

**SHERIDAN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD MEETING
September 11, 2007 @ 7:00 PM
USDA BUILDING**

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. by Chairman Jeff Wivholm. Present were: Tim Holte, Rom Hedges, Manuel Vazquez and Jeff Wivholm, Supervisors; Judy Benson and Mickey McCall, SCCD; Monica Friedrich, NRCS, Jon Reiten, MBMG; Rick Sodja, MSU/Rocky Mountain Science Center/USDI-Geological Survey, Bozeman, MT and Robert Gleason, USGS/Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center/USGI-Geological Survey, Jamestown, ND.

Public Comments:

No Public Comments.

Approval of Minutes – July 10, 2007 and August 7, 2007 Meeting

After reviewing the minutes from the July 10th meeting and the special meeting held August 7 to open bids for the pickup, Tim Holte made a motion to approve the minutes from both meetings and Manuel Vazquez seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Financial Report:

The financial reports were reviewed. The Accounts Receivable Aging Summary was reviewed and discussed. It was suggested that we start adding a monthly finance charge if we cannot collect our outstanding accounts in a reasonable time. Monthly statements will be sent on all outstanding accounts. A motion to accept the financial report was made by Tim Holte and seconded by Rom Hedges. The motion carried.

Bills to Pay

The expenditures totaling \$38,471.28 as listed on the Check Detail dated July 11 through September 11(today) were reviewed. That figure included that the regular monthly bills for July and August, as well as payroll, health insurance, payroll taxes, and the pickup purchase. The Unpaid Bills Detail summary was reviewed. A motion for approval of the total expenditures was made by Rom Hedges and seconded by Tim Holte. The motion carried. The checks were signed by Jeff Wivholm and Tim Holte.

NRCS – Monica:

- Completed Box Elder Dam Inspection in July. The report was given to Ron Anderson of the Plentywood City Council for review and signature, but hasn't been returned yet. Principle items of interest were continued seepage from the

east end face of the dam, some areas needing grass re-seeding in the west emergency spillway, and overgrazing by horses in the east emergency spillway.

- Our office assisted Montana Dept of Transportation, Ducks Unlimited, and Fish & Wildlife Service with locating some restorable wetlands for their mitigation process during highway construction.
- Met with David Pratt, Area Conservationist overseeing the newly formed Miles City Area, encompassing 19 offices in 17 counties. This area has most staff in place, with the exception of an agronomist position, which is being advertised.
- Randy Phelan has detailed to Washington, D.C. to work on the Conservation Innovation Grant program until he accepts a new position.
- We are actively working on fall practice installation. We will begin the status review process to bring all contracts up to date. It is possible we will need to begin cancellation/termination procedures in cases where the participant is unwilling or unable to finish the contract as scheduled.
- Food Security Act residue checks for compliance with conservation plans will be flown the week of September 24th. Affected producers were notified 30 days in advance.
- Amber McCall has returned to work temporarily as an office aide during a school break, under the Capacity Building grant with the District.
- Attended a meeting and field tour with the Montana Salinity Control Association in Roosevelt County. MSCA is assisting North Dakota NRCS and Conservation Districts with implementing a program like Montana's in their state.

Unfinished Business:

- There was no unfinished business.

Rick Sodja – Prairie Pothole Project

- Rick Sodja, Wildlife Biologist, Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center and USDI-Geological Survey of Bozeman gave a brief recap of the test holes that they are drilling in the Dooley-Comertown area wetlands. The purpose of the Prairie Pothole Project is to determine how the wetlands function in relation to croplands, CRP, and native prairie land. Soil samples and vegetation samples are taken at each test site. Rick reported on a field tour that he, Jeffrey Kershner, Director and Hayes Buxton, Hydrologic Technician with the Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center; Robert Gleason, Wildlife Biologist, Janine Powell, Director and Dennis Jorde, Deputy Director with the Northern Prairie Research Center of Jamestown, ND; Jon Reiten, MBMG; Medicine Lake Refuge personnel and Mickey McCall had taken of the project sites during the afternoon.

- Robert Gleason, Wildlife Biologist, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center and USDI-Geological Survey of Jamestown, ND recapped the topographical survey information that they are using to identify gas, vegetation, soil and water sample points. He stated that they plan to monitor gas emissions possibly 2 to 3 times per year. They will provide a report to our office as information is available. He also discussed the possibility of installing a small weather station and rain gauge and asked the Board members to think of a possible location for the installation.

Mickey's Report:

July, 2007

Aquifer

- Well measurements on schedule
- No activity on irrigation permit applications.

Big Muddy 319 grant

- No activity.

Oil Brine Grant

- Will continue to monitor sites treated with Salt-Be-Gone
- Had reports from several landowners that areas treated with Salt-Be-Gone have better plant growth than ever before.

