

Upper Ohio Conservation District Meeting Minutes July 25, 2023

Members Present

Allen Rush, Chairman
Bill Gellner, Vice Chairman
*Wayne McKeever, Supervisor
Patricia Thomas, Supervisor
Audra Cunningham, Supervisor
Holly Morgan, Secretary/Treasurer

Others Present

Cindy Shreve, WVCA
Lauren Hobbs, NRCS
Nick Beaver, NRCS
John Wilson, Forestry
Lori Cochran, Administrative Specialist
Katie Fitzsimmons, NRCS
*Julie Bolin, WVU Extension
*Kim Fisher, WVCA
Andy Deichert, State Conservation Engineer, NRCS
Rafael Mendez, Assistant State Conservationist, NRCS
Terri Tyler, SWA

*Attended via teleconference

Chairman Rush called the meeting to order.

Cooperating Agency Reports

USDA-NRCS-FSA – Rafael introduced Nick as the new DC in this area; he will have full support from NRCS in working with the district to help him achieve success in his career. Congratulated Lauren on her promotion and moving to the Parkersburg office. Andy said all districts had indicated they wanted full-time DCs in their district. With Nick filling this position, all 14 districts will have a dedicated DC and two will be in the Potomac Valley and the Greenbriar Valley Districts just as a workload strategy on the part of NRCS. Farm bill status statewide, we had about a 16 to \$18 million statewide on the farm bill programs and we're doing a pretty good job in obligating funds for this year. We are in the last quarter of the FY23, but we're hoping to finish strong, and we're looking to meet or exceed national goals for obligation there. The Inflation Reduction Act is to bring a significant increase in EQIP and CSP funding to West Virginia. The IRA funding is focused on climate, smart activities and, we're looking to forestry practices as just a part of the practices that can help with that. For sure you can continue with your EQIP initiatives, but there's also room to grow on that aspect. I know the district doesn't have any water or flood prevention dams, but we did do a decent job bringing money into West Virginia and FY22 through the bipartisan infrastructure law, it was about \$20 million. Not just dam rehabilitation, but watershed ops and some of those. Looked at projects that aren't flood prevention related, we're looking at low head dam removals as potential projects among other types of projects there. So even though you may not have dams that would qualify for dam rehabilitation, there are other avenues there. If you do have flooding as a resource concern, there's also different ways to remedy that. We have two projects in the southern part of the state that involve voluntary floodplain buyout. If you have a pocket of folks that are consistently getting flooded, that's a potential project we can do through watershed OPS. We can also do that through EWP. If you are addressing the resource concerns and listening to the public, what are their concerns? If continuing flooding is a concern of a pocket of Community, that's something that we can come in and talk about with you, with the Community, and it's voluntary. It's not something where you're going to drive people out. If they need help getting out, typically if areas are getting flooded, it's tough to sell that property, we would have a program that could pay a fair market value for that and help them get relocated. The agency is doing a few things that's new in terms of bringing staff members on. We are bundling positions like soil conservationist positions where we can hire multiple individuals at various locations across the state with one vacancy announcement. We're looking to do that for several jobs series to bring several people on at one time. That's something that we've just initiated. We're currently supporting the Boy Scout Jamboree, we're in the midst of it.

It was July 19th through 28. That's something that National Boy Scouts had requested of the national officer. We have volunteers throughout the state and then from other states supporting that, Julie Stutler, outreach coordinators coordinating all that assistance. We do continue to have joint employee development training with the conservation agency, and we do appreciate that partnership with the conservation agency. We're training their staff and our staff side by side. So, we're delivering similar type technical services, so it doesn't matter if they're under 319 or NRCS program, we're getting people that are providing that assistance with similar training. We really value the partnership with the districts as well as the conservation agency and association. Just to reiterate agency priorities obviously include the farm bill. You know that's a driver for the agency. Equity is an important aspect.

