boundaries. The Alaska SWCD will cease to function separately from the NRCDB. Cheryl voiced some reservations to the idea that the organized district boundaries could simply be expanded to encompass the rest of Alaska; doing so would be contrary to the basis for SWCDs which is locally led conservation. It was also suggested that the MOU should not stand in the way of new district formation. Shana Joy will work on a draft MOU for presentation to the board at the next meeting.

6. Discussion of Alaska Statute 41.10

Shana Joy provided a copy of the current Alaska soil and water conservation district statute to the board in the meeting packet (AS 41.10). The general consensus of the board is that the current statute is outdated. It was pointed out that the state's fiduciary responsibility to the SWCDs should be part of the statute as well as resolving the issue surrounding the NRCDB and Alaska SWCD long-term. Shana Joy was directed to request comments and suggestions on the current statute from the SWCDs and AACD to assist the board in compiling recommendations for the Commissioner at their next meeting. Shana Joy asked that the board members each take a look at the current statute and be prepared to discuss specific changes they would like to see at the next meeting. Shana clarified that the procedure should be to compile the recommendations for revision of AS 41.10, and present those recommendations to the Commissioner for action. Al moved to compile recommendations for the revision of the statute, allowing for review and input by the soil and water conservation districts and AACD, and then present them to the Commissioner. Bernie seconded the motion. The motion carried. Shana will distribute a request to the districts and AACD for their comments so they can be considered at the next meeting as well.

7. Future Soil and Water Conservation District Funding Discussion

Shana Joy provided an update to the board regarding the FY12 budget request for the SWCDs in DNR's operating budget. The Governor released his budget on December 15th and funding for SWCDs was not included in that budget. Both Al and Bernie made comments about the importance of funding the districts and that the statute definitely needs to include a clear mechanism for that. Al moved to direct Shana to write a letter to each SWCD requesting their support; the request will consist of a cover letter from the NRCDB and a draft letter the districts and their cooperators may choose to use. Bernie seconded. The motion carried. It was clarified that the request for funding support would be more general and not refer specifically to a dollar figure. Shana and AACD will provide details of the respective funding requests that have been made to the NRCDB and conservation districts for continuity.

8. January 19th House Resource Hearing

There was a discussion about the upcoming hearing that is scheduled for January 19th, what sort of questions the legislature may ask of the Division of Agriculture's Director and if it were possible for the public to have any effect on what questions come up.

9. Tribal Conservation Districts

Al asked whether or not DNR and the NRCDB were involved with the current tribal conservation districts or new ones that may be considering formation. Some of the board members are not familiar with the tribal conservation districts or any past conflicts that may have arisen. DNR has no authority over native lands or how they are managed and currently there are few benefits for a tribal conservation district, which is federally recognized, to also become a state soil and water conservation district. Al pointed out that there had been some conflict surrounding boundary overlap in the past but there doesn't seem to be any current issues to deal with between state and tribal conservation districts.

10. NRCDB Travel Budget

Al asked whether any of the NRCDB members were planning on attending the National Association of Conservation Districts annual conference. Shana Joy was not intending to attend this year's conference, having participated in the 2010 conference along with Bernie Karl. The board requested information from Shana Joy regarding the current funds available for board travel. The board discussed what meetings and events should be a priority to attend such as the AACD spring meeting and NACD annual meeting. Bernie moved to send an NRCDB board member to the NACD conference if the budget allows. Carol seconded. The motion carried. Shana Joy will follow up with Carol Kenley, the nominated board member, as to travel arrangements.

11. Meeting with new DNR Commissioner

The board requested that a fresh invitation be issued to the new Commissioner to attend the next NRCDB meeting or meet with members of the NRCDB at his earliest convenience. Shana Joy will work with the NRCDB Chair to issue that invitation.

12. Board Comments

- a. Al expressed appreciation for Shana's responsiveness to the NRCDB and thanked her for doing a good job.

13. Public Comments

- a. Eric Wade commented that the proposed MOU between the NRCDB and the organized districts sounds like a good idea. Eric also thanked Shana for being responsive to the districts and for doing a job. He also noted that the focus of the meeting, on the mission of the conservation districts was good.
- b. John Schirack agreed with Bernie's comments about the opportunities that may be available with a new administration and requested that details of DNR's budget request for SWCD support be distributed and also requested the same information from AACD.
- c. Jerry Norum stated his agreement with the other comments that have been made and also said that the Fairbanks district would work in cooperation with the other districts towards progress.

14. Next Meeting Date and Location

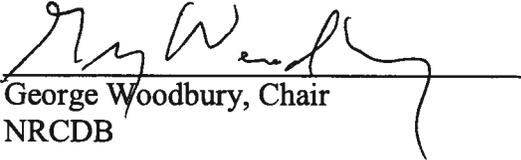
Tuesday, March 8, 2011 in Juneau

15. Adjournment
Meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

Minutes taken by:


Shana Joy, Executive Director
NRCDB

Minutes approved by:


George Woodbury, Chair
NRCDB