



MINUTES
Shenandoah RC&D Council
Board of Supervisors Room – Harrisonburg, Virginia
January 12, 2009
10:00 a.m.

Council Members Present:	Jim Nichols, HSWCD Jill Keihn., NSVRC John Eckman, VCC Esteban Nieto, At-Large	Carl Luebben, FB Joan Comanor, LFSWCD Linda Campbell, SVSWCD	Jim Lawrence, LFSWCD Jeff Rinker, SVPure H20 Bill Latham, SVSWCD
Members Absent:	Rick Shiflet, HSWCD Maria Papadakis, At-Large	Bonnie Riedesel, CSPDC	
Associate Members Present:	Chris Anderson, Page Co.		
Staff Present:	Kathy Holm, NRCS/SRC&D Lorraine Cormier, NRCS/SRC&D	Becky Barlow, Marketer – Organic Resources	
Others Present:	Chris Price, NSVRC Bobby Clark, VCE	David Richert, RC&D Forester DuBose Egleston, Citizen (W'boro)	Cory Guilliams, NRCS Mark Hollberg, DCR

The meeting was **called to order** by Vice Chairman John Eckman, since Chairman Jim Lawrence was running late. **A quorum was declared** with 10 voting members in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The **minutes** of the November 10, 2008 were distributed. A motion to approve was made by Joan Comanor and seconded by Jim Nichols. The minutes were unanimously approved.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The treasurer’s report was distributed to Council. Jim Nichols stated that the treasurer’s report is accepted as read and will be filed for audit. It was seconded by Linda Campbell.

The following reflects activity in the Shenandoah RC&D checking accounts:

SunTrust Operating/Administrative Account:

October 2008

Opening Balance:	\$20,271.64
Checks Cleared:	\$(4,661.44)
Deposits Cleared:	\$2,563.38
Balance in Checkbook:	\$18,173.58 (matches statement)
Checks Not Cleared:	\$(48.88)
Deposits Not Cleared:	\$0
New Checks:	\$0
New Deposits:	\$0
Ending Balance:	\$18,124.70

November 2008

Opening Balance:	\$18,173.58
Checks Cleared:	\$(771.10)
Deposits Cleared:	\$.59
Balance in Checkbook:	\$17,403.07 (matches statement)
Checks Not Cleared:	\$1,000.00
Deposits Not Cleared:	\$0
New Checks:	\$(1,850.00)
New Deposits:	\$0
Ending Balance:	\$14,553.07

SunTrust Projects Account:*October 2008*

Opening Balance:	\$70,310.64
Checks Cleared:	\$36,084.84
Deposits Cleared:	\$(9,841.26)
Balance in Checkbook:	\$44,067.06 (matches statement)
Checks Not Cleared:	\$(3,078.95)
Deposits Not Cleared:	\$0
New Checks:	\$0
New Deposits:	\$0
Ending Balance:	\$40,988.11

November 2008

Opening Balance:	\$44,067.06
Checks Cleared:	\$(16,476.41)
Deposits Cleared:	\$14,088.74
Balance in Checkbook:	\$41,679.39 (matches statement)
Checks Not Cleared:	\$(2,733.69)
Deposits Not Cleared:	\$
New Checks:	\$(9,900.00)
New Deposits:	\$93.13
Ending Balance:	\$29,138.83

DuPont Community Credit Union - Projects Account*October 2008*

Opening Balance:	\$70,034.90
Dividends	\$154.65
Balance in Checkbook:	\$70,189.55 (matches statement)

November 2008

Opening Balance:	\$70,189.55
Dividends	\$149.99
Balance in Checkbook:	\$70,339.54 (matches statement)

DuPont Community Credit Union - Administrative Account*October 2008*

Opening Balance:	\$25.00
Dividends	\$0
Balance in Checkbook:	\$25.00 (matches statement)

November 2008

Opening Balance:	\$25.00
Dividends	\$0
Balance in Checkbook:	\$25.00 (matches statement)

SunTrust Investments*13-month CD (3.68%)*

Opening Balance:\$	5,000.00
Earned Interest:	\$0.00
Ending Balance: \$	5,000.00

25-month CD (3.92%)

Opening Balance:\$	5,000.00
Earned Interest:	\$0.00
Ending Balance: \$	5,000.00

The bank statements for both accounts for the months of October and November were reconciled with the checkbook. Details of the above financial activities are on the reconciliations, which were distributed. If there are specific questions concerning this activity, you may view statements, reconciliations, and original receipts which are kept in the RC&D office.