It's a priority of the administration, not just providing assistance to all customers, we want to get everybody in the public aware of the programs, not just the ones that come in. We want to reach out and identify people that haven't heard of what services can be provided. From all indications the IRA funding won't be reduced; it may impact the farm bill. The farm bill is supported by both sides of the of Congress. We don't anticipate significant changes there but

could be slight changes because of the IRA funding and the Nationals perspective on pledge of reduction, balanced budget, things like that, the DIL funding and watershed programs continues to be a priority as well as urban and community agriculture and that's something at least from West Virginia standpoint Dustin Adkins is leading the charge on community AG. It's not just urban AG, that is the focus nationally, but from a West Virginia standpoint, we're calling it Community Ag. There has been a lot of discussion on the Ohio River Basin at the association meetings and the Water Resources Subcommittee meetings.

Lauren thanked everyone for the opportunity to work here in the district.

Thanks going to Katie for her time here as well.

Katie gave the regular monthly report. CSP deadline is tomorrow. UOCD had one application, but they didn't meet the eligibility deadline. Lauren assisted the Tygarts Valley in completing assessments that were due on the 14th.

Round 2 EQIP, UOCD had 8 eligible applications, unfortunately none qualified for this rounds fund code.

Recommend you rerun your District farmer in a few years. Suggest you have a field day out there, maybe a land judging, and let them complete some the things they have started. Katie gave a report from J.L. from FSA. They ended up getting three CRP grassland offers in UOCD, so he will be working with Nick to get those finalized. Anyone that loses livestock due to weather, give them a call. If anyone bought beehives to increase numbers, have them call before the end of the summer to update their bee crop report with FSA in case of any bee losses.

WVCA – Fisher also thinks we need to put Hannah back in the running in a few years. Jeremy should be close to completing the East Area tour today. State Farm Tour will be August 22 – 25. There are still empty slots on the state fair sign-up. Lori will be out of the office Sept. 12 & 13 for an all-staff agency meeting in Flatwoods. Personnel updates Kelly Kent will assume the AS position in Little Kanawha and Mary Beth Smith in Elk is being trained currently.

Forestry – Wilson reported there are no restrictions now, you just have to be with your fire if you're going to be burning, obviously no man-made materials. Nationally, you're not going to hear the media talk about it, but we're far below the 10-year average for the number of fires since January, we've had the 28,657 fires, which is burned 870,000 acres and the 10-year average for that is 32,000 fires 3.4 million acres, so we're far below average on the on fires. Trish was asking about the bio char, there is an exception for the burning permit fee, if it's agriculture. I would assume that the way we would interpret that, I don't know 100%, but if you're using it for your personal use on your farm, it's going to be agricultural use. You will need a permit because it's not a warming fire and it's not a cooking fire. It's not providing light, so you will need a permit if it's during fire season and you're burning between 7:00 and 5:00. If you wait till after five, you won't need a permit. So, if you're going to burn through the daylight during fire season, you're going to need a permit. But if it's for your personal use, it will be exempt from the fee. Now, if you're going to go into production, you're probably going to need a permit for that. There are some exemptions for chemical purposes like the plants down here when they're burning, they don't have to have a permit, but I would assume that it's going to be just like burning anything else. You will need a permit if you were to go into commercial production. If it's just for personal use, you'll just have to get permit from us or if it's an agriculture it's the same thing for your farm. If you're clearing pasture or anything, you need to get a permit. The logging stuff is pretty much the same. If you got good timber, you could sell timber, but it's slow around here. I was just figuring up today I've marked 5 timber sales in the last three years. I think two of them have sold. The other three didn't sell, so there's not a lot of interest if it's the borderline timber, that sort of stuff. Keep in mind, if you do cut timber, you're going to have invasive species take over. You better be chasing it with herbicide or you're going to see an explosion. This time of the year, you're going to start seeing some brown trees. I noticed the locusts are turning. It's just anthracnose, it's no big deal. It's normal. So, if somebody asked you, the Locust are the 1st to go. I've seen some on sycamores, they they'll start early too, and it's very normal. So, you're going to start seeing some of that. Buckeye starts that pretty early too. It's normal to start seeing some brown stuff. Believe it or not, we are at the end of the growing season, stuffs going to start going back down now, things are transitioning.

