

Chippewa/Luce/Mackinac Conservation District

Board Meeting Minutes- August 7th, 2012

Board Members Present: Forbes McDonald, Tina Love, Orville Kabat, Tom Allan **Absent:** Jane Bishop
NRCS/District Staff Present: Kristina Denison, Michelle Jarvie, Erin Satchell, Todd Insley, Kent Dankenbring, Pat Carr, Monica Brandt (NRCS Intern)
MDA Representative: Jim Pawlowicz
Public Attending: Robert Love, Robert Schwiderson

Public Comments:

Robert Schwiderson expressed concerns over his current WRP project. He signed up for ponds approximately 4 years ago. Over time and during the process design went from “pond to mud puddle.” He signed up because he wanted ponds and is unhappy with current status of project as well as the pace of the project. He would have stayed with pasture if he had known design would change throughout the process. “When you sign something you should get what you signed for.”

Board response from Kabat – What a landowner agrees to and signs should remain what the landowner receives regardless of how long the process takes. We [District/NRCS] are the ones that are slow on the trigger so we should do absolutely everything we can to meet the needs and execute the plans the landowner is expecting in their contract.

problems with the building and Engineer. He expressed feelings that what is said one day then changes the next and small changes were only talked about verbally. When he was ready to start the payment process things were changed after he already ordered material. He has issues with the Engineer having “no authority” and needing approval from another source. He feels strongly that when a landowner is told something is approved it should remain approved.

Board Response – McDonald suggested sending a letter to higher-ups. Kabat stated we are here to be advocates for the landowner. When contracts are signed, everyone needs to see the light of day. We need to ensure we are doing everything in our power to expedite the process.

July minutes and Treasurer’s report reviewed. Love motioned to accept, seconded by Kabat, carried.

Project Reports:

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Report--Dankenbring. Money allocated to Chippewa County from WRP design work submitted to NRCS State office. EQIP contract with Heavy Use Area Protection signed off on.

Engineer’s Report--Satchell. Summary and layout surveys staked, inspections completed at EQIP&CRP sites in Chippewa/Mackinac. WRP permit site inspections, landowner visits for restoration site layout/design element discussion.

Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) Report--Jarvie. Trainings completed, Asyst visits started. Funding for spill kits secured. Working with Farmer’s Market’s to expand reach potential MAEAP candidates.

Forestry Report--Denison. MDA stated funds available to hire full-time forester starting Oct. 1st. Allan to participate on hiring committee. Consulting Forester’s List and Informational Book near completion, 5 landowner projects to be posted. First meeting of Local Advisory Committee to occur at end of August.

Cooperative Weed Management Area Report--Insley. Final Garlic Mustard pulls and 3 Volunteer project days for Piping Plover conducted. Deliverables fulfilled. Rapid Response site visits increasing. Coordinator interviews in progress.

Other Business:

NACD Membership. Kabat moved to continue membership participation at \$775 annually, supported by Love, carried.

QuickBooks training will be rescheduled for Treasurer participation.

District Property plan update. Hallfrish has submitted plan and received it back for revisions. Tree marking started and is about ½ completed. Enrollment in EQIP or CSP possible, recommendation of best time to market required.

Fall tree sale will have a Newberry and Sault pick-ups. Residents affected by Duck Lake Fire will receive discount.

Upcoming Dates and Events include Chippewa County Fair August 26th-September 3rd and Habitat Day August 18th

Reflection on Public Comments by board:

People are having less than desirable outcomes, these are decisions for every landowner and they need to know what they are getting into upfront. We need to fight for the land owner so they get what they signed off on and let new enrollments know the government has bought your land when you enter into the program and they can do what they want with it.

We need to look into how we can make changes to ensure we are meeting landowner needs, investigate opportunities for landowners to get out of the program, and come up with an approach and assess the success for going forward. A letter from the board to address concerns to higher-ups. Ultimately, make sure we inform all landowners changes are likely.

Kabat motioned to adjourn. Second by Love. Meeting adjourned.