GUEST PRESENTATION

Mark Hollberg, DCR

Issues Related to Natural Resources and the Budget

Review of State Budget Cuts' Effect on SWCD
FY09 – FY10

A look back at total state operational grant funding:

High point in FY01 @ \$4,395,000 (“essential funding” = \$78,000)

FY07 @ \$4,052,240 (“essential funding” = \$78,000)

FY08 @ \$4,313,210 (padded with addition of \$258,970 thus increasing “essential funding” to \$83,510)

START FY09 with \$3,943,947.50 (“essential funding” = \$75,650; lost padding plus some for total redxn of \$369,420)

Oct 08 reductions within FY09:

5.1% or \$203,696.75 applied uniformly to all 47 SWCDs

Governor's Dec budget proposes no further cuts in op grants within FY09, but a repeat of the \$203,696.75 cut to start FY10.

Therefore FINISH FY09 with \$3,740,093.25

START FY10 with \$3,536,396.50 – proposed – distribution of cuts to be decided by VSWCB per their policy.

Further notes on Oct 2008 cuts:

Eliminate \$866,000 of General Fund support for major dam repair – handle within \$20 million bond fund.

Continue \$2,000/dam for maintenance

Retain \$200,000 for minor repairs

CREP reduced \$685,473

\$2,000,000 for “special agBMP staffing” reduced to \$1,800,000. This is proposed to continue in FY10.

DCR's overall budget cut is about 12.5% or \$5 million

Governor proposes to keep agBMP cost-share @ \$20 million and increase the percentage available for technical assistance from 5% to 8% - increase of \$600,000. This could offset some losses, 407K from op grants and 200K from “special agBMP staffing.” \$10 mill from reserve fund and interest (should be okay); \$10 mill from Gen. Fund (could be a battle).

Caveat: Governor proposes, General Assembly disposes! A lot can change.

Prepared for Shenandoah RC&D, 1/12/09

Extract from my Jan 2009 cdc report to my Area 1 districts:

State Budget update:

All districts should be well aware of the Governor's budget proposal released December 17. It looks as though district operating grants will be cut another 5% starting July 1. At its January meeting the state board will presumably decide in what manner the reductions will be enacted. The board has established policies to deal with cuts during the fiscal year and cuts known in advance of a new fiscal year.

"Special agBMP staff" funding is proposed to be cut in FY10 by the same amount cut in FY09. So the \$2,000,000 will again be reduced to \$1,800,000.

Remarkably, the Governor has proposed that \$20,000,000 be made available for agBMP cost-share with an increase in the percent allowable for technical assistance from 5% to 8%. This is the equivalent of a \$600,000 potential increase in district funding.

Routine dam maintenance is proposed to remain at \$2,000/dam. Major repairs and rehab money will come from "existing funds" and a Virginia Public Building Authority bond fund thus reducing \$866,000 from the state's general fund.

All in all, it may be fair to say that districts are fortunate thus far. A major caveat is that the Governor's proposals will be debated in the General Assembly, so don't count your eggs until they hatch! Please stay tuned to updates and to the VASWCD legislative efforts. VASWCD hopes directors will come out in force January 19 for their annual outreach to state legislators.

Mark stated that there are two new livestock exclusion practices that will be made available to the local SWCDs. They will offer cost share assistance with a twist. A tweak to the SL6 – 50% cost share if the fence is 10 ft. from stream; 85% cost share if it is 35 ft. or greater from stream. "Buffer" and "livestock exclusion strip" are two different things. Hopefully this will attract more landowners. He stated that what the RC&D did with exclusion helped DCR make a decision to do more with cost share. Joan stated that the Waste Solutions Forum has shown great support for livestock exclusion. Cory stated that the fencing has to be made to certain standards and that there will be spot checking on an annual basis or at least every two years. Jim Lawrence asked about cost share on watering of livestock. Mark stated that watering is included in the cost share program.

