



Resource Conservation & Development, Inc.

*Empowering Citizens to Build Strong Communities*

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## BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 13, 2008

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Call to Order:** The March 13, 2008 meeting of the Panhandle RC&D Council was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Secretary/Treasurer Verlin Bruns. Those present at the meeting were: Larry Gibbs, City of Gering Representative; Charles Weston, Box Butte County Representative; Ron Miller, Scottsbluff County Representative; Joe Nunn, Sioux County Representative; Terry McCord, Garden County Representative; Gary Grubbs, Banner County Representative; Bill Patterson, City of Oshkosh Representative; Verlin Bruns, Deuel County Representative; David Ostdiek, North Platte NRD Representative; Steve Brott, Deuel County Representative; President Gary Fisher, Dawes County Representative; Harold Winkelman, Cheyenne County Representative; and Rick Soper, Kimball County Representative.

Staff present were: Ron Moore and Jennifer Rogers.

Guests: Kathy Hruska, USDA Rural Development; Roy Lyles, North Platte NRD; Kay Grote, North Platte NRD/High Plains Weed Management Association; Jeff Schledewitz, High Plains Weed Management Association; and Dennis Beyer, North Platte NRD/High Plains Weed Management Association.

**Agenda:** There were two additions added to the agenda: an additional item under the Bills-to-be-Paid, which was an advertisement for the Friends of the Intertribal Gathering for \$150.00; and an additional Project Proposal from the Village of Big Springs. A motion was made by Joe Nunn to approve the agenda, followed with a second by Bill Patterson. Motion passed.

**Approval minutes:** Terry McCord made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 10, 2008 meeting, with a second by Ron Miller. Motion passed.

**Treasurer's Report:** Verlin Bruns reported that to save time from now on, the Treasurer's Report and Bills-to-be-Paid would be sent out to the council members in advance of the meeting in order for everyone to review the individual items outside of the meeting time. Everyone reported that they had received the March Treasurer's Report. Ron Miller made a motion to approve the March 13, 2008 Treasurer's Report. Charles Weston seconded. Motion passed.

**Approval of Bills:** The March Bills-to-be-Paid includes: Jennifer Rogers, postage reimbursement for \$23.68; Verlin Bruns, Western Conference Expenses Reimbursement, \$78.00; All Communications for Internet Service \$25.00; Ron Klemke, Western Conference Expenses Reimbursement for \$1,390.08; Grant Writing Workshop, \$199.00; Western RC&D Association 2008 Dues, \$200.00; NCIPA FIG Advertisement, \$150.00. Verlin Bruns mentioned that the Nebraska Association of RC&D Councils paid for the remainder of his expenses of \$500.00 for attending the Western Conference. Ron Miller made a motion to approve the bills. Charles Weston seconded. Motion passed.

**Introductions:** Due to the number of guests at the meeting, introductions were made.

**High Plains Weed Management Association Presentation:** Dennis Beyer, Association Treasurer and Jeff Schledewitz, Association President presented a short program regarding the newly-formed organization, the High Plains Weed Management Association. The group includes eight counties in the Nebraska Panhandle, including: Sioux, Morrill, Garden, Banner, Kimball, Cheyenne, and Deuel counties and is charged with the mission of the eradication and management of invasive weeds including Russian Olive, saltcedar, Canada Thistle, musk thistle, and white top. Weed management in the Nebraska Panhandle begun with the Nine Mile Creek Invasive Species project of the North Platte NRD. Dennis Beyer, coordinator of the Nine Mile project,

presented information regarding the success they have had in the areas of invasive species removal. The High Plains Weed Management Association formed last July and August (2007) and began by making contacts with the counties involved. There has been a lot of interest in the project from funding sources, and the group has received grants including funds allocated through LB 701 for \$65,000.00. Through those funds, the organization was able to provide a minimum of \$4,500.00 to each county for their specific removal needs. Their work has included the removal of phragmites, salcedar, and Russian olive along the North Platte River and has been in conjunction with private landowner efforts. The organization has received preliminary awards from the Nebraska Environmental Trust (that has yet to receive final decision) of \$28,000.00 for continued work on the Nine Mile Creek project, \$14,000.00 for an Invasive Species Management Summit to be held in Gering in May; and \$1.8 million over two years for the North Platte River Invasive Species Control project. So far, the group has utilized helicopter sprayings, sheering and spraying, with the helicopter being the most effective so far. The Summit set for May in Gering will bring in nationally-known speakers to discuss the issues associated with invasive species and will be provided for industry leaders and landowners and 400-500 participants are expected to attend. One of the goals of the group is to offer replanting in order to continue to provide habitat for different animal species. The organization will be continuing to apply for funding through the state and federal levels. Ron Moore said he believes the council should set up a subcommittee to look at the details of the arrangement between the two organizations, if the council chooses to make this a project under the RC&D. The Weed Management Association subcommittee will include: Ron Miller, Dave Ostdiek, Mike Market, Gary Grubbs, and Terry McCord.

