



**DAKOTA PRAIRIES RC&D COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**July 21, 2015      10 a.m. (CDT)**  
**Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck, ND**

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

<u>RC&amp;D Representative:</u>	<u>Organization Represented:</u>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>Unable to Attend</b>
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 10:10 a.m.

Attending were council members Mike Bauer, Jackie Hewitt, Bill Koch, Ron Leingang, Cindy Makedonski, Dawn Martin, Duane Olsen, Rhonda Vetsch, 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 April 14, 2015, quarterly meeting minutes were reviewed.

*Cynthia Wahl moved to approve the April 14, 2015, meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Richard White Bear and approved.*

## **Financial report**

Davis reviewed the balance sheet as of June 30, 2015, which shows total checking and savings of \$118,568. This includes \$44,624 in the Dakota Community Bank checking account and \$60,913 in the Kirkwood Bank & Trust special project account. The two CDs total \$12,981. Accounts receivable total \$2,680.

Davis also reported that expenses since January 2015 include telephone/Internet at \$941; rent at \$3,990; and the copier lease at \$1,469. The office rent increased from \$660 to \$690 in June 2015.

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

## **Executive director report**

Susan Davis reviewed a written report of her activities since April 14, 2015. Highlights include: 1) Submitted monthly reimbursement requests in May, June and July to the North Dakota Department of Health and issued reimbursement checks to member/partners for project work; 2) worked with Greg Sandness to extend current 319 grant to Dec. 31, 2015; 3) scheduled and attended Ad Hoc Granting Committee meeting April 23 in Hebron; 4) sent out current 319 spending ideas to members of Dakota Prairies and Dakota West members; 5) worked with members/partners with project follow-up work, including West McLean SCD, Bowman County Weed Board, Dickinson Research Extension Center, Morton County SCD and Manitoba/North Dakota Zero Tillage Farmers Association; 6) assisted Cindy Makedonski and Jay Fuhrer in writing final report and reimbursement request for 2012-2015 Menoken Farm 319 grant; 7) prepared Specialty Crop Block Grant reimbursement forms and quarterly reports for two grants Sioux County Extension is working under; and 8) assisted in cleaning up new community garden site east of the Cannon Ball school.

## **319 Ad Hoc Granting Committee report**

Mike Bauer, new chair of the Ad Hoc Granting Committee, and Davis reported the new available balance under the 2012-2015 319 grant is now \$12,496. Grants approved total \$20,178. These include \$3,500 approved for Bowman-Slope SCD toward a rainfall simulator and trailer and \$1,347 to Morton SCD for supplies for its soil health and pasture walk tours.

Morton County SCD has also submitted a second grant application for \$2,040, which the Ad Hoc Granting Committee is now reviewing.

Jackie Hewitt of Kidder County SCD and Dawn Martin of Mercer County SCD said they will be submitting grant requests for rainfall tabletop rainfall simulators. They are still researching suppliers and costs. Davis

will check with Jay Fuhrer of NRCS on sources and costs for tabletop rainfall simulators. Susan Samson-Liebig of NRCS was also recommended as a resource for this information.

The board also suggested that Dakota Prairies RC&D should order more of the noxious weed identification card notebooks for distribution to the members.

The consensus of the board was to set Sept. 30, 2015, as the deadline for submitting grant applications under the 2012-2015 grant. That way, the Ad Hoc Granting Committee can award the remaining funds and projects and reimbursements can be completed before the Dec. 31, 2015, deadline.

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

Davis reported the Dakota West RC&D board suggested meeting in September to discuss sharing expenses and income under the new 319 grant, which began July 1, 2015. The meeting will be for the executive committees of both councils with all board members invited to participate. Davis will send out possible dates and a central meeting location.

The board discussed the importance of Dakota West RC&D adjusting its membership dues to conform to those of Dakota Prairies. Dakota West currently charges \$200 per organizational member. The dues of Dakota Prairies are based on county population, which was noted as the most justifiable and consistent way to estimate dues. The Dakota Prairies membership dues range from \$300 to \$1,200.

### **Dakota West request to reduce its contracted hours**

Davis reported that during its July 20 meeting at Dickinson, the Dakota West RC&D board requested its contract hours be reduced from 42 to 34 hours per month. This will still represent about one-third of the total contact hours, as she reduced her hours from 125 to 100 per month due to the lower new 319 grant award.

The board discussed and agreed a percentage base is fair. Rhonda Vetsch suggested 30 hours rather than 34, as Davis needs time to conduct other work for Dakota Prairies under the Specialty Crop Block Grant and Menoken Farm.

