

Upper Ohio Conservation District Minutes February 16, 2021

Members Present via teleconference

Allen Rush, Chairman
Patricia Thomas, Supervisor
Holly Morgan, Secretary/Treasurer
Wayne McKeever, Supervisor

Others Present via teleconference

Lori Cochran, WVCA/UOCD District Manager
Nick Beaver, NRCS
Jennifer Kile, WVCA

Chairman Rush called the meeting to order.

Cooperating Agency Reports

USDA-NRCS-FSA – Nick reported not really a lot of movement right now. Kind of in the maintenance period for the year. Have been working on current applications, still conducting planning visits, collecting some eligibility paperwork, working on entering all of the conservation plans. Going to be working on assessment plans and cost estimates. Believe the state is working on or may have already entered the codes into the online contracting program, so should be able to start spitting those into grazing, forestry, wildlife, winter feeding. Have been reviewing the status of all the active contracts to determine if they need to take action as far as implementing deadlines or revising the practice schedule. Still accepting applications for sign-up number 2. Don't have a deadline for that as of yet. Nick did a planning visit one day last week and spoke to an individual about doing some grazing work. They will have to get together when the weather breaks to see what all his has, and what can be worked with. Talked about doing, potentially some winterfeeding improvements. He has around 15 head he runs throughout the year and winterfeeds them next to a stream, so could be some environmental issues that could be corrected, and he normally has 8 to 12 stockers that he feeds out for sale locally. Spoke with him about NRCS EQUIP, what is available, and referred him to UOCD for the AgEP program. Really not much movement with current workload, still sitting at 20 active EQUIP contracts and 12 CSP's for a total of 32 active contracts. Have 27 applications between EQUIP and AMA- AMA is additional funding that can be used for high tunnels. Received word from Katie that the rain barrel video is done, we just need to get it into a shareable format to be used on the Facebook page. Fitzsimmons reported the grant position job description was emailed out to the District (Cochran shared with all supervisors for input before placing in papers). NPCD is placing on Indeed.com as well. UOCD supervisors would like to see the resume deadline be March 15.

WVCA – Fisher provided written report.

Forestry – None

SWA – None

WVU Extension –Bolin was unable to attend but reported nothing new at this time.

McKeever made the motion to approve the January 26, 2020 meeting minutes. Thomas seconded the motion; motion passed.

Financial Report

McKeever made a motion to file the financial report for audit. Thomas seconded the motion; motion passed.

McKeever made a motion that UOCD bills be paid as funds permit and coordinated by office staff. Morgan seconded the motion; motion passed.

Funding Request

Aimee Figgatt, Spring Seed Program. Morgan made a motion to spend up to \$500 on postage mailing out the Spring Seed Program packets within the Upper Ohio CD. Thomas seconded the motion; motion passed.

Supervisor Reports

McKeever - Attended the NACD Meeting virtually. Also attended the NCF Envirothon Operating Committee meeting and the President Association Business Meeting. Participated in the Partnership call on Feb. 4, NACD Northeast meeting. On Feb. 8 was NACD General Session and AgEP meeting, Feb. 9 attended NACD General Session and Award Session. On the 11th had a call with Brian concerning AS personnel, had Legislative call on 12th, on the 15th had Association calls and District calls. NACD awards, Joe Gumm is the recipient of the 2020 Distinguished Service Award, only one recipient per year, and it recognizes individuals in Conservation Districts and State Association that made significant contribution to the Conservation in state and national conservation efforts. Joe has over 35 years of service to the Association of Conservation Districts. Had a conservation photo winner from NPCD, Tracy Rine won first place in the adult division of the Agriculture and Conservation Across America photo contest. Seems like NACD priorities are going to dip away a little from conservation and lean more toward environmental type of things such as carbon sequestration, and such. Not sure yet, but that is way looking. NACD has a new President, Michael Crowder from Washington, new vice-president Kim LeFleur from Massachusetts, and new 2nd VP Ian Cunningham from Minnesota. It was decided during the NACD Annual

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Meeting the NCF Envirothon will be held virtual this year. Spring Quarterly Meeting will be held at Stonewall Jackson Resort April 19th and 20th. Budget – Governor proposed current level funding for Conservation Agency, means legislature will probably approve the recommendation and the Conservation Agency will not suffer any budget cuts for the next fiscal year. Legislative meeting – water quality issue, with funds being used to improve water quality, more specifically 319 projects was not allowed because the wording “water quality” is not included in our code. Attorney General got back with us that yes could probably go ahead and do it, but if ever was any court action, we might lose, so gave us the recommendation to change the wording in our code. Brian and Kent discussed and decided to attach to the Dept of Ag bill being submitted and most likely it will shoot right on through. Legislative Committee approved doing that and hopefully will get this out of the way so we won’t be dealing with it anymore. Scholarship Auction will be same as last year. Partnership call – working together (Brian, Wayne and NRCS) look at conservation in the future, kind of long-range plan. Looking at how to make Districts more involved because we’re all working together for the same thing so let’s all work together on the same type of plan. Looking at a strategic plan, conservation plan that was developed in the state 12 or so years ago, looking to update that. Will have training at Oct. meeting and maybe in July as well. That will coincide with annual work groups and annual conservation planning. Working on the AS recommendation, working so have good working relationships everyone is better understanding with some of the issues. This will just make it so everyone on a level playing field and make it so issues conservation districts across the state can be better resolved and make everything work a little bit better. District chairman received a letter concerning evaluations on the AS and how district supervisors can contribute to that evaluation. More will be coming from Brian in the next few weeks to make things work a little better. I feel it was a good thing, we all worked together on this and came out with some good ideas.

