

SNHRC&D

SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE
RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AREA

Cheshire Hillsborough Merrimack Rockingham Strafford Sullivan

*Meeting of the Board of Directors
April 24, 2009
The Concord Center, Concord, NH*

*Board Members Present: Webb Palmer, Chairman; Bob Spoerl, Vice
Chairman; Jim Moore, Secretary;
Board Members Absent: Bud Winsor, Win Robinson, Kerrie Diers*

NHRC&D Staff Present: Ann Bowes, Administrative Assistant

*Guests: Julia Steed Mawson, UNH Cooperative Extension
Per Garp, Small Farmer, Loudon*

Chairman Webb Palmer called the meeting to order at 12:35 and introduced the guests and board members. The minutes for the last meeting of March 20th were submitted by the Secretary and approved by the Board. The budget report was postponed until the next meeting due to the excused absence of Bud Winsor.

The Cooperative agreement between the NH RC&D Councils and the NRCS was discussed, particularly as it pertains to the expansion of Ann Bowes duties in the grant to reprint the NH Rural Fire Resource Quick Guide.

Bob Spoerl moved and Jim Moore seconded a motion to authorize the acceptance of the Cooperative agreement, and the motion was carried.

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Julia Steed Mawson gave an update on the progress of the Community Gardens Coalition. Interest appears to be growing. The Community Gardens concept is a broad one which includes the traditional community garden as well as youth gardens and neighbors sharing garden space. An analysis of the attendance at meetings is needed to determine whether all the state residents are being reached. This is obviously a new demand on funding and people for the logistical work. Another concern is the potential liability of the land owners who allow the public use of their land. Bob Spoerl suggested a possible solution could be a legislative act to add an exemption to the state's "Duty of Care" statute specifically for Community Gardens similar to the current exemption for recreational purposes, such as hunting, hiking, etc. Julia had questions regarding the New Project Request Form and the Board to clarify and advise what kind of help the RC&D is permitted to perform for the Community Gardens organization. Bob stated that he felt an important limitation was with respect to any action of a lobbying nature with the legislature. Jim Moore reiterated this, as a threat to our tax status.

Julia asked about the Conservation Innovation Grant, since she is interested in applying for a grant for the Massabesic permaculture based garden to be developed as a model for other gardens. Per Garp suggested talking to Mike Lynch at NRCS about potential water issues and grants.

Julia also stated the need for a plan to avoid duplication of efforts among the various parties in the coalition, need for networking, and ensuring that the coalition has a public voice and public forum.

Per Garp stated a need for small farmers to help in business planning. He is looking for grants to help individual farmers with business plan training and "value added" grants. He knows several interested farmers, but says it is easy to get such grants in Vermont but difficult in New Hampshire. Value-grants in New Hampshire are administered by Steve Epstein, USDA. Per also spoke of his interest in forming some kind of a farmers retail collective.

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Hollie submitted a request from NCRC&D asking if SNHRC&D could find a judge for this year's New England Awards Program. Any suggestion can be e-mailed to Hollie. There was no other new business so the next meeting was scheduled for May 15, 2009 at 12-2 PM - brown bag lunch.

Chairman Palmer adjourned the meeting at 2:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Secretary, SNHRC&D