USGS

- USGS crew was here to drill wells the week of July 16th. USGS personnel included Rick Sodja and Hayes Buxton from Bozeman and three individuals from Jamestown. The Jamestown crew brought a Giddings soil probe mounted on an ATV. Nineteen wells were installed. Jon Reiten assisted with geologic analysis and helped install casing etc.

223 Grant

- Grant completed.

R C & D

- Attended quarterly meeting in Wibaux.
- Discussed proposed partnership with Great Northern Development to acquire a \$3,000,000 Brownsfield Grant that will be used as type of revolving loan for small projects in the 16 counties of the RC&D.
- Discussed upcoming carbon sequestration signup deadlines.
- Planned events for the Mon-Dak Open in Williston.
 - Irrigation Atlas
 - Potato study
 - French fry plant for area

- Will require 12 to 14,000 acres under pivot (sandy soil)
- Presentation about Clear Lake Aquifer for Potato people.

Misc.

- Completed Newsletter
- Updated Web Site

August, 2007

Aquifer

- Well measurements on schedule
- Eric Nielsen is working with NRCS on how to cross wetland with pivot.

Big Muddy 319 grant

- Received copy of letter from Dean Yashan requesting that we compile all data collected on the big Muddy in a very specific format. After discussion with Jon Reiten it was decided that I would get the information put together and send it to DEQ. It is estimated this will take 4 to 6 weeks.

USGS

- USGS project continuing with installation of wells in wetlands.
- 23 sites have two wells installed with 7 sites to go.

R C & D

- Attended Mon-Dak Open in Williston
 - Met with potato people and Irrigation Atlas representatives
 - Gave presentation about aquifer to tour at Ed Smith's potato pivot.
- Participated in several conference calls and email conferences about the Economic Development District for the Southwestern counties.
- Next quarterly meeting is October 17th in Glendive.

Misc.

- 2007 Chevrolet pickup purchased on 8-14-07
- Updated Web Site

New Business:

- Memorandum of Understanding – Montana Bureau of Mines
The Memorandum of Understanding between SCCD and the Montana Bureau of Mines was reviewed by the board members present. The agreement authorizes the MBMG to conduct the work authorized in an agreement between NRCS/USGS and SCCD to acquire data in selected wetlands in the Prairie Pothole area of Sheridan County. Tim Holte made a motion to sign the agreement. Manuel Vazquez seconded the motion.

Motion carried. Jeff Wivholm signed the agreement. It will be sent to the Montana Bureau of Mines for their approval.

- Area Meeting- Jordan, September 26
The Area 1 meeting to be held in Jordan on Wednesday, September 26, 2007 was discussed. The written District Report was passed around for approval. Jeff Wivholm, Mickey McCall and Judy Benson indicated that they would be attending. The district report and the registration were to be mailed in September 12, 2007.
- 319 Letter – Dean Yashen/DEQ
The letter that Dean Yashan had sent to SCCD dated August 23, 2007 regarding the Big Muddy Creek 319 Contract #203074 was reviewed. Mr. Yashan requested an Excel spreadsheet file format for reporting the data that had been collected on the 319 project. Jon Reiten and Mickey McCall recommended to the Board that the reports be submitted along with an invoice for the hours spent creating the report.
- Pickup Accessories
Mickey McCall presented prices for a tool box, bedcover, and lettering for the pickup. Rom Hedges made a motion to purchase a roll-top bed cover. The motion was seconded by Manuel Vazquez. Motion carried. Tim Holte made a motion to have Bob Southland do vinyl lettering on the pickup using the SCCD logo at a cost of \$185.00 and add the phone number if possible. Manuel Vazquez seconded the motion. The motion carried. Jeff Wivholm mentioned that he had a tool box that would possibly work for the pickup. Mickey will stop at Jeff's and look at it.
- Schedule Meeting Time
The board members present decided to schedule the October 9th meeting at 10:00 AM. Future meeting time will be further discussed at the October meeting. The meeting time should be changed in the Sheridan County News.
- Big Sky Public Procurement (BSPPA) – Great Falls, Oct 9-11
BSPPA is to be held in Great Falls October 9 – 11. It was decided that we would not send anyone this year.
- QuickBooks Payroll Renewal
The annual QuickBooks payroll renewal date is September 26, 2007. The annual renewal cost is \$199.00. Tim Holte made a motion to renew and Manuel Vazquez seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The pass-around files were reviewed by the members present. .

Adjournment:

- Tim Holte made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Manuel Vazquez. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM. The next meeting will be held Tuesday, October 9, 2007 at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy A. Benson,
District Administrator

Approved,

Jeff Wivholm
Chairman
Date: Oct. 9, 2007