COUNCIL OPERATIONS

Agua Fund and Other Grants Status

Kathy Holm updated the Council on the status of the Agua Fund grants. Kathy stated that the Agua Fund 07-08 has not been totally spent out. There are a few projects that have been committed, but not spent. The balance of uncommitted funds is \$6,920; \$32,676.39 was committed to projects over the years but has not been spent. Council needs to keep uncommitted funds in mind when considering the projects on the agenda today. Kathy stated that maybe Council could also talk to folks who the RC&D has committed money to and see where they are in terms of project status. Are they moving forward with these projects? Or could they receive funds at a later date, if available, while the RC&D uses the money for projects that are ready now? Jim Lawrence concurred with this. Agua Fund 08-09 for \$55,000 has been conceptually approved. However, Agua Fund may not be able to send a check until the end of the calendar year, if then. They may send \$5,000 of the \$55,000 for administrative/operating expenses sooner. This money may also be used for projects if Council deems it necessary. Kathy also stated that there are reserves in the administrative funds. Joan Comanor pointed out that the reserves might be critical if the Federal support for RC&D changes. Jim Lawrence stated that maybe projects could be partially funded by RC&D and a match could come from other sources. Jim Lawrence asked about the Firewise money. Council decided to put the balance of that money after it was used on forestry project in the administrative account. David Richert stated that they have a current Firewise grant, funds could be used in the Shenandoah area with a similar arrangement to the last grant. He stated that Council needs to keep their eyes open for Firewise possibilities in the Shenandoah RC&D area to let him know. Jim thanked David for his past support of this project. Jim also stated that an Executive Committee meeting will be scheduled in the next month to discuss this further. He said that status reporting on the projects needs to be kept up with more. Council needs to know what is going on with current projects. He suggested status/updates be posted on the website.

Project updates/status changes**Enhancing Large Animal Mortality Disposal in the Shenandoah Valley**

Bobby Clark reported on this project. This is a project for an on-farm disposal and composting of large animals. Some landfills will not be accepting large animals after January 1, 2009. At the November 10, 2008 meeting, VCE requested \$11,829 from the RC&D. There was much discussion about who would benefit and who should be involved in supporting the project, such as the dairy and livestock producer organizations, etc. As a result, Joan suggested funding this project at \$5,000. Council approved funding the education/outreach portion only for \$5,000. This money would be given only after the other parts of the project have been completed and other funders come on board. The funding will come from Agua Fund 07-08. Bobby stated that this project has moved forward quickly and they would like to request the money to be used for the project now because he has started doing some composting demonstrations and has started dealing with the bones. He has commitments of approximately \$1,500 - \$2,000 as a match. He also has applied for a federal grant. He will know in March whether the grant is approved or not, however it only will cover costs incurred beginning next fall. He will let the RC&D know if he gets the grant. Jim Lawrence stated that Bobby could use \$2,000 now for demonstrations and meetings. A motion was made by John Eckman for \$2,000 to be used for the project now. It was seconded by Linda Campbell; and unanimously approved.

Waynesboro Farmers Market – I

Jim Nichols reported on this. A final report was distributed including a financial report. The Waynesboro Farmers Market (WFM) received a grant from Shenandoah RC&D in September 2007 for the purpose of employing a market manager and doing background and educational work for the development of a business plan for the 2008 season. The mission of this market was to support sustainable agriculture and to provide a weekly event for downtown Waynesboro. These goals were achieved with the 2008 market. The committee hoped that the market would be self-sustaining by the end of the 2008 season. However, based on the small amount of money generated in the first season, the market is not yet in that position. Therefore, the committee is requesting a grant from Shenandoah RC&D for the 2009 season. The research done prior to opening the 2008 market indicated that the WFM's experience was similar to other markets in our area. Most are not self-sustaining after only one season. The committee does not anticipate the necessity of a future grant after 2009, as we will evaluate continuing the market beyond the 2009 season based on sustainability. A motion was made by Joan Comanor to declare this project complete. It was seconded by John Eckman; and unanimously approved.

