

KONA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

February 9, 2010

Directors Present: Greg Hendrickson Rick Robinson
Kawika Marquez Skip Cowell

Associate Directors Present: Jeff Turner

KSWCD Staff: Mary Robblee

NRCS Staff: None

RC&D Kawika Marquez

Meeting called to order at 7:00 a.m. by Chair, Rick Robinson.

MSCU* (K. Marquez/S. Cowell) to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2009 meeting as circulated.

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

1) Reports:

A. NRCS Report:

- a) No NRCS staffers available for the meeting. Reporting for NRCS the District's Conservation Assistant. M. Robblee reported there were 34 applications for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and 2 applications for the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program for the 2010 ranking period which ended on February 5th. The EQIP Organic Initiative sign up deadline for the 2010 ranking period is March 12.
- b) NRCS had a State Technical Committee meeting to discuss the signups for the 2010 ranking period. Also discussed was discontinuing the recommendation of species that are on the national or state invasive weed species list. Kikuyu grass was the example provided. It will no longer be recommended nor will cost share dollars be spent on establishing kikuyu grass for any purpose. It has been popular as forage for cattle. The state's forest assessment was also discussed and is scheduled to be completed early this summer.
- c) A new Soil Conservationist will be starting in the NRCS Kealahou Field Office on March 1st. (Patra Gherich's replacement).
- d) The posting for the District Conservationist closed in mid-January and a review of all applicants is now underway.
- e) There was no information provided on the replacement of the Soil Conservationist position held by Denise Light who retired on December 31st.

B. HACD Report: Wes Nohara, due to being laid off from his job, is no longer eligible to be director for the West Maui SWCD. He has had to resign as director and HACD President. The HACD Vice President has become an interim President until elections can be held.

C. NACD Report: (Skip Cowell) New CEO for NACD. There is a great concern on the national level about the deterioration in the relationship between NACD and NRCS. The general feeling is that NRCS tends to talk down to NACD. The new CEO met with the Pacific Region and there is a clearer sense of our uniqueness

versus the east coast. There is a new Western Specialist on the NACD staff. The major question was on how to come together, how to better communicate. Despite Skip advising the Pacific Region that he will be retiring at the end of the year they reelected him as Chairman of the region. It seemed nobody else was willing to take on the position.

D. Big Island RC&D Report:

- a) HADP (Hawaii Agricultural Development Plan) has been signed. The RFP will be going out soon.
- b) Washington DC trip, begins March 3rd will include a meeting with Ginger Murphy, the Associate Chief of NRCS
- c) Also meeting with Cheryl Cook, Deputy Undersecretary Rural Development. President Obama has zeroed out the RC&D budget for 2011. It will be up to Congress to address this.
- d) Will be meeting with Gary Locke of the Department of Commerce to pursue funding avenues for RC & D, the Districts, the Multi Day Music Event Festival and rural development.
- e) Kawika also has a meeting with the National Endowment for the Arts to discuss a proposal for a community involved referring to this as “prime the pump” money.
- f) Carol Sampia will be leaving RC&D in October. There is approximately 40K in funding that will be coming in to hire a replacement. When those funds will become available is unclear.
- g) There was a meeting on Jan. 29th and a follow up meeting will be held on Feb. 19th to discuss a Multi-Day Music Festival Event.
- h) The February 26th meeting will be held at the NELHA Gateway Conference Room at 10am. RC&D and NELHA are working toward becoming collaborators on funding opportunities.

E. Conservation Assistant Report: Available upon request.

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

2) New Cooperator(s):

8-3-010:054 (5.11 acres) Coffee and avocado producer, looking for Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) to improve soil moisture content and soil moisture retention.

7-6-011:044 (254.83 acres) Coffee producer with sheep, producer wants to diversify crop to include tea and vegetables

7-8-003:022 (14.15 acres) Coffee producer wants to work toward more organic practices.

8-3-009:059 (3 acres) coffee and mac nut producer wants to learn how to use water more efficiently.

7-8-009:037 (8 acres) coffee producer who wants to open up new fields on parcel

8-8-002:024 (13.2 acres) producer is currently working 4 of the 13+ acres and wants to open up the balance to agricultural production

7-8-006:017 & 023 (3 and .7 acres respectively) coffee producer who wants to learn more about good land stewardship and wants to install conservation cover

7-9-009:014 (36 acres) coffee producer leases 3 acres from owner wants to establish *tropic lalo* as conservation cover

7-7-007:057 (4.7 acres) coffee producer who wants to increase soil water retention via shade trees (*monkey pods*) and conservation cover. Producer also wants assistance with erosion control, a resource concern that conservation cover will address

8-2-001:095 (3.4 acres) coffee and mac nut producer who want to establish conservation cover to prevent erosion and increase soil water retention

MSCU* (K. Marquez/S. Cowell) to approve the new Cooperator Applications.

3) **Correspondence Review:**

Available upon request.

4) **Kealakehe Dump update:**

5) **Sept. 2010 Conference:**

M. Robblee has been creating an email distribution list for the districts in the Pacific Area and Southwest Regions of the NACD organization. The next major hurdle is to develop an agenda.

6) **Proposal to Contract Conservation Specialist:**

Due to a knee injury the District's Conservation Assistant has been unable to do site visit work related to creating conservation planning. **MSCU* (K. Marquez/S. Cowell) to approve contracting out to an NRCS retiree the site visit work required to create a conservation plan. The scope of work will initially include participating in a meeting between the cooperator and our Conservation Assistant to review the completed conservation plan and attendance at the District Board of Director's meeting when the plan is presented for approval. After 3 plans are completed the Board will reevaluate the need for the contractor to participate in the post site visit meetings.**

7) **Literature Purchase for Earth Day:**

Allot \$132 for the purchase of literature from the National Association of Conservation District (NACD) suitable for school age children and will be available at the Kona SWCD's 2010 Earth Day booth. This year's NACD theme is "Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats". Additional school-age-appropriate literature has been ordered with "Where is Energy" themes.

8) **FSA Programs:**

Jen Withrow of Farm Service Agency (FSA) discussed available programs through FSA They include:

- a) Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) which provides crop insurance for crops that cannot be insured through commercial insurance programs.
- b) Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) provides benefits to producers who had losses due to the drought.
- c) Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides cost share assistance for producers to rehabilitate farm land damaged by natural disasters. They are currently accepting applications for ECP for damage related to VOG.
- d) Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) provides assistance to ranchers who have suffered livestock grazing losses.

9) **Earth Day 2010:**

Associate Director Jeff Turner brought the BOD up to date on Earth Day Events and inquired about the District's Earth Day plans.

MSCU* (K. Marquez/G. Henderickson) to approve the District hosting a 4x4 tour as part of the Earth Festival and to make a \$2000 donation toward this year's Earth Festival.

10) Flooding Concerns:

Community member Richard Kunitomo presented to the BOD a TMK map that shows a drainage way or easement that has somehow gone away. The Chairman explained the question, as presented to the Board, is best asked of the county's Public Works Department. The Chairman advised Mr. Kunitomo that Ki Emler, Public Works Engineer, had stated he understood what the problem is. Mr. Kunitomo was advised to consult with the County Public Works Department and Mr. Emler specifically. Mr. Kunitomo provided the District a copy of this map for their records. Chair, Robinson, advised Mr. Kunitomo that he would call Ki Emler as well

11) Meeting Adjourned:

Next Meeting March 9, 2010

Virginia Isbell, Secretary

*MSCU – Moved, Seconded, Carried Unanimously