#### **Program Assistant Report:**

**Credit Card Update:** Jennifer informed the Council that she contacted Nita Gibbs at First State Bank, and it is definitely required to have an individual's social security number attached to the credit card, even for a business. Larry Gibbs moved for Jennifer to proceed with obtaining a debit card through Valley Bank with any available protections they offer. Terry McCord seconded. Motion passed.

**Allo Communications Inquiry:** Jennifer reported that she did contact Allo Communications, the council's internet service provider to see if they offer any sort of discount for paying a year in advance for service. The business does not offer any such discount at this time.

**Five-year Area Plan planning date:** The council's 2009-2014 Area Plan needs to be completed this year, and approximately four hours will be needed to complete the initial planning session. Ron Miller made a motion to set Thursday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. as the date for the planning meeting, and to hold the meeting at the Gering Civic Center and to provide dinner for attendees. Gary Grubbs seconded. Motion passed.

**Project Proposal Form Changes:** President Gary Fisher took over at this time. Jennifer presented an updated Project Proposal form which included changes to the "RC&D Assistance Requested" area. Larry Gibbs made a motion to approve the Project Proposal Form changes, in addition to adding another line titled "Other." Ron Miller seconded. Motion passed.

**Village of Henry Clean-up Day:** Jennifer reported that the Village of Henry will not be in need of any financial assistance through the RC&D to be reimbursed through the Department of Environmental Quality grant, as discussed at the previous meeting. The village decided not to apply for funding this year.

**Newsletter:** Jennifer requested any changes or additions that the council may think would be beneficial to the quarterly newsletter she will be sending out, including guest columns. There are no suggestions at this time.

**Underserved Producers Grant-writing Assistance:** Jennifer mentioned the information included in the council packets regarding a program offered by the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute regarding financial assistance for underserved producers to apply for federal and state grants. More information can be found at [www.michaelfieldsagainst.org](http://www.michaelfieldsagainst.org).

**Western Conference Report:** Verlin Bruns reported on the events that took place during the 2008 Western Association of RC&D Counsels held in Las Cruces, NM. Verlin, Ron Klemke and Ron Moore attended as the Panhandle RC&D representatives. Verlin mentioned that although ensuring funding for the upcoming year has been challenging, representatives in Washington have been getting positive reports. Verlin said that next year's meeting will be held in Spearfish, South Dakota. Also, six of the seven awards at the Western Association

Conference were given out to Nebraska RC&D's, including the Sponsor of the Year award for the Chadron Native American Center for their involvement in the Intertribal Gathering.

**Project Proposals:**

17 Ranch Winery "Blue Creek Blues Festival": Bill Patterson made a motion to accept the Blue Creek Blues Festival as a project under the RC&D. Seconded by Rick Soper. Motion carried.

High Plains Weed Management Association – North Platte River Invasive Species Control: Some of the assistance the organization will be requiring, will be for the to-be-hired Project Coordinator and Field person to share an office with RC&D personnel, to share the support assistant position (have Jennifer work an additional 20 hours strictly for the Weed Management Association), and to obtain their 501(c)(3) status. Larry Gibbs made a motion to approve the High Plains Weed Management Association as a project under the RC&D. Terry McCord seconded. Motion carried. The subcommittee members will meet with members of the HPWMA before next month's meeting in order to determine the details of the arrangement.

Soil Food/Web Health Project: The Northeast RC&D received a preliminary award through the Environmental Trust for the Organic Farming project that Panhandle RC&D voted to be a part of. Through these funds, the local RC&D's will be receiving money for an Organic Farming coordinator, and to hold educational events. No action needed at this time.

PADD Request: Jennifer Rogers presented a contract from the Panhandle Area Development District, in which they requested an agreement between the RC&D and PADD to contract for services from the program assistant. Due to the new arrangement with the HPWMA, it would be very difficult to honor this request at this time. No action taken.

Big Springs Memorial Flag and Pond Project: The Village of Big Springs has requested assistance from the RC&D in locating and applying for funding in order to complete this local project. Larry Gibbs made a motion to accept the Big Springs Memorial Flag and Pond as a project under the RC&D. Terry McCord seconded. Motion carried.

**Diversity Policy and Action Plan:** Jennifer included a sample Diversity Policy and Action Plan she put together in order to meet the requirements under the Outreach/Diversity Grant RC&D was awarded through the NARC&DC. Council members wanted to take some time to read through the policy before taking action. Item tabled until the next meeting.

Verlin Bruns made a motion to adjourn. Larry Gibbs seconded.

With no further business, at 11:45 a.m., President Gary Fisher adjourned the meeting.