

KONA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS
October 13, 2009

Directors Present: Virginia Isbell Greg Hendrickson Skip Cowell
Kawika Marquez

Directors Absent: Rick Robinson

Associate Directors Present: None

KSWCD Staff: Mary Robblee

NRCS Staff: Kara Nelson

RC&D Joachim Oster, Steve Skipper

The meeting was called to order at 7:00a.m. by Skip Cowell

MSCU* (K. Marquez/V.Isbell) to approve the minutes of the Sept. 8, 2009 meeting as circulated.

MSCU* (K. Marquez /G. Hendrickson) to approve Treasurer's Report - available upon request.

1) RC&D - Steve Skipper

Mr. Skipper is the RC&D Coordinator for Big Island, the acting Federal Liason and Facilitator to the Big Island RC&D Council, a private non-profit entity. NRCS provides RC&D Council with office space. His co-worker is Program Assistant, Carol Saipai, who assists primarily with accounting work for the Council and has been in her position for the past 15 years.; however, it appears that she may be brought in by NRCS to do field work.

There are numerous RC&D projects on the Big Island, however, the RC&D coordinator cannot solicit funds. RC&D is not a well understood program and nationwide costs approx. \$50 million/yr. but brings in approximately \$300 million/yr. There is a need to work on capital fundraising. Kawika stated that the U.S. Senate is looking at level funding for RC&D. It is unknown how money is distributed at the state level. Isbell suggested that the money committees in Congress do not appear to have a broad knowledge of the RC&D Program. Currently, admin. fees run about 10% of budget, however, if RC&D Council has to hire new person, admin. fees can go as high as 25%. One of the advantages of having RC&D is that Districts and individuals can use RC&D as their non-profit "umbrella" to obtain funds, primarily for the rural areas. This provides seamless collaboration.

Federal money comes to each state's RC&D Councils through NRCS which determines how the funds for RC&D Programs will be distributed. NRCS provides a stipend for the Assistant to the Council. Most states have one RC&D office with one RC&D coordinator. However, because Hawai'i is a non-contiguous state we have multiple RC&D offices. The RC&D Councils are made up of one member from each SWCD board and one member at large not affiliated with any SWCD Board.

Each of the Councils are encouraged to have at least five standing committees.

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The Big Island's RC&D Council supports the Hilo Pow Wow, a three-day event that generates approximately \$1 million for the local economy. It costs approximately 40K to run the event with funds coming through the Hawai'i Tourism Authority and other donors. As with any program, the RC&D Council must first approve the Pow Wow as a project they want to be involved in. The individuals coordinating the event determine which grants they want to apply for. If the RC&D Council agrees with the proposal, the federal RC&D employee assists those individuals by ensuring that those applying for funding use the proper "boiler plate" documentation required for the 501(c)3 and that they are submitted on time. That employee also assists with the logistics and accounting aspects of the funds, ensuring that they go into a partitioned account and distributed appropriately. This is the basic system used in funding requests for various community projects.

It should be noted that these tasks are generally the responsibility of the Program Assistant who may be pulled by NRCS to work on Farm Bill-related work. Those individuals initiating the process are required to create the budgets required by the proposals and see the project through to the end.

1) Reports:

A. NRCS Report: Kealakekua Field Office:

- 1) 2009 Contract Obligations - 6,833.1 acres treated and over \$1.1 million obligated.
- 2) Current active contracts, 109.
- 3) 2008-2009 fiscal year conservation contract payments, over \$2.1 million.
- 4) Patra Gerghich's position was posted until closure on 10-16-09.
- 5) Jeff Knowles' position will be posted after he leaves for Afghanistan. Both positions are posted on www.USAjobs.gov/
- 6) An Acting DC from Saipan will be arriving this month.
- 7) Applications still open for EQIP 2010.

B. HACD Report: Executive Teleconference last month.

Eliminated inactive committees and want to create a Finance Committee to act as a funding committee to investigate other sources of funding. Also discussed was the state-wide poster contest.

C. NACD Report:

1) NACD meeting in July in Wyoming hosted by the Southwestern Region. The southwestern region is one of the more financially stable regions of the county with Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, Oregon, and Arizona have carried the 17 state member region financially.

- a) These states have a CEO to locate funds.

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b) The Arizona CEO will come to Hawai'i to discuss how to obtain funding and meet with the county. These states have a line item budget which pays for the CEO position. It is felt this position more than pays for itself.

2) Arizona has a "dump" similar to the Kona Kealakehe "dump". Arizona received grants for 1.7 million to deal with it.

3) The next Southwestern Regional meeting for the will be in Kona, scheduled for Sept. 2010. Fifteen to seventeen states will be participating and is expected to bring approximately 300 participants from the mainland. Greg Hendrickson has volunteered to chair the committee for this conference. M. Robblee to provide any necessary assistance. The Regional Executive Director will also provide assistance. There was a national conference in Waikoloa a number of years ago.

