

NY Empire Chapter – Soil and Water Conservation Society

Agenda - Council Conference Call

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

September 19, 2012

1) Welcome

In attendance were: Scott Fitscher, Jessica Sargis, Brad Schwab, Cherie Sage, Heath Eisele, Lisa Miller, Elaine Dalrymple, Aaron Weiss, and Pat Barry.

Administrative

2) Review un-official minutes from August 22, 2012, Council Meeting (L. Miller)

Motion to accept minutes was given by Elaine.

Scott seconded the motion.

It was approved by unanimous consent.

3) Treasurer's Report (L. Miller, J. Sargis, All)

Bus tour spreadsheet was created by Lisa. There was a loss shown. Membership forms were handed out to participants. There was a question of whether we want to move things in the budget to address the loss. The answer was no. Council wanted to show that we needed to budget more for the annual summer meeting in future years.

Motion to accept the treasurer's report was given by Cherie.

Elaine seconded the motion.

It was approved by unanimous consent.

4) Lisa's Invoice (All)

Elaine moved to accept Lisa's invoice.

Pat seconded the motion.

It was approved by unanimous consent.

5) Summer Bus Tour Report (Sub-Committee)

Recap of the discussion was that all seemed to be impressed with the education and the progress of the recovery efforts made to date in Schoharie County after the devastation caused by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. The cost of the stream work repair needed is substantial. It was unprecedented how fast some of the money was able to be allocated from all levels of government. The speakers were great and all participation was good. There were about 20 people in attendance which allowed for great conversation and expertise. In the afternoon 16 students and 3 professors from Guelph University (Canada) joined us for the remainder of the tour.

6) Van-Guard Discussion – Short and Long Term Goals (C. Sage & S. Fitscher)

Cherie and Scott posed the question of what the money in the Van-Guard fund is to be used or ear-marked for. This fund contains money that the Empire Chapter has accumulated over time through publications etc. and was transferred to a fund to gain greater interest and growth. This led to a short discussion posed by Aaron that our

long-term and short-term goals should be in line with our mission statement so that we are promoting our mission by funding the most appropriate projects.

Elaine said that we have a very well worded mission statement that we should look up and recall when making decision.

Cherie believes we need to look at our budget over the last few years. This will give us a better idea of the actual items/projects that we have spent money on and allow us to hone in on what we want to do next more specifically, while considering that we will have some unforeseen expenses occasionally.

Some topics brought up were: we may consider paying our scholarships out of the interest only, or that only a set amount is allowed to be withdrawn from the principle yearly; Cherie pointed out that Aaron had an idea for an actual physical project that our society could do which will be a tangible, visible item for other to view and use for educational purposes. Restoring a wetland by using the expertise we have within the society is an idea; Pat recently attended the Critical Area Seeding Workshop at the NRCS Plant Materials Center. He felt it was very well attended and had a great representation of products. He felt that we should be at these events to get the word out and represent the society, especially since it was geared toward Certified Erosion and Sediment Control Professionals (CESCPs). The standards and specs that our publications have been so instrumental in promoting are all geared toward this.

Aaron said that he and Cherie had been looking into eligibility for grants such as standards and specs related to Green Infrastructure with the Chesapeake Bay foundation. Our rewriting of the Field Notebook, etc. sounds like the type of project that this grant would cover. **ACTION ITEM:** Cherie and Aaron will look into it further.

All of this will be discussed in the future at a meeting specifically geared toward this.

7) NRCS support of SWCS activities and leadership

Heath said that this was discussed briefly in the past. There seems to be a shift in that we have more members in the private sector, whereas in the past membership was predominantly NRCS and SWCDs. Currently in NYS, none of the council's time is to be during NRCS time any longer. **ACTION ITEM:** Heath wants to speak with Bill Boyer to see what has happened historically. Also speak with the state conservationist and see what the train of thought is as to supporting the cause and organization. Cherie also mentioned that her organization has stated that SWCS time shall be on personal time. This will make it more challenging for SWCS leadership to work on society projects/issues.

Programmatic

8) 2013 Envirothon Support Request

A request has been received by Heath for [REDACTED]. We have [REDACTED] ear marked for the 2013 Envirothon, but don't have a budget for 2013 at this time. Jessica moved to table this issue with the thought that we don't want to pay it out until 2013. Cherie

seconded the motion. It will be put on our next budget. **ACTION ITEM:** Heath will call the organization and let them know that we are planning to support it in 2013.

Later in the call, more information was discussed in relation to this:

Lisa said that she can't seem to find that we did send a check for the 2012 Envirothon. If issue was clarified and request was for 2012, Jessica moved that we pay the request from 2012 allocated funds. Elaine seconded the motion. Passed with unanimous support.

9) National Conference Update (C. Sage)

In attending the seminar called *Chapter Leadership 101* it came to Cheri's attention that the Council needs to spend some time getting our records and legal responsibilities in order. One thing that will help is Strategic Planning. Cherie feels it is important to have a meeting of council with Bill Boyer, NE Representative and National Chapter President, to address these issues. **ACTION ITEM:** Heath asked that Cherie send an informal survey to council members to pole strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) facing our organization currently.

10) National Representative for the NE Region

Bill Boyer is looking for representatives. Heath can contact him if anyone is interested. **ACTION ITEM:** Council members should contact Heath if interested – heath.eisele@ny.usda.gov

11) Summer Bus Tour Update (Sub Committee)

This was discussed during the Bus Tour financial report.

12) Publication Update (L. Miller)

Heath has seen the first draft. Lisa said that Don Lake has sent it out for review. Once approved, publishing costs will be discussed. Lisa will meet with Don in the near future to finalize.

13) Publication Copyright Infringement (C. Sage)

Cherie is taking a Stormwater Management class at SUNY ESF which Don Lake had formatted and taught in the past. Two of the required texts are the Stormwater Manual and the Design Manual. The faculty is having the copy center download and print the manuals from the DEC website, and sell them to students at cost, about [REDACTED]. It seems that this should not be legal, since we bear the cost of creating and printing these, and it is our chapter's source of revenue.

ACTION ITEM: Ask Don Lake about this to see if he knows what the rights are to the publications. Lisa will email Don with Cherie's contact information.

14) November Annual Meeting /Logistics Update (H. Eisele, All)

November 14, 2012, directly after AEM meeting Don Lake will present/speak about new, updated Field Note Book. Pete Wright will present new rainfall data. One other speaker we are looking for is an NRCS employee to speak about hydric soils changes-rating based on mapping. Pat said that Steve Sprecher gave a good presentation at the

critical area seeding seminar and tied it into Stormwater. **ACTION ITEM:** Pat will send a request to Steve to see if he is interested in speaking.

Other topics that we may want to include are updates to the Web Soil Survey (WSS) and/or other soil tools geared toward how districts can use these tools more efficiently.

ACTION ITEM: Pre-registration packets need to be prepared. We need to set a target date for this.

Send ideas to Heath about theme, lunch, or other logistics. If we are going to have the council meeting around this time, we need more feedback from council members to see who is available to stay through November 15th.

15) Scholarship Information/Application/Selection Process (Pat B)

ACTION ITEM: Pat is to send out the paperwork to call for applicants. He is looking for more schools. Pat needs to send out info for Paul Smith's college scholarship. Deadline for applications needs to be looked into. Pat said to make it at least two weeks before our annual meeting. Also send to membership list. We need to see if it is posted on the website.

16) Next Council Meeting:

October 17 from 1-3pm is the next meeting. We may need a preplanning meeting for the annual meeting before that.

Cherie made a motion to adjourn.

Pat seconded the motion.

It was unanimously accepted.