A question arose about controlled burn. They're really trying to push the prescribed fire stuff. In the east we can usually control a little bit better, but they're finding out that it's better for every generation if you have a little bit of fire. Prescribed fire is actually a good thing because it's totally controlled.

Start the fire from the top of the hill. It's low intensity and it just slowly walks down the hill and if you have any trees that are you want to protect, you go in and remove the leaves around it. There's not going to get heat on those trees, so it's not a wildfire. There's a big difference in a wildfire and prescribed fire. If it starts and goes indiscriminately, then it does destroy stuff quickly. The state ground, they're trying to do some prescribed fire. They have in code now, so you're probably going to see more and more of that as time goes on.

WVU Extension – Next week will be busy with the fair. I'm working on a needs assessment that I rolled out today and it's on our Facebook page, but I will send an email to Lori with the links. It's a needs assessment to see what families need in Tyler County. I know it's not agriculture based, but I would appreciate if the Tyler County supervisors could at least send it out. Also, some farmers have black leg in potatoes. If you have any farmers in Tyler or Wetzel, it could be a problem with the seed potatoes. If anybody is having black leg and happened to have good records and has their certification from their seed potatoes, that would be great. I'm working with the USDA on this because there have been a couple of other reports in the area and so they are investigating it further. I'm also on the women in AG team this year, so I will be working on the women in Agriculture Conference, which is in November. More information on Black Leg please. The symptoms, the potatoes can look healthy and then it's kind of almost looks like they're just normal die off. But then when you investigate, the stems will be black and slimy and rotting. And what happens is it

Upper Ohio Conservation District Meeting Minutes July 25, 2023

will transfer to the tubers, and they won't want store. They will become slimy, and any potatoes that are left in the ground. So unfortunately, most people do not, especially the farmers I've talked to in this area, they don't rotate their crops, so they're growing potatoes in the same fields every year, and this can live in the plant debris and transfer to the next year. So, if anyone has black leg, they really should plant a something in the crucifer family or a circuit family for the next three years. But it's a type of bacteria. There are different kinds, but the one we're talking about is DICKEYA is the type of bacteria there's a chance that it was brought in on seed potatoes from Canada. A lot of people just assumed it was the weather, so if it's not that, you know if it is black leg, I'd rather if we could know about it then we can pass this information on to the USDA. Mainly it's a copper fungus spray can help, but one of the things that you can do is if you can spray them with an herbicide. Kill the tops. Leave the tubers in the ground and but again, they will not store well, because and you can harvest if you have infected plants, you can keep those plants and any surrounding them separate from your rest of your crop. But from what I'm hearing from some of my farmers is that it's their whole potato crop. That's why the USDA was concerned. I have reported it to the West Virginia Department of Ag first and they had a couple of other people in the region report the same thing and that's why it was passed off to the USDA.

Are they safe for people to eat or they need to? They are safe to if they're still firm, they're safe to eat, but they can contaminate all the other potatoes. When it gets into the tubers and I do have information on our Facebook page, but I also have information that I can send to people about it if anyone having issues with their potatoes. Yes, if you hear people losing their potatoes and they think it's just weather related, we really need to know because the USDA said that they could send out a person to look through the field to make sure, because if it's widespread, if the seed potatoes came in and were infected, it could really hurt farmers down the road, especially if they aren't, rotating their crops.

SWA- Terri handed out flyers with everything Wetzel Co. SWA accepts. They do accept tires, up to 10, no large tires or tractor tires. If more than 10, call to see if they have room for them. Accept on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays. October the 22nd to the 24th is our annual conference, and this year it is in Oglebay. There is a group from WVU in Morgantown trying to get a State Compost Charter. There are a lot of things that coordinate with both of us. Bag collections, for every 500 pounds of bags, they get a Next Trex Bench from Next Trex Decking. Any non-profit organization can do it, but it must be more than one person bringing the plastics. Only one bench every six months. We still take glass, no windows, only off the grocery shelves or similar.

