

**Becker Soil and Water Conservation District  
Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, July 17, 2013**

The regular meeting of the Becker Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday, July 17, 2013 in the Conference Room of the Ag Center Building located at 809 8th Street SE, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

Those present were Supervisors Tony Beck, Duane Grossman, Kathy Stenger, and Jerome Flottesch. Others present include Becker County Commissioner Barry Nelson, District Administrator Peter Mead, District Administrative Assistant Jen Wentz, District Conservationist Ed Musielewicz and District Technician Ed Clem.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Beck at 8:09 a.m.

**Minutes** – The June regular meeting minutes were presented for approval. Motion (Grossman, Stenger) to accept the June meeting minutes as presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Financial Reports and Bills for Approval** – the financial reports and bills for approval were presented, reviewed, and discussed.

Motion (Flottesch, Grossman) to accept the financial reports and bills for approval as listed. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Reports – District Conservationist Ed Musielewicz reported on the following:**

- July has been busy with survey and dirt work for construction projects
- Basins and buffers have been discussed and most will be installed and completed through November. In addition, there should be 35 acres of buffer strips around Stinking Lake. CRP constructions continue.
- First Wetland Mitigation plan has been approved; BWSR withdrew credits; there is additional paperwork to the landowner and will then be completed
- Staffing issues – the state office has approved a Soil Conservationist in Detroit Lakes and there will be a vacancy out soon. This will be a long-term position for Detroit Lakes. Also, Glen Kajewski will retire August 2, 2013.
- Additional staffing changes – John Voz has taken a position for BWSR and will begin July 30, 2013. He is their new RIM Easement and Working Land Specialist and will work from the Detroit Lakes office housed at the old MN Lottery building. Within the USDA building, Beth Davis from FSA will retire July 31, 2013.
- Becker County will assist with new CRP signups. Peter Mead noted his role in the process to authorize contribution agreements.

Motion (Flottesch, Stenger) to authorize Peter Mead to approve all CRP contribution agreements. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

- Two CSP applications were scored and approved last week. They will need to be obligated by the 20<sup>th</sup> of August. Most recently, Minnesota has been ranked number one in CSP programs.

**Reports – District Technician Ed Clem reported on the following:**

- Last month he was in Brainerd for the 5<sup>th</sup> TMDL meeting in the series. They're getting ready to write the WRAP plan. Many biologists have been involved in this process. Becker County has been seeing natural causes of the BMPs, such as low dissolved oxygen from wetlands and river runoff. A high amount of ground water discharge has been the main cause of all recent impairments throughout Becker County. Ag related concerns are minimal and consist of ground water levels and irrigation permits.
- Up until recently, his well readings have been at their lowest levels; however, now he's seeing a huge increase with the recent rains that we've had. The Straight River Watershed is playing a major role in these results.
- He has finished all 46 landowners that were involved with the Central Sands Plains monitoring network. The samples were tested for nitrates. He collected well information and made GPS notes on all sites.
- WIA program signups have now been completed for a total of 720 acres of grassland used for public hunting purposes. These pieces are walk-in only and can be hunted from September through May. He wrote the agreements and coordinated with the landowners.
- He and Peter have been trained on the annual monitoring of WRP. We received a contribution agreement. Field work has been completed and now the paperwork needs to be processed for the July 19<sup>th</sup> deadline.
- Upcoming CRP plans – he'll work with Ed Musielewicz and Jeff Norby to process these soon and before the construction season starts.
- State Cost-Share has a significant change ahead for 2014. Shelterbelts will no longer be paid through cost-share funds. Shelterbelts will no longer be an eligible practice for state cost share under the pretense that they are intended to address energy conservation, not soil and water quality. While field windbreaks will remain eligible, our tree program will feel the effects of this change.
- He's been very busy with WCA. A landowner in Detroit Township is discussing a culvert install. H-O-L Township is re-routing a ditch near Briard Hog farm. There have been violations near Highland Drive and in Silver Leaf Township surrounding a DNR protected water wetland. Minor issues have also been handled. A replacement plan for Becker County and a public hearing will begin next month in an area south of Shell Lake where access points have been halted and land locks have overtaken. Placing a road will cause a wetland impact. Wetland banking credits will be factored into this project.

**Reports – Peter Mead reported on behalf of District Technician Marsha Watland:**

*County Ag Inspector*

- Her last gravel pit inspection was completed on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June. Yellow and orange hawkweed has been discovered in Becker County.
- Tansy treatment started in June
- Herbicides have been designated
- Leafy spurge beetles continue to thrive in treatment areas
- She has been handling phone calls regarding weed control and treatment care

*Shoreland Specialist*

A Power Point was presented to the Board on the most recent shoreline plantings and concerns.

- Laurie and Sid Olson site was planted on Big Detroit Lake in late June
- She visited the Berg site on Cormorant with a huge slough and tree loss
- She visited the Suby site on Pickerel Lake with a huge slough and tree loss
- Toad Lake shoreland buffer evaluation
- She has been using the new iPad purchased through grant funding for assessing these shoreline issues. It was noted to possibly share this information with Planning & Zoning.
- She attended a Zoning meeting on July 11 regarding permits for shoreline
- On July 12 she visited with Jolly Fisherman Resort for buffer installations
- Floyd Lake Cost-Share applications were presented to the Board for review
- Also noted, 2013 Shoreland Buffers that will be expended through cost-share dollars

**Shoreland Equipment & Fees –**

Trailer needs of the District – Peter has received price quotes from four different locations. He's finding a price range from \$1,800-\$2,800 and should be able to purchase what we need with \$3,000 including tax, title, and license.

