

Upper Ohio CD Meeting Minutes December 19, 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

Nick Beaver, NRCS DC
*Heather Duncan, WVACD
Lori Cochran, Administrative Specialist
*Davin White, WVCA

***Not Present

*Attended via teleconference

Vice-Chairman Rush called the meeting to order.

Cooperating Agency Reports

USDA-NRCS-FSA – Beaver reviewed the written report. I have been working on CSP payments. Those are made for the year, and I am working on finalizing EQIP payments. I have four contracts preapproved that could be obligated as contracts or signed to be turned into contracts. Two people are scheduled to come in later this week to sign. Both are contracts for stewardship plans; the other two are Hay Land Improvement IRA contracts. Engineering and spot checks for contract practices have been completed. Luke Daugherty, the engineer from Morgantown, will be in the office next week, for convenience. It is closer for him to be with his family during the holidays and it will put someone in the office on the days I will be out of the office. The State Office is working through the Post – Inflation Supplemental Payment list, so anybody that has had practices certified before December 1 may qualify for another incentive payment for completing practices under A. Still taking applications for Act Now; the deadline is December 29, 2023. Act Now is a much faster time frame for obligating contracts and getting federal dollars to the community. It's nutrient management plans, which is step 1 for somebody to apply for feed pads, forest management plans, which can allow people to apply for managed timberland status on the property which will give them a tax break and provides a good baseline to start planning EQIP practices. Something new for the agency this year is Hay Land Improvement. This is a two-year contract consisting of lime, frost seeding, fertilizer, and hay records. This sign-up deadline is December 29. There will be a second sign-up which will follow the regular Equip and CSP signups. That deadline will be March 15. The State has made a selection for a Forester in Middlebourne and the position has been accepted. He will be starting in late February.

WVCA – Fisher provided a written report.

Forestry – None

WVU Extension – Information is attached.

SWA –

WVACD – Duncan reminded everyone of the Quarterly meeting on February 7. Committee meetings will be held prior to the Quarterly meeting. They will probably be virtual or a hybrid option. Hopefully the committee chairs will have those committee dates for you at the beginning of the year. And of course, February 8 will be at the Capital for Ag and Conservation Day. Our Area Meeting will be Wednesday, January 31 at 10 am at the LKCD office. Call information will be sent for that as well. Mileage will be going up to \$.67 on the 1st. A resolution is to be discussed at the annual meeting on wildlife control fencing.

Previous Meeting Minutes

Thomas made a motion to approve the November 21 meeting minutes. McKeever seconded the motion; motion passed.

Financial Report

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

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

Funding Request – McKeever made a motion to strike the NE Association of Conservation District Employee funding request. Rush seconded the motion; motion carried. Appalachian Grazing Conference – **Rush made a motion to donate \$500 along with the registration cost of the county farm winners if they would like to attend. McKeever seconded the motion; motion carried.**

Unfinished Business

Cooperator Agreements –
None

AgEP – Nothing new.

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Grant Updates

Provide bio char samples as door prizes at the workshops coming up.

Education Programs – continue to look into an inflatable soil tunnel. Dustin has access to design files for the tunnel that is already in the state.

Cunningham joined the meeting.

UOCD Annual Meeting

Education auction raised roughly \$1100.00.

New Business

Davin White – looking for items to highlight for the district’s annual report. Items completed this year and coming up. County Farmers, Forestry and Land Judging contests. Workshops, Community Garden Grant, Bio Char Workshop in Pleasants County, Envirothon practice in Tyler County, Forestry Field Day with chain saw safety in Wetzel County, Bio Char trials, fair booths, soil tunnel trailer at New Martinsville School. Coming events include Enhanced back Yard Gardening with Kacey Gantzer in January followed by Dustin Adkins in February with promoting programs and an invasive workshop in March with “Keeping it Native”. In late January a training “May the Force Be with you” with Aimee Figgatt.

SMART Farms WV grant- Maybe you have heard as referred to the NASDA grants. SMART farms stands for sustainable management and agriculture using regenerative techniques. NASDA stands for National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. They applied for a grant through EPA. All of the gulf draining states were eligible and they grouped them into categories. NACD also had a region of the Gulf that they have some grants for. Our area covers Ohio, part of Kentucky, maybe a little of Virginia. The goal is to target historically underserved producers and reduce nutrient and sediment loads into the Gulf of Mexico. The WVCA was the main applicant for this grant. The Association and the Division of Forestry are the two major partners. Targeting historically underserved farmers such as limited resource beginning farmers, socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers. Was able to write into the grant that producers that have not participated in district or state or federal programs can also qualify. The goal is to establish native warm season grasses into pasture fields and log landing sites. Asking if districts would participate in the grant. It is open to non-Chesapeake Bay draining counties, so 12 of the 14 districts are eligible. It is a multi-year grant. We have it until December 2026. Asking supervisors to help find target individuals to apply; one those are ranked, WVCA staff and Division of Forestry staff will play a big role in providing the technical assistance.

McKeever made a motion to participate in this grant. Rush seconded the motion; motion passed. This is still in the planning stages; once that is completed the information will be sent out.

Supervisor Reports

Gellner – Provided a written report as attached.

Cunningham – None

Morgan – Provided a written report as attached.

McKeever – provided a written report as attached. Talked about raised beds and small crops deer fencing. Decided to do a resolution in the state which then went to NACDNE and they adopted the resolution. Goes to NACD meeting in February. It is based on specification for the feral hog practices. The Legislative meeting is January 3 at 1. An invitation went to each district representative. If on the committee, make sure you are at the meetings and do the work. I was hoping to have more information for the per diem issue. Requested 1 million for AgEP, so if more per diem is requested it would have to a supplemental amount.

Thomas – None

Rush – None

Correspondence

Adjournment

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

The next regular meeting will be at 6pm January 16, 2024.

Minutes submitted by: Lori Cochran, Administrative Specialist

Signature of Chairman

Signature of Secretary

Date

Date