



**DAKOTA PRAIRIES RC&D COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**April 14, 2015      10 a.m. (CDT)**  
**Ramkota, Bismarck, ND**

---

**RC&D Council attendance was recorded as follows :**

<u>RC&amp;D Representative:</u>	<u>Organization Represented:</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>Unable to Attend</u>
Cindy Makedonski	Burleigh County SCD	X	
Helen Schatz	Burleigh County Commission	X	
Terry Fleck	Burleigh County WRB		X
Rhonda Vetsch	Emmons County SCD		X
Wes Frederick	Grant County SCD		X
Bill Koch	Grant County Commission	X	
Jackie Hewitt	Kidder County SCD		X
Penny Nester	Kidder County Commission	X	
Steve Lee	McLean County Commission		X
Richard Perkerewicz	South McLean SCD		X
Richard White Bear	West McLean SCD	X	
Dawn Martin	Mercer County SCD	X	
Vacant	Mercer County Commission		X
Duane Olsen	Morton County SCD	X	
Ron Leingang	Morton County Commission	X	
Mike Bauer	Oliver County SCD		X
Blake Wilkens	Oliver County Commission		X
Darci Gahner	Sheridan County SCD		X
Cynthia Wahl	Sheridan County Commission	X	
Sue Isbell	Sioux County Commission		X
Deborah Vollmuth	Cedar SCD	X	
Joe Smith	Standing Rock Conser. District		X
<u>RC&amp;D Staff</u>			
Susan Davis, ED	Dakota Prairies RC&D	X	

## **Call to order**

President Dawn Martin called the quarterly meeting to order at 10 a.m.

Attending were council members Bill Koch, Ron Leingang, Cindy Makedonski, Dawn Martin, Penny Nester, Duane Olsen, Helen Schatz, Deb Vollmuth, Cynthia Wahl and Richard White Bear. Also attending was Susan Davis, executive director of Dakota Prairies RC&D.

## **Approval of minutes**

Minutes of the Jan. 20, 2015, annual meeting minutes were reviewed.

*Helen Schatz moved to approve the Jan. 20, 2015, annual meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ron Leingang and approved.*

## **Financial report**

Davis reviewed the balance sheet as of March 31, 2015, which shows total checking and savings of \$123,377. This includes \$49,499 in the Dakota Community Bank checking account and \$60,898 in the Kirkwood Bank & Trust special project account. The two CDs total \$12,980. For the period of January through March 2015, total income was \$94,913 and total expenses were \$65,925.

*Ron Leingang moved to approve the financial report. The motion was seconded by Duane Olsen and approved.*

## **Executive director report**

Susan Davis reviewed a written report of her activities since Jan. 20, 2015. Highlights include: 1) Submitted monthly reimbursement requests in early February, March and April to the North Dakota Department of Health and issued reimbursement checks to member/partners for project work; 2) updated contract between Dakota Prairies and Davis and sent to Dawn Martin for her signature; 3) prepared annual report filings for Dakota Prairies RC&D and the North Dakota RC&D Association; 4) made updates to the Web sites for Dakota Prairies RC&D and Dakota West RC&D; 5) rewrote new 319 grant plan and budget and submitted to Department of Health; 6) held discussions with Ad Hoc Granting Committee members and scheduled committee meeting for April 23; 7) assisted Cindy Makedonski with rewriting Menoken Farm work plan and budget and resubmitted Menoken Farm 319 grant to Department of Health; 8) spent time on Specialty Crop Block Grant project on Standing Rock Reservation, including writing annual report under SCBG No. 14-205 and began working on quarterly reports for SCBG Grant No. 14-205 and SCBG Grant No. 14-217; and 9) attended the Jan. 24, 2015, meeting of the NRCS Technical Committee.

## **319 proposal requests and reimbursements**

Bill Koch, one of the four members of the Ad Hoc Granting Committee, and Davis reported that almost \$43,000 is available for new member projects through June 30, 2015. A total of \$256,506 of the \$325,000 grant has been spent, with another \$16,630 committed to member projects and \$15,951 committed to Dakota Prairies RC&D for administration costs. Davis estimates that only about \$2,500 to \$3,000 can be reimbursed to Dakota Prairies per month, so Dakota Prairies will likely need only about \$9,000 of this \$15,951. Therefore, the remaining \$6,951 can be used for member projects. This leaves a total of \$42,966 for new projects.

Davis reported that Mike Bauer, a longtime member of the Ad Hoc Granting Committee, recommends SCD members look at ordering Solvita soil test field kits. This advanced level field biology test measures soil microbial metabolism. The cost is about \$1,000, of which \$600 (or 60 percent) could be reimbursed under the 319 grant and the remaining \$400 could be paid by the SCD as the 40 percent match.

The board also discussed rain simulators, either tabletop ones (about \$500) or portable ones with or without a special transport trailer. Those with a trailer may cost up to \$10,000 to \$15,000. Davis will try to find out more pricing information on rain simulators.

Other ideas suggested include soil probes, shallow pipeline plows and water testing kits. The water kits test total solubles and may cost from between \$50 and \$200 each.

Davis will bring these ideas to the meeting of the Dakota West RC&D board on April 20. The Ad Hoc Granting Committee is also meeting April 23 and will discuss possible ideas.

