

Natural Resources Conservation & Development Board  
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 9, 2010 at 9:00 a.m.

This meeting was held at 400 Willoughby Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Juneau, Alaska and by teleconference.

*Board members in attendance:*

George Woodbury  
Suzanne Fisler  
Carol Kenley

Bernie Karl  
Cheryl Thompson

*Others in attendance:*

Shana Joy, Executive Director, NRCDB  
Franci Havemeister, Director Div. of Ag.  
Gary Morrison, Alaska SWCD  
Ryan Stencel, Alaska SWCD  
Bryce Wrigley, Salcha Delta SWCD

Ken Marsh, Upper Susitna  
SWCD/AACD  
Jerry Norum, Fairbanks SWCD/AACD  
Joni Scharfenberg, Fairbanks SWCD

- 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 9:12 a.m.
  
- Approval of Agenda
  - Carol moved to approve the agenda. Suzanne seconded. The motion carried.
  
- Approval of November 30, 2009 Meeting Minutes
  - Suzanne moved to approve the minutes as presented. Carol seconded. The motion carried.
  
- Executive Director Report
  - Shana Joy provided a brief summary of her experience at the National Association of Conservation District's conference in February including her activities there as a board member for the National Association of State Conservation Agencies.
  - The Southwest Alaska/Kenai Peninsula board seat and the Northwest Alaska/Arctic Peninsula board seat both expired on March 1<sup>st</sup>. If either of the incumbent board members would like to seek reappointment, they need to contact the Office of Boards and Commissions.
  - Shana Joy reported no further developments in the SWCD mapping project due to funding constraints at this time.
  - Bernie Karl reported on the Envirothon meetings that also took place in conjunction with the NACD conference. It seemed that many states were also struggling to support the Envirothon program due to a lack of funds.

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Bernie made a request to the legislature for \$3 million for a natural resource education package including the Envirothon. He has talked to many legislators about this need. He also reported that positive exposure for Alaska is a good thing and the trip to NACD was worthwhile; and that Alaska can be part of helping other pacific region states with common issues.

□ Board Member Reports

- Bernie Karl reported that their educational program is a real strength of the Fairbanks district and they are doing fabulous work with a lot of cooperators.
- Suzanne Fidler reported that the Kenai district board is complete and active and they are hiring. Potential candidates are local and have been active in natural resource management for some time. Suzanne listens to the Kodiak meetings by telephone. The need for funding projects and operations is still a primary concern.
- The new NRCS high tunnel cost-share program was discussed at length and may be a good opportunity for local producers looking to increase their production either for sale or home use. Also mentioned were opportunities for low interest loans through the USDA Farm Services Agency.
- Cheryl Thompson reported that she may apply for the high tunnel program as a demonstration to others in her area. A conference/workshop was put on regarding water quality issues, back-hauling solid waste, etc... and it was very productive with a good number of attendees. The local communities in the Fish River watershed are moving towards forming a watershed council, especially to collect baseline data in the area. Their goal is to prevent run-off issues such as have occurred at the Rock Creek Mine. A greenhouse project using waste heat is still a possibility but there are new roadblocks to overcome.
- Carol Kenley reported that Eric Wade, the Palmer district manager, had suffered a heart attack a couple of days before but was recovering. The Palmer SWCD is funding the Envirothon this year and is supportive of the Farmland Trust. Carol will try and attend more district meetings in her area.
- George Woodbury reported for Southeast AK/ the AK SWCD. Several native groups are interested in becoming cooperators but funding for the district manager to continue the outreach work is very low. Dick Coose no longer works for the district. A forester has been found who can qualify to perform TSP work under the NRCS restrictions. There are proponents for a move to second growth harvest in the Tongass but that growth is not mature yet and non-federal landowners need education on managing their forest land for sustainable use. Again, funds are needed. The AK SWCD has twenty cooperators towards the goal of twenty-five to form a new district.

□ SWCD Funding Discussion

- There are two approaches going currently to the legislature for funding, one from AACD and some from individual districts. Suzanne would like to invite OMB or LB&A to come and visit with the board and discuss a more comprehensive approach to state funding for districts. DNR's funding request for districts is a third approach. AACD formed a finance committee this year but it needs work to be fully effective. Constant communication with the legislature is needed to keep districts as a priority. Bernie Karl and Franci Havemeister pointed out that a complete package presented to the legislature, everyone on the same page, is essential to success.
- Shana Joy advised the board that continuing to seek funds through DNR is a good avenue and that getting district funding into the base budget will be difficult but it would be easier to maintain a level of funding each year rather than start fresh. Eric Wade and the Palmer SWCD have done some preliminary thought into what base funding needs might be for each district.
- Bernie Karl moved to request that Shana Joy create a form to collect actual expense information from each district and accompany the form with a letter to the Commissioner and ask that the funding be included in DNR's base budget. Suzanne seconded. The motion carried.
- Bernie Karl said that the funding should be directed through AACD, with AACD allowed to withdraw their 10% to operate. Shana Joy offered an approach whereby AACD recalculate their membership dues, which could be based on the level of services they provide to each district, and districts would submit AACD dues as an essential operating cost.

□ Public Comments

- Bryce Wrigley mentioned the proposed Fairbanks SWCD district expansion which the Salcha Delta board approved recently however, in keeping with the watershed plan, the Salcha Delta district would like to make a change to the proposed new boundary to allow the Salcha Delta district to encompass an entire watershed. Shana Joy provided some guidance on the steps to take to expand their district boundaries.
- Ken Marsh, AACD, said that the funding approach the NRCDB discussed is intriguing. He pointed out there will likely be some more discussions to iron things out.

□ Board Comments

- None were offered.

□ Next Meeting Date and Location

- Sometime the week of June 1 - 11 by teleconference with possibly one earlier to address any district expansion issues that arise.
- Bernie Karl offered meeting space for a future NRCDB meeting.

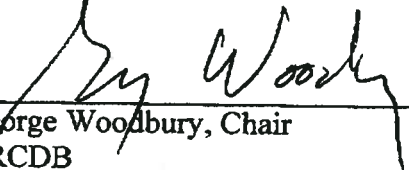
€ Adjournment

- The board discussed meeting for dinner and would a quorum be present? A quorum was not re-formed at dinner. The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Minutes taken by:

  
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Shana Joy, Executive Director  
NRCDB

Minutes approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
George Woodbury, Chair  
NRCDB