

Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Council

An Agency of State Government, Serving Vermont's 14 Conservation Districts

NRCC Meeting Minutes: May 21, 2013

UVM Extension Conference Room, Berlin

Present: Rick Hopkins, Larry Kasden, Linda Corse, Jeff Carter, Jill Arace, Kerry O'Brien, Justin Kenney, Renae Masse, Laura DiPietro, Vicky Drew

Meeting Opened: 9:07am. Jeff called the meeting to order.

Roundtable introductions

Rick mentioned the ERP grant RFP has been released and he distributed copies, deadline is June 13th. The grant is capital funds, so it emphasizes implementation, some planning, and river corridor easements. Implementation is a central component of the grant. No education projects. 2013 319 funding will not be available this year for grants. Larry reported that Sue Greenall had an accident and horse fall on her, she suffered broken ribs, neck and punctured lung. She is home recovering and doing ok. Linda noted that her daughter is in Washington DC is part of an environmental working group. Discussion followed about education and discussion that agencies aren't necessarily supporting education projects outright, but implementation can be used as a demonstration and education can be integrated. Jill discussed correspondence with Washington DC regarding the farm bill and need for technical assistance dollars. She discussed the staffing changes with District Managers. VACD is looking at CIG grants to enhance private funding of EQIP contracts. Jeff discussed his grant management and outreach including facilitating no-till and reduced tillage demonstration projects. .

Previous meeting minutes: Linda moved to approve the minutes as printed, Jeff seconded. Without a quorum, the motion was approved with one abstention and additional votes will be acquired by proxy following the meeting.

Financial Statements: Linda moved to approve the financial statements as printed, Rick seconded. The motion was approved and additional votes will be acquired by proxy following the meeting.

Agricultural Outreach Initiative Year 2 Budget and Deliverables Discussion: A discussion of the deliverables for Year 2 was discussed. Rick asked about the workshops, and noted that the distribution of workshops by District was discretionary and depending on what Districts signed up to do. Rick asked if we might want each District to conduct a workshop, and provide guidance on topics for the workshops. Jeff mentioned AAPs as the primary focus, and more technical workshops on practices and implementation. CAFO permits will need to be discussed across the state as well once the permits are live, for example. We agreed all Districts need to do one workshop— and 6 additional workshops would be geared toward target areas. Laura noted that small farms are still a target audience. Laura expressed concerns that the program seems light on deliverables for the amount of money and was uncertain of support from VTAAF&M leadership. Discussion followed about matching these dollars with other

existing programs to help stretch dollars further, or utilizing this funding to create greater impact of existing sources and coordinating more strategically with other agencies.

Rick proposed that NRCC apply guidance to the workshop component of AOI, and that each District conduct at least one. It would be encouraged to cover permits, AAPs and requirements and partner with UVM Extension. It was suggested that this be covered in training. Laura is meeting with VTAAF&M leadership on Friday and would discuss this program with them and address how AOI can help meet needs.

Green Infrastructure Coordinator: Justin Kenney

His new role is focused on coordinating the green infrastructure initiative. He defined green and grey infrastructure and various functions of each ranging from pipes and catch basins (grey) to raingardens and wetlands (green). The goal is to restore or maintain sites' pre-development ecological and hydrologic function, reduce the volume of water quality impacts while providing the functions of a built environment. He discussed Conservation Districts involvement with this program – and suggested outreach and education to landowners on LID and Let it Rain program, outreach to municipalities. Rick noted the agricultural landscape is part of our green infrastructure.

Ag Working Groups: Laura DiPietro

EMC.org contains all the information obtained from the ag working group meetings. The groups were designed to cover all different sizes and types of agricultural operations. AAP compliance was covered extensively, and getting feedback from producers on this. Discussion about farms who don't "count" as a federal farm (don't produce \$1000/year in farm revenue) but may have animals, etc. They are still obligated to comply with state AAPs, however their access to federal programs is limited. These and other small farmers are a target audience for outreach and education. Discussion about custom applicators and the AAP compliance management scheme between farmer and custom applicator – and how the farmer is responsible if the custom applicator is not aware of the farm's compliance or makes a mistake. Waterways in the context of livestock exclusion are only perennial streams and not streams that dry up. Funding schemes were discussed with the legislature to accomplish regulations. Buffers were discussed to be 25' everywhere instead of varying widths. Will continue to develop Certainty Program, milk programs, and nutrient management classes for farmers.

Continuing NRCC planning and restructuring:

Laura recommends we open and revise the statute. Vicky cautioned about bringing statutory revisions to the legislature. Rick suggested a sub-committee who would be specifically tasked with this. It was suggested that structural changes be recommended in the statute. Discussion followed about supervisory participation. Consensus to convene a subcommittee on NRCC drafting statutory changes.

July 11, 2013 9:00am-12:00 Berlin – meeting for NRCC restructuring.

Nominations will be accepted for chair of NRCC. Jeff is stepping down.

Meeting adjourned: 12:50pm