

Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Council

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

Meeting Minutes VT Snow Travelers Association Conference Room 4 August 2005

Attendants: Bob Drachman, Christen Kaiser, Babe Pomainville, Marli Rupe, Ed Lewis, Judy Howland, Abby Willard, Phil Benedict, Rick Hopkins, George Miller, Karen Schneider, Jon Anderson, Dave Hoyt.

The meeting opened at 9:39 by Chair Ed Lewis.

The minutes of the June 2, 2005 meeting were reviewed. There were a number of small typos. Also Rick Hopkins corrected the classification of waters from A2 to 2B.

A motion was made to accept the minutes, as corrected, by Babe Pomainville and seconded by Phil Benedict. The motion passed.

The Council discussed the allocation of District base grants for FY 05. There was discussion about the budget submitted. The budget did not show additional support from AAF&M or NRCS for the LTP's or ARS positions. The Executive Secretary wanted to show the council only the funds that they had direct control over and it did not represent all funds supporting Districts.

The Council discussed District needs and events over the next year. The Council agreed to continue to support the Envirothon and District Manager training. The upcoming strategic planning meeting with Ray Ledgerwood and the need to have District supervisors attend was discussed. The Council agreed that this was an event that it should sponsor. The Council agreed to support each District up to \$250 to attend the meeting. The need of continued support for technology infrastructure was discussed. The greatest need right now is for those four Districts that are not in USDA service centers. The following allocation of District grants was developed.

Base Grants (\$8,500 per District)	119,000
Envirothon	1,000
District Employees Training & Support	7,000
Technology infrastructure	2,500
Ray Ledgerwood meeting (\$250 per District)	3,500
TOTAL	133,000
Unallocated	4,991

A motion was made by Babe Pomainville and seconded by Judy Howland to approve the above budget for FY 06. The motion passed.

New Funding Opportunities:

RFP for Basin Planning – there is \$100,000 allocated in the state budget for development of the ag section of the 7 basin plans underway at this time or about to begin (Lake Champlain Direct, Mississquoi, Otter Creek including Little Otter and Lewis Creek, Stevens/Wells/Waits/Ompompanoosuc, Winooski, West/Williams/Saxton, Battenkill/Walloomsuc/Hoosic). As you recall, the ARS positions used to do this, but this task was cut back when the positions were decreased. A draft RFP is available through Jon or myself – final version is expected to be posted on the Ag website in mid/late August, with a 45 day period for application. Ag will prioritize funding one vendor vs. multiple vendors.

River Corridors Grant Program – Rick Hopkins of ANR reminded Council of this funding availability. The Category 1 grants were due Aug 1, however, Category 2 and 3 (project development and implementation) are due Sept 1 and Oct 1 respectively.

Some concerns were expressed such as the fact that this is a very large workload for \$100K (this is expected to be up to a 2 year project). The person doing the work is expected to do the Ag section plus attend basin-planning meetings in each location, so travel will also be huge. Question was asked about the timing since basin plans tend to take more than 2 years to complete – Phil said some details still need to be worked out before the final RFP is released. The applicant should obviously apply to complete a workload they feel they can handle with manageable deliverables.

The need for oversight and coordination of the Land Treatment Planners was discussed. The need for both coordination of hours spent related to grant requirement and technical needs and requirements were discussed. The council offered to facilitate a meeting among those directly involved to discuss these needs. This meeting should include Mike Domingue, Ed Lewis, Dave Hoyt, Jim Wood, Abbey Willard, Jon Anderson, Pam Stefanek, Kerry Gemmett, Renae Masse, and the LTA's. The Executive Secretary will organize this.

The Schedule for the “official Public hearings” on the changes to the AAP's and the new Medium Farm Operation program were announced. They are:

September 27 in Swanton
September 28 in Rutland
October 5 in Montpelier

Rick Hopkins reported that DEC has two (2) watershed planner positions open in Waterbury and Springfield. The Whiter River classification is currently being reviewed by Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (LCAR).

Karen Schneider reported that UVM extension is starting a new 5 year planning cycle. She expects that water quality and agriculture will be high priorities. They are also looking into having the planning cycle reduced to 3 years to increase the ability to implement the program and keep current.

Dave Hoyt gave the NRCS report. They are assuming that they will be level funded for FY 06. They hope to allocate program funds early in the fiscal year so that all funds can be allocated. There were 11 Conservation Security Program (CSP) applicants. They will officially announce the new CSP watersheds soon.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35. The next meeting will be on Thursday October 6, 2005.

Respectfully submitted.

Jon W. Anderson