

# Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Council

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

## **NRCC Meeting Minutes September 25, 2012**

UVM Extension Conference Room, Berlin

**Present:** Jill Arace, Linda Corse, Paul Wagner, Larry Hamel, Justin Kenney, Rick Hopkins, Mike Domingue, Jeff Carter, Kerry O'Brien, Michelle Gudorf (on phone), Mike Middleman (left at 10:00), Laura DiPietro, Vicky Drew

Meeting opened: Jeff opened the meeting at 9:35

Jeff acknowledged the passing of Hank Robinson and commended his service to Districts.

**Previous meeting minutes:** Board reviewed minutes from 7/31/2012. Linda moved and Michelle seconded to approve the minutes as printed. The motion was approved with one abstention.

**NRCC Finance Committee Conference Call Notes:** Jeff explained the functions of the finance committee which is to deal with "housekeeping" to free up NRCC meetings for more content. The Finance Committee members are Michelle Gudorf, Linda Corse, Kerry O'Brien, Jeff Carter. Mike discussed the communications of supervisors and providing feedback to the finance committee and making sure that gets in the minutes. It was discussed that the NRCC administrator (Kerry) will communicate with DMs who will be tasked with communicating Council information with supervisors. Jeff will communicate with NRCC board members. Jeff discussed the roles and responsibilities of the NRCC administrator which will continue to develop. Jill added that it should include assisting the chair of NRCC in developing agendas for meetings. NRCC would like the NRCC administrator to be sure not to overextend her time and do what she can do for the amount that has been designated for the work. Michelle moved and Linda seconded to accept the finance committee report as printed. The motion was approved.

**Annual Report:** NRCC submitted an annual report to VT AAF&M on 7/31/2012. Laura indicated that the annual report was accepted. Jeff reviewed the content of the report. Discussion followed about how Districts often report in arrears, rather than compiling needs looking forward. There are multiple reporting requirements for Districts (to NRCC, to VT AAF&M, to VACD, to legislature). Kerry suggested a subcommittee to help streamline reports and developing an annual planning cycle. Mike was concerned about inclusion of supervisors in the process and make sure they are able to review and approve reports. Jeff discussed the value of having shovel ready projects. Jill discussed collecting themes of services. Laura suggested that compiling projects is useful in determining the funding source for them, and anything not covered under existing grants may be considered for funding under NRCC/legislature. Michelle suggested that individuals Districts send annual reports to local legislators. Laura said there are broader initiatives going on that Districts should be aware of and mentioned the changes happening in the Agency with programming and the timing is right to partner and plan for this. Small shovel ready projects are nice, but larger goals and themes provide greater momentum for programming. Laura

suggested the NRCC administrator sit down with Chuck to discuss his reporting requirements before October 31<sup>st</sup>. A workgroup was suggested to help Kerry develop a format and timeline for reporting and planning and understanding our audiences and funding sources – members would include Michelle, Laura, Jill, Mike. Mike's email is [mdomi15978@gamil.com](mailto:mdomi15978@gamil.com) not available on Oct 4-5. Discussion followed about developing a template or online supporting system.

**Proposed budget for FY2014** – A budget a justification for NRCDs is due by October 31<sup>st</sup> 2012. Rick suggested NRCC pull together a project or program and put it out there. Council members wanted to take advantage of the forum we have with membership and develop ideas at these meetings. Agricultural sectors throughout the state are difficult to access, and NRCC can help provide that access and feedback back to the state. Jill discussed the need to have Districts understand more about the trends (funding) taking place at the state level that can help inform local programming. Laura suggested NRCC debriefing after attending water quality meetings in the state (mostly Lake Champlain Basin) which are getting developed now. There is a meeting this Friday 10-2 at state office NRCS to develop these outreach meetings. VACD technical partnership meetings can also help inform this process.

**FY2013 NRCC Agreement with VT AAF&M.** Agreement has been signed but is not yet executed. Invoices will come in and Laura suggested setting up direct deposit. Jeff reviewed the documents outlining the budget, payment schedule and financial procedures. Kerry and Justin gave an update on the \$100K agricultural outreach initiative. Discussion about having an internal budget for the program which would allow allocation of X to Windham for their part in the program, X to Winooski, etc.

**More discussion on reporting and planning:**

Laura suggested that the list of resources concerns (compiled) should be completed prior to a Council meeting that would be held before October 31<sup>st</sup>. This would give NRCC a chance to review and discuss it, and develop an approach to the legislature. Rick asked what NRCC is interested in to put forth programming that isn't a good fit for existing funding sources. Justin discussed the idea of DMs putting programming forth for NRCC to discuss. Laura discussed engaging more board members somehow in this process. Vicky agreed that we need to demonstrate success in water quality programming otherwise regulations will follow.

Laura asked the supervisors what some of the resource concerns were: Linda – invasive species; Paul – manure management, water quality. Mike suggested that reaching small farmers involves face to face technical assistance and Linda suggested that Districts are well received. Larry suggested cover cropping in sensitive areas/floodplains. Linda mentioned ag plastic recycling as a priority. Linda suggested getting in the loop on meetings that farmers are already going to (coop meetings) so we don't create more meetings. Vicky mentioned they have a specialist coming up conducting intense soil quality workshops around the state. Laura challenged NRCC members engage in workgroups to flesh out details for programming around the state. She suggested the next Council meeting be a programmatic discussion. Rick asked how Council can submit a comprehensive budget before October 31 though. Laura mentioned that general funds are still general funds. Rick mentioned a huge interest in the field for tile drains, but treatment is needed, for example. Jill recommended that we build on the existing Ag outreach initiative programming next year since we won't have the opportunity.

**Dates for NRCC meetings:**

Tuesday December 11<sup>th</sup> – 1:00-4:00: Act 138 report, follow up on water quality stakeholder meetings and strategies for planning. 9:00-12:00 that morning is the VACD partner meetings. Berlin

February 5, 2013 or 12<sup>th</sup> - NRCC during legislative session to explain Council to legislature. Review the statute, inception of Districts, and structure. Montpelier

May 14<sup>th</sup> 2013 – 9:30 – 12:30 Initiation of FY2014 agreements. Berlin

Meetings will be held in the smaller UVM Extension conference room

**Other business:**

Jill requested \$500 from Council to support the VACD annual meeting and \$500 to support a district rep attending the NACD meeting. Council members were concerned about spending this money when the money is already established. A budget for DM support was requested to see what expenses will be anticipated for training and support this year. The request was tabled for Finance Committee meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: Rick moved and Larry seconded to adjourn. The motion was approved. 12:50pm