

Western RC&D Assn
Board of Directors Conference Call Report
09/17/2013 6 p.m. MDT

Officers Present:

Sue Sutherland, President
Susie Klein, First Vice President
Joe Leichtnam, Second Vice President
Pam Gouse, Secretary

Officer Absent:

Joyce Mick, Treasurer

State Presidents Present:

Pam Gouse, Montana
Ellen Reddick, South Dakota
Kimber Ricks, Idaho

Guest:

Jewell Bork, South Dakota

Welcome -- Sue Sutherland

Roll Call – Sue Sutherland

Secretary's Report – Pam Gouse

Final Draft Minutes for the Reconvened Annual Meeting were distributed to the Board of Directors. They will be voted on in June 2014. The 2013 Annual Meeting has now been concluded.

Treasurer's Report – Joyce was not on the call but had provided a Financial Report

State Highlight – Utah – Erica was not on the call.

President's Report – Sue Sutherland (below)

Calendars: Sue for Laura Doth – Committee is seeking images from various western region States; calendars will be made available at \$5.00 each to member Councils who can then sell for \$10.00 to earn money for their council. Cost to print is \$2.50 apiece. Plan to pre-sell calendars but need a council who is willing to volunteer and either has or is willing to develop the capacity to accept credit cards. In return, the volunteer Council will receive 100 free calendars. Calendar distribution will be done in New Mexico thanks to Laura. Deadline is Sept. 20 for photos but might be extended. Councils interested in handling orders should contact Sue or Laura Doth.

Scholarship and WRCD A fundraising: Joe Leichtnam reported on guns that he is planning to raffle online prior to Annual Conference next June, both for the Scholarship fund and for general operating funds for WRCD A. Details to be worked out.

Made in the West: Sue reported that there is interest in a website to promote items that are Made in the West by local entrepreneurs. We are looking for a Council to volunteer to work on this project..

Website RFP: Information and Marketing Committee is requesting proposals from all willing parties; hoping for a volunteer? October 15th is the deadline to submit proposal to Sue Sutherland and Laura Doth.

Needs of the Committees: Sue reported that Mary Stevens is retiring October 1 and needs to be replaced on several committees: Finance (Jewell volunteered); Nominating (no volunteers); Scholarship (no volunteers), and Information and Marketing (no volunteers). Additionally, Ellen volunteered for Site Selection Committee. We also would welcome a few more people on various committees.

National Perspective -- Sue

Facebook NARC&DC has a Facebook page and they are amazed that they already have 250 likes.

Dues will remain at \$450 (no increase since 2006). Percentage of Councils paying dues is not good. NARCD C got "maybe half of what they had projected" for this budget year.

Training is available via webinars to councils. Formerly available only at State or other large meetings.

NRCS \$100,000 Grant Program is in the planning stages; will be made available to underserved community of NRCS programs. Western States targeted are AZ, CO, ND, NM, SD and UT.

Grant Mentors -- There is a need for a Mentorship Program for grant-savvy councils to work with lesser educated councils on proper grant management.

Andy Gordon – Andy is moving to Sacramento but will continue to work out of Sacramento on a trial basis. There is still an office in DC but smaller.

Finances – Based on current finances, the National Office can remain open for another 15 months.

Possible Government shutdown – There may actually be a government shutdown at the end of the month.

Legislative Alerts – Future Legislative Alerts will be focused on key states. Andy says that Legislators want to hear from their constituents, not from paid staff.

2014 Conference for Western Region will likely be the day before National next year, so probably May 31.

Restructuring Committee for NARCDC is working on survey questions at the end of its report.

What do you expect and need from National? Is the focus of the questions.

Success stories are being sought; focus is on NRCS programs and how RC&Ds have fulfilled NRCS' mission. Specific areas of interest are: Agricultural Enhancement Program, Grasslands Preserves, Healthy Forests, Wetlands, Farm and Ranch.

Round Robin

Montana – Pam reported on the successful International WUI Code Conference that Montana's Northern Rocky Mountain RC&D hosted. Only three Councils were represented, and no County Government officials were there. The conference got favorable reviews, with most attendees believing that the requirements are simply common sense best practices, and perhaps the code should be a voluntary measure.

South Dakota – Ellen reported that Black Hills will handle payroll and employment process for another State Forester in the area; there is a mountain pine beetle epidemic in the Hills.

South Dakota – Jewell reported that Randall has a successful Lewis and Clark grant; farmers markets are going well. She has not heard from Badlands. Tatanka is having a hard time getting their council together for meetings. South Central is working with NRCS. She reported on a successful project that involved the Boy Scouts and others making over an empty lot on Main Street with grass, trees and other plants. And it is being fenced.

North Dakota – Susie reported that her own council is busy, but she hadn't heard from other councils.

Idaho – Kimber reported that Idaho also had already hosted their IWUI Code Conference, and he agreed with Pam that it was successful. Most councils are treading water, but a few are very successful, with a few superstars like Pam Herdrich being very helpful. They will hold their annual fall conference via teleconference to save costs.

Open Discussion

Pam asked what format councils are using for their five-year plan – if they are staying with the NRCS model or branching out? Andy is advising Councils to keep their 5-year plans current in hopes that funding would once again become available. Several councils are abandoning reporting acres treated in favor of people helped.

Next Meeting – Sue will send out a Survey Monkey to determine when is best for the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Pam Gouse

Subsequent Note from Sue:

Greetings RC&D Enthusiasts! At one of the teleconferences last week the question was raised as to whether the 5 year Strategic Plan needs to follow the NRCS Guidelines.

I discussed this with Andrew Gordon, National Executive Director, tonight. The answer is no. However, if you are hoping to receive funding through the Farm Bill at some point in time, your 5 year Plan should address the following:

Land Conservation
Community Development
Water Management
Land Management

Notice that I said your plan should "address" the above. It doesn't mean you have to do it. So if your council elects not to do one or more of the above, say so in the plan and move on.

Andy mentioned that several of these type of questions have been answered in the National Catalyst which can be found on the National website.

I'm thrilled councils are maintaining their 5 year plans. Good job! Sue