Motion (Stenger, Grossman) to move forward with the purchase of the trailer as noted by administration. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Shoreland Fee Schedule – Peter noted that the new shoreland fee schedule will not apply to cost share projects, only mitigation and non-cost share projects. Administrative and Technical costs on cost-shared projects will be captured from grant funds as normal.

**Plat Book Sales –**

- Sales have declined; we still have 150 copies in stock that are 3 years old
- We may need to discuss moving these remaining copies quickly
- We also need to discuss plans for the future. The plat book is a useful tool even with the new GIS system tied into the Becker County website. In the past, contracts have run 3-4 years and when the contract renews, the old books are taken back by the publisher.
- Rockford Publishing has been used in the past as well as Cloud. There has also been a third company that would like to bid on the project.
- Incorporating public lands and access to trails in a new plat book would be beneficial. Also, noting surrounding lakeshore information and possibly adding coupons might make it more appealing to the public.
- Peter will complete research on publishers and talk about incorporating the additional features as discussed. In addition, some key points should be discussed with Tony Brahma, Becker County IT.
- WIA sites should be included in the plat book or just on the County website

**Farm Bill Assistance –**

The District has been approved to receive these funds. This will possibly add a Farm Bill Biologist or wash those funds into our existing staff while adding duties relating to the grant. Peter discussed eligible duties allowable by grant funds, including marketing conservation

programs for grassland, wetlands, water quality and wildlife habitat (CRP, CCRP, WRP, WHIP, Clean Water Legacy projects, etc.), landowner guidance for non-farm bill programs, and conservation plans for any of these programs. Non-eligible duties include tree planting/matting, non-wetland/grassland CCRP practices, most EQIP practices, CSP applications, and construction management of engineered practices.

The funds are for one year; however, BWSR has been known to provide additional funding year after year to hold a position such as this in the office.

Adding a Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist position to the office is an option and can be directly funded with the Farm Bill assistance funds, with Pheasants Forever handling the hiring and administrative duties associated with the new hire. Peter noted that if we take this route, we are still able to add another soil technician to our staff. The only clear drawbacks are limited input to the hiring process and space needs may become a concern.

Motion (Flottemesch, Stenger) to authorize administration to move forward with the Farm Bill assistance grant agreement and Farm Bill Biologist position . Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

#### **2014 Budget –**

The proposal for 2014 was presented to all Board members and compared to current figures for 2013. Salary increase proposals were noted and discussed.

- The Capital Outlay increase is due to the upcoming trailer purchase and purchasing back the office furniture when John Voz moves out
- Plat Book Sales were decreased as well as Tree Sales with impending cost-share changes effective in 2014
- The Conservation Tour is a new expense for the 2014 Budget proposal. Other options on this same idea were discussed as well.
- Discussion of employee salaries and health insurance benefits. Those in attendance were pleased with the numbers.

Motion (Flottemesch , Grossman) to accept the salary proposals for 2014 as presented by the administration. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Motion (Flottemesch, Stenger) to approve the 2014 Budget as discussed and presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

#### **Cost-Share & Clean Water Legacy Contracts –**

*The following Clean Water Legacy cost-share contracts were presented for consideration:*  
CWL contract #CWL-4-2013—Tom Bergren. Installation of 2 Water and Sediment Control Basins and Buffers in Cuba Township. Estimated cost \$22,387.25. This project will receive AWEP funding of \$13,138.89. Eligible CWL funding to be applied to the project is \$9,248.36. Two additional Water and Sediment Control Basins were covered under a previous application of 2012 CWL funds in the amount of \$4,357.50.

CWL contract #CWL-5-2013—Chris Erickson. Installation of 13 Water and Sediment Control Basins and Buffers in Cuba Township. Estimated cost \$61,871.10. This project will receive EQIP funding of \$54,348.33. Eligible CWL funding to be applied to the project is \$7,522.77.

Motion (Grossman, Stenger) to approve the two new CWL contracts as presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

*The following Clean Water Legacy and Native Prairie Buffer cost-share contracts were presented for payment authorization:*

CWL contract #CWL-1-2013—Kevin Lunde. Water and Sediment Control Basins were installed. Total project cost \$30,211.16. This project will receive EQIP funds of \$16,822.44. Eligible CWL payment \$10,367.60.

Native Buffer C-S contract #NB-10-5—Richard Hecock. Completed prescribed burn. Total cost of project \$1,320. Eligible cost-share payment \$990.

Motion (Flottemesch, Stenger) to authorize payment of the above contracts for the amount presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Other –**

SWCD Governance Training 101 to be held in Alexandria, MN on September 4-5, 2013. The Board was invited to attend. Mead and Wentz will be the only attendees from Becker SWCD.

Conservation Cooperator or Conservationist of the Year needs to be decided before August 20<sup>th</sup>. Ed Musielewicz mentioned his pick for this year. Tony Beck offered a choice as well.

Motion (Flottemesch, Stenger) to appoint the first choice candidate as discussed by the Board and others in attendance. That person will be made known after their acceptance is confirmed. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Being no further business, Motion (Grossman, Stenger) to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 a.m. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Approved: Don Lefebvre, Becker SWCD Secretary**

**Date: August 21, 2013**