Growing Power – I

Esteban Nieto reported on this project. A final report was distributed including a financial report. It stated the following: Through New Community Project's Urban Sustainable Living Homestead we formed a non-profit organic market garden named Muddy Bike Urban Garden Project. This program grew organic local produce transported by bicycle power and trained and part-time employed five people (two women and three men) who are from a homeless/in transition situation. Six other homeless/in transition people were employed during the peak garden season. These garden workers gained horticultural skills, job reference, marketing techniques, a small income, and greatly benefited mentally from meaningful healing work in a calm natural setting. One of the garden workers saved money from her garden work that contributed to her ability to get off the streets and into a small apartment with her husband. During this first phase of the program we had a stream of community volunteers who learned about our program and joined in our work to garden, learn, build friendships, and accompany our garden workers. We averaged three community volunteers two days per week from April to September. We hosted several large service learning groups including Bridgewater College, Montezuma Church of the Brethren Youth Group, and a weekly middle school class of Eastern Mennonite School. The production of our produce was sold at the Harrisonburg Farmers Market and the Blue Nile Ethiopian restaurant.

The second component of the program was the development of a community garden in one of Harrisonburg's poorest neighborhoods, a trailer court off Liberty Street. This program is named 'Growing Power!' We initiated gardens for families in the trailer court who previously had nowhere to garden. Given the origin of this neighborhood from agricultural backgrounds in Central America, this was a welcome program. Each family from the trailer court had two garden beds 4' x 30'. Tomatoes, squash, beets, radishes, chilies, corn, cilantro, and beans were grown and harvested. An estimated \$500 was saved on grocery bills for the season for each family. Both children and adults participated in the gardens. We also incorporated a service-learning program for Eastern Mennonite School (EMS). Each Tuesday a group of 7th graders from EMS worked in the gardens with the community to learn and help.

Additional funds were raised through the REAP Fund, and sales at the farmers market and local restaurant used to support workers. In addition to grant money to run our two programs, community volunteers and assistance from men on probation through the court system greatly supported our work. It was estimated that the value of volunteer labor for both programs at \$9,500.

With increase in soil fertility, production and marketing, the Muddy Bike Urban Garden program that supports homeless men and women, projects to be financially self-sufficient after the second garden season. A motion was made by Joan Comanor to declare this project complete. It was seconded by John Eckman; and unanimously approved.

Carbon Trading

This was reported on by Bobby Clark. A report was distributed. A meeting was held in February 2008. An article about this meeting was published in the Mid Atlantic Country Folks Farm Chronicle. Certified foresters who attended the meeting (about 10) received Society of American Foresters CFE credits. In addition a list of attendees who were interested in receiving more information about Carbon Trading was developed.

Following this meeting discussions were held with 10 farmers who attended. The consensus of farmers in the Northern Shenandoah Valley is that the potential revenue available from carbon trading is not high enough to warrant participating in the program. In fact even the highest values provided were not high enough for most farmers.

There is interest from some rural landowners related to forestry practices. Subsequent to this meeting Extension has met with approximately 20 rural landowners to provide them with information about carbon trading.

Presently there is no interest from the farming community in pursuing carbon credits. There continues to be activity in the forestry sector.

A motion was made by Joan Comanor to declare this project complete. It was seconded by Jim Nichols; and unanimously approved.

Crossing Creeks

This project was reported on by Kathy Holm. A report was distributed. It stated the following:

We have converted the majority of our layers to a pastured/day-range model. We currently have two portable coops with intentions of building a third specifically for broilers. Renovations were made to a donated portable coop, a second was built new, and we intend to build a third this spring specifically for broilers. Electro-net fencing and a battery energizer with solar charger were purchased which allows for further flexibility for poultry. As a result of our expanded operations, we are currently harvesting eggs for all of our facility's needs and have been making a small amount of income through additional egg sales. Approximately \$1000 of Shenandoah RC&D funds were expended for the poultry aspect of this project, \$210 in donations were received, and 24 hours of in-kind time valued at \$432 were contributed.

