

Natural Resources Conservation & Development Board  
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 22, 2013 at 9:00 a.m.

This meeting was held by teleconference.

*Board members in attendance:*

Cheryl Thompson  
Carol Kenley  
Bernie Karl  
Al Poindexter

*Others in attendance:*

Shana Joy, Executive Director, NRCDB  
Ken Marsh, AACD/ Upper Su SWCD  
Darcy Etcheverry, Fairbanks SWCD  
Dee Pond, CAO, AACD

Ryan Stencel, Anchorage SWCD  
Bryce Wrigley, Salcha Delta SWCD  
Bob MacFarlane, Dept. of Law  
Kathlene Rowell, DNR Comm. Office

1. Call to Order – Determination of Quorum

It was determined that a quorum was present and the meeting was called to order by Bernie Karl at 9:05 a.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

**Carol moved to approve the agenda; Cheryl seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

1. Approval of October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Meeting Minutes

**Carol moved to approve the minutes as presented; Al seconded the motion. The motion passed.** Al commented that Shana had done a good job transcribing the minutes.

2. Executive Director Report

The Scott Paper projects are moving forward and cooperative agreements are in the works with the districts. The districts are submitting really good ideas for these projects. The FY12 SWCD Annual Report has been bound and mailed out. It has also been posted on the board website. Shana has been working with AACD on planning for the spring conference to be in April this year. Work slowed down on AS41.10 over the holidays but a memorandum from the Dept. of Law has been received recommending the fund concept in resolving the SWCD issue associated with spending and receiving money. Shana is committed to continuing to work on this project and moving it forward. She has also been responding to day to day district inquiries and issues.

Al pointed out that the state FFA convention is April 24-27 in Fairbanks so the spring conference shouldn't conflict with that.

**Old Business**

### 3. Upper Susitna SWCD Boundary Expansion

A revised resolution from the Upper Susitna SWCD has been provided and it is the result of a lot of work and consideration on the part of that district since the last NRCDB meeting. They have revised their proposed boundaries to encompass the entirety of three different watersheds a portion of which were already within their boundaries. Those watersheds are: 20501, 20502, and 20503 (USGS HUC #s).

Bryce Wrigley asked about the prior comments made regarding the motivation behind the district boundary expansion, perhaps opposition to resource development. Shana clarified that those prior comments were not correct and the district is not in opposition to resource development whatsoever but the district would like to be able to assist new settlement and resource development companies with environmental mitigation efforts and data collection. Ken Marsh also pointed out that the Upper Susitna SWCD is definitely not in opposition to future resource development projects; they only wish to encompass whole watersheds more in line with the trend of watershed-wide planning. Al stated that his prior concerns were based on some individual comments he had heard along with the wording of their former resolution but the new resolution and revised boundaries seem much more thoughtful and it is beneficial for the district to step up and offer assistance to those formerly unserved areas. Bernie believes the new boundaries make more sense and thanked Ken for his sincere comments on the expansion. Bernie thanked the Upper Susitna SWCD for a job well done.

**Al moved to approve the boundary expansion for the Upper Susitna SWCD. Carol seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

### **New Business**

#### 4. Southeast SWCD Cooperative Agreement

Shana provided two different versions of a cooperative agreement for the Southeast SWCD. This is a new district and they are having difficulty finding any seed money to be able to open a checking account and begin functioning. The difficulty arises in that most grant and other current fund sources are reimbursable only. The SE SWCD had asked if they could receive the annual stipend at the beginning of this fiscal year so they could get started rather than wait until the end of the fiscal year along with the other established SWCDs. The first version of the cooperative agreement is the language used in FY12 which provided the funds at the beginning of the fiscal year. The second version is the new version for FY13 that the other districts are working under which disburses funds at the end of the fiscal year. Shana recommends that the FY12 version be used as a one-time consideration for this new district.

Bernie thinks it is important that the board treat all of the districts the same way. Cheryl pointed out that the SE SWCD is a brand new district and it took a lot of work to get the district formed and if they need the funds up front to start operations, they should get it now. Carol pointed out that all of the districts got the money up front just last year and she doesn't have a problem giving the district the funds now for this fiscal year. Al agrees with both points but there really wasn't any money for districts in the beginning and they got along the best they could. Today is a different time and he would hate to see the new district fail because they couldn't get off the ground so he thinks that an exception can be made because it is a brand new district to give them a fighting chance. If they can't get functioning, they won't be able to submit the required documents anyway.