Thomas – attended the AgEP meeting via Skype. Envirothon, had intended to meet with our teachers for that, but with various weather issues, that did not happen. It is on my agenda to fit that in when we can get back to school more.

Morgan – Facebook page reached 1249 people with 5 new likes, had an email requesting a copy of the Area Scholarship form. Sent the Area Scholarships to the schools. Valley was only one to confirm receipt and intentions of handing it out. Checking with John Smith at a meeting tomorrow night to make sure Magnolia received it. Hundred did get it, I actually talked to them too. Talked to a couple people about the Seed Program, attended the communications call which Aimee spoke more about the Seed Program on that meeting. Need to post about the poster and photo contests on Facebook. Signed checks a couple of times.

Rush – Sat in on the Legislative Committee meeting Friday. Sounds pretty positive for the funding and may even improve the funding a little bit. Water Quality change being presented with the Ag department farm bill. Maybe to keep from having to open the code. I ordered the copper pipe for the spring headers, I will drill them so they will be ready to sell when someone needs them and will get the pipe for the spring boxes. Not sure what the mixture is for the lids, need to take to Tony to see what the mixture rate is. We kept the form to make them.

Unfinished Business

AgEP

Committee Meeting Revisions - Use the All BMP Application instead of individual practice applications. Chemical prices were in a range from \$80 to \$90 for 1 gal Remedy Ultra. Crossbow \$57, Cimmaron \$26.50, not sure how much it makes, surfactant \$11 per gal. to \$109 per 1/2 gal., colorant \$17 per quart.

Thomas made a motion to increase Invasive Species maximum cost share from \$300 to \$400 to include payment of chemical, surfactant and dye. McKeever seconded the motion; motion passed.

Jenn will call to check on lime and gravel prices.

Grant Needs

Nothing new

Century, etc. Farms

Morgan made a motion to approve the Century Farm from Jack Smith application and Sesquicentennial Farm application from Joe Wells. McKeever seconded the motion; motion passed.

Spring Development Supply Update

Received the copper pipe needed to install watering systems. Rush will drill holes as needed and make a trip to pick up the black pipe needed for spring boxes. Need to pour lids for the spring boxes, just need to get the correct formula for the pour mixture.

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Shared Employee Update

NRCS has granted a one- year extension of the grant. The job posting is available, UOCD would like to give until 15th to submit resumes. Will check with NPCD if that is agreeable with them.

Education Programs

- Rain barrel workshop update – Video has been created for Facebook page posting and hopefully District page posting. Just a matter of getting the format write to send.
- Update on barrel order – wait until late March early April for better weather so truck can get to the shop.
- Composting workshop update – working on.
- Mushroom workshop – nothing new
- Gardening workshop update – nothing new
- High Tunnel/Lime field day with Shaun Kuhn? Rush to discuss with Shaun and hoping for late summer.
- Bluebird Box Video – Kile is working on this.
- Other ideas on new programs and how to proceed – water quality, project 319
- Food desert update – Nothing new.

New Business

District Personnel Plan

Thomas made a motion to approve the District Personnel Plan as presented. McKeever seconded the motion; motion passed.

Employee Hand-Book Review

Need to change the wording from District Manager to Administrative Specialist. Cochran will present changes for final draft approval at the March meeting.

District Policy Manual Review

Change the wording from District Manager to Administrative Specialist. Add “virtually” to camp section. Make changes to pages 5, 6, 9 and 10 as noted. Review final for approval at the March meeting.

Plan of Work

Good through 2022. Make necessary changes at that time.

Contact Your Legislators

Rush to sign letters addressed to Legislators from UOCD. Supervisors are encouraged to introduce themselves.

Staff Review

Rush to contact each Supervisor for input on survey.

Audit

Lowe and Associates submitted the lower bid of \$2150 for the Agreed Upon Procedures Audit. **McKeever made a motion to contract Lowe and Associates to perform the Agreed Upon Procedures Audit for three years if agreeable. Thomas seconded the motion; motion passed.**

Correspondence

Adjournment

McKeever made a motion to adjourn. Thomas seconded the motion; motion passed.

The next regular meeting will be teleconference February 16, at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Lori Cochran, Administrative Specialist

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Date

Date