WVAC-Cindy reported that a couple vacancies have been filled. Temp positions are still posted. Grants previously mentioned, the grass grant that the partnership with WVU, award at \$660,000. Lisa Jones has started making her rounds to the districts. AgEP timeline everything has been pulled back three months. August 18 is the deadline for any suggestions for the allocation formula. The goal is to have the program to present to the State Committee in January for approval.

Previous Meeting Minutes

Cunningham made a motion to approve the June 27 meeting minutes with correcting the location of the Forestry Field Day. Morgan seconded the motion; motion passed.

Financial Report

Gellner made a motion to file the financial report for audit. Cunningham seconded the motion; motion passed.

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

Funding Request

Morgan made a motion to donate \$115.00 to WV Women in Ag Conference. Thomas seconded the motion; motion passed.

Unfinished Business

Cooperator Agreements –

Gellner made a motion to approve agreements for Rebecca VanCamp-Daugherty, Annette Wetzel, Thomas Wince, Shannon Silva, Diann Wykert, Tony Huggins and Everette Anderson, Jr. Thomas seconded the motion; motion passed.

AgEP – Gellner made a motion to approve AgEP applications as follows:

William Baker	Heavy Use Area	266 Sq. ft.	\$ 350.00
---------------	----------------	-------------	-----------

Jon Dupudja	Lime	16.74 Acres/33.48 Tons	837.00
Kathy Phillips	Urban Ag	Raised beds/Soil	1000.00
Shannon Silva	Pasture Division Fence	1600 ft. Woven Wire	2500.00
Tony Huggins	Invasive Species	5 gals/98 acres	500.00
William Baker	Water System	1 System	2150.00
Rebecca VanCamp-Daugherty	Pollination	¼ Acre/Planting/2 Nucs/bee houses	430.00
Terry Collins	Forage Seeding	30 Acres	2250.00
Hannah Ferrell	Heavy Use Area	238 Sq. Ft.	314.16
Ward Grose	Lime	31.51 Acres/63.02 Tons	1575.00
Jon DuMars	Urban Ag	Raised Beds/Soil	1000.00
Elijah Haught	Pasture Division Fence	1424 ft. Barbed Wire	2275.00
William Ingram	Invasive Species	6 gals/40 acres	500.00
Lauren Weaver	Water System	1 System	2500.00
Greg Musgrave	Pollination	2 Nucs/Houses	230.00
Allen Rush***	Heavy Use Area	1600 Sq. Ft.	2112.00
James Cochran	Lime	38.7 Acres/77.4 Tons	1935.00
Rebecca VanCamp-Daugherty	Urban Ag	Raised Beds/Soil/Straw	1000.00
Hattie Massey	Pasture Division Fence	900 Ft. High Tensile	1440.00
John Furlong	Invasive Species	8.5 gals/80 Acres	500.00
Anthony McDiffitt	Water System	1 system	2100.00
John Furlong	Heavy Use Area	1300 Sq. Ft.	1716.00
Terry Collins	Lime	5 Acres/10 Tons	250.00
Sara Ingram-Sole/New Beginnings	Urban Ag	Raised Beds/Soil	1000.00
Terrell Cozart	Pasture Division Fence	1000 Ft. Woven Wire	1600.00
Stevie Young	Invasive Species	5 gals/32 Acres	500.00
Kara Garrett	Water System	1 System	1930.00
Sandy Blake	Heavy Use Area	1155 Sq. Ft.	1500.00
Hattie Massey	Lime	3.32 Acres/6.64 Tons	166.00
Sandy Blake	Urban Ag	Raised beds/soil/low tunnels/fence/charger	1000.00
William Johnson	Invasive Species	6 gals/40 Acres	500.00
Colleen Folgers	Water System	1 system	1900.00
Stevie Young	Heavy Use Area	1516 Sq. Ft.	2000.00
Elijah Haught	Lime	4.5 Acres/9 tons	225.00
Annette Wetzal	Urban Ag	Raised Beds/Soil/Compost Bin	1000.00
Everette Anderson	Pasture Division Fence	1600 Ft. High Tensile	2500.00
Kathy Phillips	Invasive Species	5 gals/8 Acres	500.00
Hattie Massey	Urban Ag	Fence/Charger/Compost Bins/Raised Beds/Soil	894.00
Allen Rush***	Invasive Species	4 gals/100 Acres	388.00
Delbert Elder	Invasive Species	2.5 gals/13 Acres	300.00
Charles Musgrave	Invasive Species	5 gals/80 Acres	500.00
Terrell Cozart	Invasive Species	8 gals/20 Acres	500.00
Colleen Folger	Invasive Species	3 gals/15 Acres	250.00
Rebecca VanCamp-Daugherty	Invasive Species	2 gal/10 Acres	200.00
Nancy Seckman	Invasive Species	8 gals/40 Acres	500.00
Hannah Ferrell	Invasive Species	8 gals/40 Acres	500.00
Annette Wetzal	Invasive Species	2.5 gals/10 Acres	250.00
	Total		\$50,067.16