The second major component of this project was to expand our farming operations to include small livestock. Renovations were made to a poultry shed to allow for housing for goats. Additionally, we built fence, and purchased electric netting to allow flexibility and rotational grazing in pasturing goats. Volunteers, staff and residents provided almost 100 hours of labor in salvaging and reusing woven wire fencing, building fence and renovating the poultry shed. Approximately \$435 of Shenandoah RC&D funds were expended for this aspect of the project, four meat goats valued at \$300 were donated, and 92 hours of in-kind time valued at \$1656 were contributed.

Shenandoah RC&D funds have also provided for professional development and educational resources. I was able to attend both the SSAWG conference and VABF conference where I benefited from networking with other local farmers, making some local community connections and learning some new techniques and project possibilities in sustainable agriculture. Additionally, books were purchased as a reference for these projects and in researching other potential income-generating projects based on farm production. Approximately \$290 in Shenandoah RC&D funds were expended for professional development and educational resources.

Kathy stated that the project was a success in terms of meeting their goals and objectives, however Crossing Creeks went out of business due to economic issues. A motion was made by Linda Campbell to declare this project complete. It was seconded by John Eckman; and unanimously approved.

Forestry Mini Grants

Joan Comanor reported on this project. She stated that five mini-grants of \$500 each were awarded to five different projects. They were awarded to: The City of Winchester, two were awarded to the Town of Woodstock, Harrisonburg Memonite Church (HMC), and the City of Harrisonburg. In every case more money was leveraged than was awarded. The goal was to heighten the awareness of urban forestry resources. This was a first partnership with HMC. There has been some interest for more projects like this. However, Joan stated that this may not be a high priority of projects for now. She stated that this was a successful project. A motion was made by Joan Comanor to declare this project complete. It was seconded by John Eckman; and unanimously approved. (Afterwards, she provided the following information for the record: the RC&D provided \$2433.36 for these projects, which was matched by \$4898.51).

New Projects

Waynesboro Farmers Market – II

The goal of the Market is to continue providing a market for sustainable agriculture, provide a weekly event for downtown Waynesboro, and to bring the Market to self-sustainability. The project objectives are to broaden educational information during the off-season to create awareness for the Market before it opens as well as continuing to advertise it. The specific activities to be undertaken are to distribute fliers and brochures about the Market. Accept interviews with newspapers on the value of a local market. Advertise the Market as a weekly event in downtown Waynesboro in local newspapers, radio, and on websites. Collect email addresses and send out an e-blast before the Market starts and each week thereafter. They will also request sponsorship from local businesses. The Sustainable Agriculture Committee recommended approving the project. Jim Nichols is requesting \$4,500. A motion was made by John Eckman to consider and discuss. It was seconded by Linda Campbell. Jim stated that more emphasis will be put into educating the public about the market and local foods. Jim stated that if the RC&D gave them \$2,000, they could work with that. After consideration and discussion, including budget constraints, a motion was made by John Eckman to amend funding for this project at \$2,000. It was seconded by Carl Luebben; and unanimously approved. Council agreed that they are welcome to come back with another funding request during the year.

Growing Power – II

Esteban Nieto reported on this. This project has two components: 1) non-profit organic garden provides food and work for homeless people; 2) development of a community garden in trailer parks. They are asking for funding to continue with this project for 2009. They are also asking local restaurants to use the food they grow. They may also sell at farmers' markets. They are requesting \$5,000. A motion was made by Linda Campbell to consider and discuss this project. It was seconded by Joan Comanor; and unanimously approved. Linda Campbell and Chris Anderson recommended that they ask for seed donations from local business and national seed companies. John stated that this is a good project and it meets our goals and objectives for our Community Development Committee. They are receiving garden tools from local churches. After consideration and discussion, including budget constraints, a motion was made by Linda Campbell to amend funding for this project at \$3,500. It was seconded by Joan Comanor; and unanimously approved. Council agreed that they are welcome to come back with another funding request during the year.

Updates/Additional Business

Shenandoah RC&D Earth Team Volunteer Award

Kathy reported on this and passed around the award for all in attendance to see. The Earth Team Volunteer Award was presented to Shenandoah RC&D by NRCS at the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District meeting in Roanoke. It is very important to report Earth Team volunteer hours when requested.