4) S. Cowell is working on coordinating assistance for American Samoa which suffered a devastating tsunami.

D. Big Island RC&D Report: RC&D is working with a consultant in an effort to apply for Revolving Loans Grants and Stimulus Monies to disseminate into the community. The Council is working toward enlisting the assistance of a professional grant writer.

E. Conservation Assistant Report: Available upon request. Discussion around Flood Control Structure Tour: First stop - at Richard Kunitomo's property. There is concern about the stability of Mamalahoa Hwy. between Elementary School Junction South, in front of Mr. Kunitomo's home, and the Koshi flume area. Participants in the tour will include Warren Lee. Invitations will be sent to all County Council Members that represent North and South Kona.

F. Monthly Report to the County: Available upon request.

2) **New Cooperator(s):**

7-5-016:031, 035, 049;050 (88.8 acres): A sustainable farm with animals, vegetables and fruit orchards. They are interested in native plant restoration and riparian buffer restoration.

8-9-013:053 (7.69 acres) with citrus, avocado, coffee and other assorted fruit. Continued production of these crops while expanding coffee production.

8-9-013:050 (7.96 acres): Currently forest and grower of papaya. Looking for assistance in determining what would be appropriate crops for the area.

8-7-004:027 (5 acres): Coffee, banana and other assorted fruit. Looking for assistance with reforestation and would like to expand coffee and start with cacao.

8-7-014:056 (5.13 acres) Pasture, coffee and avocado, looking to obtain a conservation plan to ensure best management practices are being followed.

7-9-002:016 (3.2 acres): Vegetable farmer who wants to include citrus, coffee, avocado and vanilla. The individual requesting to be a cooperator is not the land owner. No documentation has been provided that he has the authority to farm this land.

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MSCU* (V. Isbell/G. Hendrickson) to approve five of the six new Cooperator Applications. The sixth Applicant, TMK 7-9-002:016 will need written documentation that he is authorized to be on the land and authorized to farm it.

- 3) **Conservation Plans:** **7-8-004:002** (7.59 acres): Presented by M. Robblee. Practices to be installed include, conservation cover, mulching, with nutrient and pest management. These practices will be applied to active coffee orchards only and will account for .6 acres. The main concern for this cooperator has been erosion, and pest management. Tropic lalo sprigs from the Plant Material Center have been provided to establish conservation cover.
8-9-013:018 (10 acres): The area the conservation plans applies to is a .5 acre field. The main concern for the cooperator is pest management and inefficient water supply. Practices to be implanted include conservation cover, mulching, nutrient management and pest management.
MSCU* (V. Isbell/S. Cowell) to approve conservation plan as presented.
- 4) **Correspondence Review:** Available upon request.
- 5) **Subdivision Reviews:** Tabled until our next meeting.
- 6) **Big Island RC&D Grant** The Kona Soil and Water Conservation District was not awarded grant money to extend their pilot program to non-cooperators ineligible for NRCS funds. The District's application was rated as 15 out of 17. One of the reasons provided was the misconception that those who would benefit from this program are already able to obtain soil testing paid for by NRCS, Extension Services and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts. It was a flaw in the proposal to express there were no other financial assistance programs available to new farmers or farmers who did not meet NRCS eligibility rules that the District is aware of.
- 7) **Pilot Project Update** Tabled until next meeting
- 8) **Kealakehe Dump update** Per K. Greenwell, it is an EPA issue. This issue is greater than the dump itself, it has to do with Hawaiian Homes and the impact of the dump if it were to catch fire. It is currently on fire in a number of different places that the county is aware of. All the fires are subterranean and the process for controlling them is to apply water base-foam plus detergent. The plan is to mine the dump and turn it into an organic soil to be used along the coastline in developmental parks, golf courses and general landscapes that are being built today with cinder soil. The value of this soil is projected at \$.5 - 1.5 billion. There are a number of federal agencies participating, the EPA the Department of the Interior and National Parks due to the impact on the near shore water. K. Greenwell has been to D.C. and met with representatives. K. Marquez is concerned because there is no written

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data on when a clean up will begin or will need to be completed by. V. Isbell is concerned because there are no published studies on the health hazards to the public. G. Hendrickson asked for K. Greenwell's viewpoint on a comment made by Lono Tyson in a letter to the RC&D Council. The comment "*...I am concerned that multiple parties are working independently and are not coordinating their efforts and therefore may potentially negatively impact the County's chances to acquire State or Federal funds.*" K. Greenwell was in agreement with this statement. K. Marquez believes total community input is required.

- 8) **Treasurer Officer Position** **MSCU* (V. Isbell/G. Hendrickson) to nominate and approve Kawika Marquez as the new treasurer.**
- 9) **Meeting Adjourned:** Next Meeting November 10, 2009.

Virginia Isbell, Secretary

*MSCU – Moved, Seconded, Carried Unanimously