

Minutes
Dakota West RC&D
Dickinson Research Extension Center
Dickinson, N.D.
April 20, 2015

Call to order and attendance

Jim Odermann, president of Dakota West RC&D Council, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. (MDT).

Those attending and the organizational member they represent were:

- Frank Hatzenbuehler, director at large
- Pam Meier, Slope/Hettinger Soil Conservation District
- Chad Njos, Bowman/Slope Soil Conservation District
- Jim Odermann, Southwest Water Authority
- Dr. Kris Ringwall, Dickinson Research Extension Center
- Kaylee Stein, Dunn County Soil Conservation Service
- Bonnie Twogood, Central Stark County Soil Conservation District
- Duane Urlacher, Stark County Water Resource Board

Also attending was Susan Davis, contracted executive director, and guest Randy Gaebe, director of the Bowman County Weed Board.

Introduction and agenda

Self-introductions were made. Kaylee Stein, district technician for Dunn County SCD, explained that she is replacing Jolyn Wasem on this board. Randy Gaebe told the group the Bowman County Weed Board may be interested in joining Dakota West RC&D.

The group reviewed the agenda. Two items were added: A report by Chad Njos on the North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition's (NDGLC) plans to add a Leopold Conservation Award; and 2) how many organizational members are allowed under the bylaws.

Frank Hatzenbuehler moved to approve the agenda with these additions. The motion was seconded by Duane Urlacher and approved without dissent.

Approval of minutes

The minutes from the Jan. 12, 2015, Dakota West RC&D annual meeting were reviewed.

Duane Urlacher moved to approve the Jan. 12, 2015, minutes. The motion was seconded by Pam Meier and approved without dissent.

Treasurer's report

Hatzenbuehler reviewed the balance sheet as of April 16, 2015. Total assets are \$63,160. Bank accounts total \$55,886, of which \$47,838 is general checking and \$5,848 is a certificate of deposit.

Dues of \$2,600 have been received, which represents \$200 from 13 members. It was noted that the payment from Golden Valley SCD should be listed as \$200 rather than \$2.

Payments have recently been made to Consolidated Telcom for phone/Internet and to Dakota Prairies RC&D Council for professional services. A check for \$150 was recently mailed to Western Association of RC&Ds for dues for 2014 and 2015. Davis will contact Joyce Mick, the treasurer of Western, to see if this is the right amount. Dakota West RC&D will also join the North Dakota Association of Nonprofit Organizations.

Pam Meier moved to accept the treasurer's report and file for audit. The motion was seconded by Chad Njos and approved without dissent.

Executive director report

Davis reviewed a two-page report on activities performed since the last meeting. Highlights include the following:

- Wrote and submitted a proposal to the Manitoba-North Dakota (Man-Dak) Zero Tillage Farmers Association to provide administrative services
- Interviewed with Man-Dak and negotiated an hourly rate of \$45
- Let Man-Dak know Dakota Prairies/Dakota West needed to decline contract for now due to lack of time
- Submitted 319 grant monthly reimbursement requests in February, March and April 2015
- Rewrote and submitted the new 319 grant application and revised work plan and budget sheets to reflect grant award of \$145,000
- Coordinated with Ad Hoc Granting Committee on new project requests and discussions on remaining current funds of more than \$40,000
- Researched other funding sources, including the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program

319 grant funding through North Dakota Department of Health

■ *Final funding and work plan under the 2015-2018 319 grant:* Davis reviewed the final work plan and budget for the reduced award of \$145,000 for 2015-2018. The largest reductions were made in objective 2, the ag-related water quality training module. The Health Department's Task Force recommended just conducting the organizational work and come back in three years for funds to implement the training and education work. Therefore, the 319 funds under this objective now total \$17,400. Under objective 3, with \$25,800 in 319 funds, the number of soil health workshops was cut from eight to two. There is \$60,000 under objective 4 to grant to members for local water quality education events. The remaining \$41,800 is for management.

■ *Current 319 grant balance:* Davis and Duane Urlacher reviewed projects funded to date and current project proposals. Of the \$325,000 grant, \$256,506 has been spent and \$32,580 is committed for administration and approved projects. Of the \$15,951 reserved for administration, Davis estimates about \$9,000 will be needed. The remaining balance of \$6,951 can be added to the \$35,915, for a total available balance of \$42,866.