VARC&DC Awards Nominations

Council decided to submit for Council of the Year and Assistant of the Year. These have been submitted.

NARC&DC Leadership Forum

This will be held February 9 -10, 2009. Joan Comanor, Jim Lawrence, and Chris Anderson will attend. They plan to see Virginia Representatives Wolfe, Goodlatte, and Cantor. They may be able to see Senators Webb and Warner also.

Transfer of Development Rights Workshops

This was presented by Jim Lawrence. RC&D may partner with NSVRC. There is a need for TDR workshops in the area. There is a lack of knowledge about these. This will be brought back to Council at a later date because of budget issues. The Land Protection Committee will consider and bring back to Council.

Chris Price presented what he has in mind for TDRs. He stated that there is a lot of interest in rural areas in the counties of Frederick and others. They don't know how to go about doing it. There is a great need for education and outreach on the front end and then on the back end practical tools. He said that you cannot have "one size fits all" workshops. You have to have different messages for different people. County and City Government officials and their staff and Farmers/Landowners have very different needs. There are also appraisers, real estate assessors, and attorneys that deal with the easement issues. Three different workshops are needed. Then if there is interest they would develop model ordinances that are consistent with best planning practices for Virginia. The local elected officials in the Northern Shenandoah Valley have put TDRs on the highest priority for this coming year. They are pursuing General Assembly legislation right now. He feels like it is a big win for all if RC&D would get involved.

Jim Lawrence stated that the recommendation will go to the Land Protection Committee including any other Council members who would like to participate. They are requesting \$5,000 for bringing in experts on TDRs, meeting materials, and handouts. If the Land Protection Committee recommends, the Executive Committee will be polled. If a majority gives their approval, it will be approved. Jim stated that he will check with VDOF for a grant. John will also check with NFWF.

Chris stated that he is going to withdraw the request because of budget and time constraints.

John stated that this should come back at another time with this request Frederick County. The Land Protection Committee will meet about this.

An Alternative Approach to Addressing Sustainable Ag

Joan Comanor reported on this project. There was a follow-up meeting in November. Rockbridge, Page, Augusta, Shenandoah, and Warren attended. Some farmers attended also. There is interest in a regional approach. Shenandoah supervisors unanimously approved a resolution to commit to a regional approach. Page and Rockbridge may do the same this month. Rockingham has stated that they are not interested. She has made contact with Frederick County. The next follow-up meeting will be in February. A minimum of three counties need to be on board in order for this to go forward. She will keep Council posted. John stated that maybe the cities of Waynesboro, Staunton, and Harrisonburg may be interested.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Coordinator's Report was distributed.

COUNCIL INFORMATION**WSF-II**

A report was distributed.

Energy Audit Workshop

An On-Farm Energy Audit Application Form was distributed. These need to be returned to Kathy as soon as possible. Maria will decide who will get the 12 free energy audits. The audits will be done in February or March. Maria will analyze the information and generate a report.

Announcements

John Eckman

Easement and Ag Forrestral District Workshop in Page Co.

Stanley - 1/22/09

Luray - 1/25/09

John will email fliers. Postcards were sent to landowners.

Jim Lawrence
DCR Watershed Protection/Great Valley Stormwater Alliance
Stormwater Charrette - Feb. 5, 2009
LFCC
An announcement will be sent out soon.

Linda Campbell
Khimaira now has compostable disposable products for their green weddings. These are made from corn.

John Eckman
1/19/09
General Assembly Session – Virginia Network Lobbying Day
SWCDs
Richmond, Virginia

1/29/09
10:30 a.m.
Groundbreaking for Purcell Park/Blacks Run

Next Meeting
3/9/09 – 10:00 a.m.
Shenandoah County

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m. A motion was made by John Eckman and seconded by Jim Nichols. It was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorraine M. Cormier
Administrative Assistant

Approved: Chair

Date

UPCOMING EVENTS

National Association of RC&D Councils Conference
June 2009
Albuquerque, New Mexico