**The board voted unanimously in favor of DNR utilizing the FY12 language, providing the funds up front, in the cooperative agreement with the Southeast SWCD.**

#### 5. Fairbanks SWCD Boundary Expansion

Bernie believes that these proposed boundaries make sense and the district seems to have done a decent job of putting the proposed expansion together. Al asked how the financial situation had progressed with the Fairbanks SWCD. Shana said that the district is working through the issue and moving forward; the legal matters will just take time to resolve. Darcy Etcheverry was available but not able to offer any other information to the board on the finances. She does have partnerships formed with Stevens Village and Ft. Yukon with weed management work. Schoolyard habitat projects are ongoing in the new areas as well. Bernie would like to have a clear picture of the Fairbanks SWCD financial situation before approving the boundary expansion. It might be a good reason for the district to settle any outstanding issues. Shana offered to go to Fairbanks and provide assistance to the Fairbanks SWCD if it will at all be helpful. Bernie appreciates the offer. Al pointed out that the district has an office in Nenana which is outside their current boundaries. Al further pointed out that postponing the expansion approval for a couple of months until the next NRCDB meeting in March. Al would like the district to further describe the land area they would like to encompass, number of landowners, and the types of projects they would like to get involved in there but the new map is much improved. The NRCDB is ultimately responsible so Al would like to hear more specifics from the district - what is the thought process behind watershed #40704 for example. Bernie asked that someone from the Fairbanks SWCD be available to participate in the March meeting to speak to the boundary expansion. Ken thanked the board for being willing to allow Shana to go to Fairbanks to assist. Bernie recommended an executive session at the next meeting if need be to discuss confidential matters having to do with the Fairbanks SWCD.

**Carol moved that Shana should go to Fairbanks and help sort through their financial problems and that this item be tabled to the next meeting. Al seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

#### 6. Governor's Timber Jobs Task Force Report

Shana stated that George Woodbury asked for this agenda item – he served on/assisted this task force and he has asked the board to support the recommendations in this report. Bernie doesn't have any problem supporting the report and that it was well done. He also said there was a time in Alaska's history that the timber industry was one of the largest industries in the state and it's unfortunate that so much has been lost. Cheryl remembered a bowl factory that closed down due to a lack of timber supply. Bernie stated that timber is an agricultural renewable crop.

**Cheryl moved to have Shana write a letter of support for the Governor's Timber Jobs Task Force Report. Al seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

#### 7. Board Comments

Al is dismayed that there is no funding in the budget at all for SWCDs and he's not sure how they are going to continue to function without operating money. The NRCDB is obviously not being taken seriously or being utilized the way it was meant to. The 41.10 statute needs to be rewritten so it is effective and Al is not real happy with the proposed solution because small band-aid changes are still going to be a mess. The Commissioner and the Governor ought to take it up and do the re-write job and the board had asked for a draft and the board has seen nothing. Al is not sure his service is still even needed.

Bernie agrees with Al's comments. He truly respects the Commissioner and he is the best one in 40 years and Bernie hopes he can be at the next meeting so the board can have a face to face discussion with him. Shana pointed out that funding for the SWCDs was not included in the budget requests. Bernie would like that these comments are taken back to the Commissioner. This board's time is just as valuable as the Commissioner's and Bernie really thought that we were going somewhere.

Al thinks that Commissioner Sullivan is probably the most hands-on commissioner in the last 20 years. The SWCDs and NRCDB are part of DNR and it's beyond him that they are not included in the Commissioner's budget. Al would like the Governor to be invited to the March meeting as well. Bernie disagrees in that the budget request has to come from the Commissioner. Bernie would like just five minutes with the Commissioner in Juneau in March.

### 8. Public Comments

Ken Marsh supports the NRCDB fully. Once again AACD and the SWCDs are once again at the mercy of the legislature and the Governor for district funding. Bernie replied that we are a resource state and here we are once again begging for a few dollars to take care of the districts and its total insanity that this goes on.

Bryce Wrigley had been reviewing the EPA report on toxics and how it may result in additional oversight by the EPA of the mining industry in the state. It is unfortunate that most of the EPA's report are suspect of bias and he is not sure if the NRCDB has any authority in whether or not the EPA has a larger role in the state but it might be good to keep the boards' ears open.

### 9. Next Meeting Date and Location

The next meeting will be in person in Juneau the week of March 25th but flexible with the Commissioner's schedule. Bernie may have a conflict. Shana will be in contact with the board regarding the exact date and travel arrangements. Shana will also check on any upcoming board seat expirations and let any board members know about it.

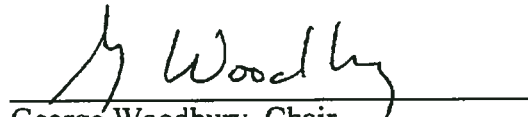
**Al moved to adjourn. Carol seconded. The motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

Minutes taken by:

Minutes approved by:

  
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Shana Joy, Executive Director  
NRCDB

  
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George Woodbury, Chair  
NRCDB