■ *Possible purchases and expenditures before June 2015:* The board reviewed a list of possible purchases by the members to spend down the remaining grant balance of almost \$43,000. Some were recommended by members of the Ad Hoc Granting Committee and some were ideas generated during the Dakota Prairies RC&D board meeting April 14, 2015. They include:

1. Solvita premium level field soil test kit: These test soil respiration and cost about \$1,000.
2. Rainfall simulators: Tabletop or full-size simulators are available and the prices range from \$500 to \$3,000. With the trailer and all related equipment, the cost could be \$10,000 to \$15,000
3. Root display boxes: These could be purchased with the rainfall simulators and are estimated to cost about \$50 each
4. Soil probe
5. Shallow pipeline plow
6. Water testing kits

Chad Njos reported the NRCS state office has one mobile rain simulator and the district offices have tabletop ones. If large ones are purchased through the 319 grant, he recommends three to four SCDs join together to get one. Kaylee Stein said Dunn County would have room to store a large one with a trailer if necessary. Stein also said the water testing kits may be useful.

Randy Gaebe reported he has a project that was not funded by the Outdoor Heritage Fund that may work through the 319 grant program. About \$12,000 is needed for a portable solar water pump and station to conduct a conservation grazing project at Bowman Haley Dam. The goal is to train cattle to eat noxious weeds such as Canada thistle. Njos said if this project request needs to come from a current RC&D member, Bowman/Slope SCD could partner with Gaebe on it.

Dr. Kris Ringwall reported he is working on an educational event for 300 sixth-grade students during May. It will involve planting trees and it could feature a water quality education component.

Davis will work with Gaebe and Ringwall on getting these two projects funded under the current 319 grant. She will also send updates to the members of Dakota West and Dakota Prairies on possible needs they have, especially focusing on the soil test kits, rainfall simulators, root display boxes and water testing kits.

■ *Granting Committee members:* Davis provided contact information for the four members of the Ad Hoc Granting Committee. The two representatives from Dakota West RC&D are Don Urlacher and Duane Urlacher. The two representatives from Dakota Prairies RC&D are Mike Bauer and Bill Koch. Duane Urlacher and Koch are new members and have not yet attended an in-person meeting of the committee. One is planned for April 23 at Hebron.

■ *Joint meeting with Dakota Prairies RC&D on sharing expenses/income under the new grant:* Davis reported that the members of the Dakota Prairies RC&D board recommend having this meeting either May 6 or 7 at New Salem. The board members agreed these two dates will not work with field and tree planting and recommended either late May or early June.

Project/activity reports from members

Hatzenbuhler reported he participated in a recent webinar on USDA Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). The REAP provides loans and grants for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements. The program provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to purchase or install renewable energy systems or make energy efficiency improvements. Hatzenbuhler wanted to use the program to add solar power onto his house. However, it can be used for farm buildings, but not homes.

North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition

Njos, a member of the NDGLC, said that group wants to establish the Leopold Conservation Award in North Dakota. Other states are already doing this award through the Sand County Foundation. South Dakota added it in 2010. It is a conservation award for those going out of their way to implement conservation. The winner gets \$10,000 and a crystal award. The winner's operation is toured.

NDGLC will help sponsor, but it needs other financial support for the award. Njos said Mary Podoll, the state conservationist, supports establishing this award in North Dakota. The North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts also supports it.

Dakota West RC&D membership policies

President Odermann reported the Dakota West RC&D bylaws allows for up to 16 sponsoring members and four at-large members. The sponsoring members shall consist of the following organizations, which may petition the Council for memberships: Units of government of counties, cities, towns, soil conservation districts, special purpose districts and nonprofit organizations within the boundaries of the area.

The Council currently has 13 sponsoring members and two at-large members. Therefore, if Bowman County Weed Board wants to join Dakota West, it just needs to send a letter requesting membership.

Next meeting

The next quarterly meeting was scheduled for Monday, July 20, 2015. It will be held at 9:30 a.m. (MDT) at the Dickinson Extension Research Center.

Adjournment

President Odermann adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m. (MDT).