### **New 319 work plan and budget**

Davis reviewed the final approved 319 grant application for new funding for 2015 to 2018. The Task Force approved \$145,000 of the requested \$574,929. The work plan and budget were revised to reflect this reduction and was resubmitted by the due date of Feb. 6, 2015. The final four objectives and how they were affected by the lower grant award are as follows:

- *Objective 1—Management leadership and support systems:* This objective, which includes some funding to help cover administration expenses, was reduced to \$41,800 (from \$68,428).

- *Objective 2—Organizational work on a comprehensive ag-related water quality training module:* The Task Force recommended just conducting the organizational work on the planned comprehensive ag-related water quality training module and training. Therefore, the funding for this objective was reduced to \$17,400 (from \$213,500) in 319 funds.

- *Objective 3—Two western North Dakota soil health workshops and one statewide grazing workshop:* The proposed eight North Dakota soil health workshops were reduced to two—one in the Dakota Prairies RC&D service area and one in the Dakota West RC&D service area. The one advanced grazing planning workshop will still be held, but the funding for it was reduced. This objective went from \$143,000 to \$25,800 in funding.

- *Objective 4—Local water quality events:* This objective was reduced to \$60,000 (from \$150,000).

### **Joint meeting with Dakota West RC&D**

The board discussed previous plans to meet with Dakota West RC&D directors on the possibility of sharing expenses and income under the new 319 grant. After further discussion, either May 6 or May 7 was set for the date. It was suggested the meeting begin at noon with a lunch and be held at New Salem. Davis will bring these recommended dates to the board of Dakota West when it meets April 20 at Dickinson.

### **Manitoba-North Dakota Zero Tillage Farmers Association**

Davis reported she wrote and submitted a proposal to the Manitoba-North Dakota Zero Tillage Farmers Association (Man-Dak) to provide administrative services to that organization. Davis later interviewed with three board members of Man-Dak, who offered the contract to Dakota Prairies (in partnership with Dakota West). After negotiating an hourly rate of \$45, there was some member feedback that this additional work may not be compatible with the existing work for both councils that Davis is performing. Therefore, Davis reached back out to Man-Dak to decline the work offer.

### **Other funding sources**

Davis reported she conducted some research under the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program's professional development grants and began an online application. However, there was not enough time to develop a final application. SARE also had other grants throughout the year and Davis will review these. Other suggestions discussed included the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund, NRCS's Regional Conservation Partnership Program, Delta Waterfowl, Ducks Unlimited and the North Central Extension Risk Management program. It was noted that Oct. 1 is the next deadline for the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

### **Election of new treasurer**

President Dawn Martin reported that Rhonda Vetsch, treasurer, has resigned her officer position due to lack of time. She was elected in January 2014 to a two-year term. Along with her resignation notice, Vetsch recommended Cindy Makedonski to fill her unexpired term.

*Deb Vollmuth moved to release Rhonda Vetsch from her unexpired term as treasurer. The motion was seconded by Penny Nester and approved.*

*Deb Vollmuth moved to nominate Cindy Makedonski to the unexpired term as treasurer to replace Rhonda Vetsch. The motion was seconded by Helen Schatz.*

*Penny Nester moved to cease nominations and that a unanimous ballot be cast for Cindy Makedonski as treasurer to serve the remaining unexpired term of Rhonda Vetsch. The motion was seconded by Deb Vollmuth and approved.*

### **Solar power for pasture wells**

Bill Koch reported he uses solar power for pumping water from one pasture well, which others may be interested in. He recommends adding a tracker device that tracks the sun's position. He said Verendrye Electric Cooperative has more than 150 pasture wells powered by solar and also stocks the parts and helps with repair. Koch said he has approached Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, but has not gotten any interest. He estimates the cost for the solar panel and equipment to be about \$4,000. The cost to dig the well is another estimated \$2,500.

The group discussed that this, along with water taps, may be a project the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund may be interested in funding.

### **Other business**

■ *Earth Day Festival:* Deb Vollmuth reported the Earth Day Festival is scheduled for April 23 at McCabe Methodist Church, Bismarck. Growing rapidly, this year's event is expected to draw 900 students and include 19 sessions. It is open to the public starting at 3:30 p.m. There will be booths and concessions by Science Olympiad. Trees, donated by the soil conservation districts, and other items will be given away. The 1,000 free trees will be wrapped on April 17 if anyone can help.

■ *Area IV SCD's Winter Meeting:* Vollmuth also reported the Area IV SCD Cooperative Research Farm held its winter meeting March 2, 2015. More than 200 attended the event, "Farming for the Bottom Line." The 319 grant was helpful in making it a success.

■ *NRCS/SCD contribution agreements:* Makedonski reported the contributions agreements that SCDs have through NRCS may be at risk. These contributions are under the USDA Farm Bill.

■ *Kidder County SCD:* Penny Nester told the group Kidder County SCD recently held a successful women's ag night. The district has a cover crop roller for sale. It is a pull-behind unit the SCD has had for four years.

### **Next council meeting and adjournment**

The next quarterly council meeting was set for 10 a.m. (CDT) Tuesday, July 21. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.