Cunningham seconded the motion; motion passed.

Grant Updates

Morgan reported grant funds should be arriving. Need to build fence at the community garden. Had two workshops for bio char. \$4730.00. Community Garden \$4298.00 but the fence is still needing built.

Education Programs –

Cunningham checked on the inflatable soil tunnel. They will loan that to us free of charge because for educational purposes. Needs picked up and returned; office is near Columbus. Had around 10 years, cost them a little over

Upper Ohio Conservation District Meeting Minutes July 25, 2023

\$8695. They got it through New Jersey State Conservation. Had to be approved by NJSC because they held the licensing for the tunnels.

Thomas made a motion to allow Cunningham travel to Columbus to pick up and return the inflatable soil tunnel for use at the Pleasants County Youth Fair. Morgan seconded the motion; motion passed.

New Building

Gellner reported on sizes of equipment. Feels more planning is needed for entry to and from the storage unit.

New Business

Supervisor per diem

Sent to the Attorney General again for clarification. Should know more later. Currently \$150 per day starting July 1. Cannot charge for less than a full day.

County Fair Arrangements

Tyler County Fair Space is reserved. Will try to move the position this year.

LOR AgEP Allocation

Gellner made a motion to submit an LOR in the amount of \$34,000 for FY24 AgEP Allocation. Morgan seconded the motion; motion passed.

Grazing Conference

Cunningham made a motion to offer UOCD County Farm Winners the opportunity to attend the Grazing Conference in March. Morgan seconded the motion; motion carried.

Supervisor Reports

Morgan made a motion that Supervisors provide a written report five days prior to the board meetings. Gellner seconded the motion; motion passed.

Gellner – Letter to the Association asking for their financial support to supervisors while doing Association business. **Cunningham** Attended Farm Tour, Forestry Field Day, Grazing Conf call, offering tour for \$40 limiting to 60 people, but may not have the tour. Website is being updated. Called to inquire about the Inflatable Soil Tunnel. Report precipitation. Attended the Quarterly Meeting online.

Morgan – Attended the Farm Tour, Quarterly Meeting, Association is applying for 3 tech assistance people. No signs for Century Farms yet. Talked about the Ohio River Basin again. This is going to be very big. Feb 8 is Conservation Day. Did the grant paperwork and wrote up some newsletters.

McKeever

Thomas – Advertised the Field Day. Gave Allen information to order parts so the weed wiper could be repaired, traveled with Wayne to the Farm Tour in Wetzel County. Went to Jim Bowen's to evaluate the bio char test spot. Sod seeder was used on some hay fields. Spoke with John Wilson about the use of the bio char rings and permits needed if any. Bio char field day photos for anyone needing them.

Rush – Grazing Conference meeting. Various meetings, signed paperwork, etc. Heather talked about the tech assistance grant call, and looks like the statewide would suit us best, not really going to do our district any good to apply, we don't meet many of the qualifications needed.

Correspondence

WVDEP, Tyler County FFA thank you, **Watershed. Give \$100.00 donation.**

Adjournment

Morgan made a motion to adjourn. Gellner seconded the motion; motion passed.

The next regular meeting will be at 6pm August 22, 2023.

Minutes submitted by: Lori Cochran, Administrative Specialist

Signature of Chairman

Signature of Secretary

Date

Date