*Rhonda Vetsch moved to approve revising the professional services contract with Dakota West RC&D to reflect 30 hours per month rather than 42. The motion was seconded by Ron Leingang and approved.*

### **Membership dues**

Davis reported that she has followed up on three unpaid memberships. Morton County Water Resource District voted during a recent meeting to not pay its 2015 Dakota Prairies RC&D dues. According to Darci Gahner of Sheridan County SCD, she mailed a check for \$300 in February. However, it either got lost in the mail or at the Dakota Prairies office. And Standing Rock Conservation District has not paid its \$300 dues.

The board recommended asking Gahner to reissue her \$300 dues payment and for Davis to contact Joe Smith at the Tribal Land Operations office and get both of these taken care of before the end of August 2015.

### **Member/director reports**

■ *Rhonda Vetsch, Emmons County SCD:* Vetsch reported the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) will have significant changes under eligibility and grant amounts under the new state allocation next fiscal year. Vetsch, an ex-officio member of the OHF advisory board, said the OHF wants more conservation district practice implementation programs, rather than educational events and things like playgrounds. The applications for the OHF tree planting grant awarded to the North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts (NDASCD) were due July 15. This grant of \$1.8 million has already resulted in 2 million feet of trees planted. NDASCD will put in another grant application for tree planting in October. The OHF is

forming a task force to discuss rental payment applications. They have been denied, but may look at something similar to a statewide CRP program.

■ *Dawn Martin, Mercer County SCD*: Martin reported the SCD held a low-stress cattle handling workshop during the recent county fair. About 35 attended the workshop led by Curt Pate. Attendees could get certified through the North Dakota Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Program. Lisa Peterson, the state BQA specialist, provided certifications. Mercer County SCD is also providing NUTBAL sampling of cattle waste to test for nutritional balance. This service is being provided to six producers and a fee is charged. The SCD also has another eighth-grade conservation tour planned.

■ *Duane Olsen, Morton County SCD*: Olsen said the SCD held a recent soil salinity workshop with about 50 attendees. The event, held at a farmstead in Morton County, featured how to control salinity through cropping systems.

■ *Deb Vollmuth, Cedar SCD*: Vollmuth reported tree planting season was busy. The SCD also provides NUTBAL testing for about 35 producers, which is a good income source. The fee is \$100 per sample if producers collect the sample and \$75 if they bring in the sample. About 50 samples have been collected and sent to Texas A&M University for analysis. Early summer and late summer are good times to do sampling. A no-till garden was planted behind the office building and the first bag of fresh produce was given away. Extra produce also goes to the Porcupine District, the diabetes program at Fort Yates and to area schools. The BQA program was presented in the county during July. Planning for the 2016 Earth Day Festival has begun. The location may be changed. Friends and Neighbors Day was held July 18 at the Northern Great Plains Research Center at Mandan. Ag tours and tree tours were held and Cedar SCD will work with Grant County to plan an agricultural night education event.

■ *Richard White Bear, West McLean SCD*: White Bear reported Christine Frost resigned and Christina Roth was hired to replace her. Tree planting is done. A joint meeting will be held with South McLean SCD. A partition was added onto the SCD's garage for the tractor.

■ *Mike Bauer, Oliver County SCD*: Bauer said Valerie Hartman was hired as the new district conservationist to replace Dave Pflieger, who is now at Burleigh County SCD. He said his SCD would be interested in the NUTBAL analysis as it could be an enhancement of the Conservation Stewardship Program.

■ *Bill Koch, Grant County Commission*: Koch reported a new Extension Service agent has been hired and he has visited with her about the 319 granting program.

■ *Cynthia Wahl, Sheridan County Commission*: Tree planting is wrapped up. A new county Extension Service agent was hired. A successful Women's Night/Spring Fling event was recently held.

■ *Jackie Hewitt, Kidder County SCD*: The Area IV meeting was held in Tuttle. Crop rotation and grazing rotation were the main topics. The board is interested in getting a tabletop rainfall simulator. Almost all (99 percent) of the pine trees planted this year and last year have died. Replacement pines will now need to be planted by hand. The Kidder County Commission is doing satellite imaging with drones and will then have producer meetings after the information is gathered to determine soil health.

■ *Cindy Makedonski, Burleigh County SCD*: The Soil Health Garden Tour is July 23 at Menoken Farm east of Bismarck. Some of the presenters and subjects include Jay Fuhrer, soil scum; Ken Miller, compost and cover crops, Darryl Oswald, flowering shrubs; Tom Kalb, garden pests; Lori Martin, high tunnel greenhouses; and Karen Ehrens, food and nutrition. Makedonski is working on a brochure for Menoken Farm. The first tour group is Sept. 3 and will consist of ag lenders and landowners.

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

The next quarterly council meeting was set for 10 a.m. (CDT) Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2015. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.