

**Minnehaha Conservation District
December 11th, 2023, Monthly Meeting
USDA Service Center
Board Meeting at 3:00 pm**

Heber called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Supervisors present: Rick Bonander, Travis Entenman, Gordon Heber, Jim Pfeifer, and Allen Severtson

Supervisors absent: None

Advisors present: None

Advisors absent: Brian Alderson, Carl Eliason, Susan Kruse, Kelly Lyons, Mark McGee, and Jennifer Schmidtbauer

Others present: John Parker, Mike Langner, Denise Fletcher, Alina Krone-Hedman, Dan Wehmeyer, Brian Top, Austin Carlson, and Chris Goldade

Agenda: MSP to approve by Pfeifer and Entenman. All ayes.

Minutes of November 13th meeting: MSP to approve by Severtson and Bonander. All ayes.

Treasurer's report: Reviewed at meeting. MSP to approve by Severtson and Entenman. All ayes.

Bills: Reviewed at meeting. MSP to approve and pay by Pfeifer and Bonander. All ayes.

NRCS activity report by Dan Wehmeyer:

WETLANDS: 40 certified wetland determination requests in process.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP): No new offers can be made until the new farm bill is in place.

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSTWP): Approximately \$1.6 million for Big Sioux RU (Resource Unit).

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP): Approximately \$1.6 million for Big Sioux RU. \$50,000 for CIS (Conservation Implementation Strategy) – high tunnels, cover crops.

BIG SIOUX RIVER PROJECT RCPP: Approximately \$637,000 remaining in last year of project.

Big Sioux River Project Report by Barry Berg:

SRAM & RAM: SRAM/RBI Stack and Extension; RAM/RBI Extension.

OTHER RELATED ITEMS: 1 producer in Moody County finishing up water development. Submitted the 2023 annual GRTS report.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION: Big Sioux River and Sustainability Summit on 12/7/23. Big Sioux River Buffer Programs Comparison.

UPCOMING: 12/13/23 Q4 Steering Committee Meeting at Minnehaha Community Water Corp. at 9:00 a.m.

Urban Educator Report by Alina Krone-Hedman:

OUTREACH: Tabled and presented at Local Foods Conference on Nov. 17-18-2023 and Big Sioux River and Sustainability Summit on Dec. 7. Approximately 150 in attendance at each event. Will attend Pheasant Fest (March 1-3-2024) and Sioux Empire Water Festival (March 12-13-2024).

CITY PARTNERSHIP: Prairie and Pollinator Program – continued work on kits and selling leftover kits. Community Garden and Education Demonstration Area – Continuing work to prepare for the spring.

NRCS PARTNERSHIP: Continue working on draft of application regarding next phase of Urban Conservation Demonstration & Awareness Project.

OTHER: Newsletter – Coordinating articles being written by various individuals. Christmas Tree at Good Earth State Park – One of approximately 12 organizations presenting trees. Provided re-usable bags with goodies for the official event on Dec. 9. Will take tree down on Jan. 8.

Public Comment Time – 15 minutes - None

Update from Supervisors - Bonander mentioned that Summit Carbon Solutions is working on re-routing their pipeline in the state and will re-submit the plan. Heber noted that the Research Farm Focus Group will meet in Brookings on 1/10/24 for a noon meal and meeting. He also attended a Grassland Coalition meeting on 12/5/23 in Rapid City. An annual meeting and session on land succession planning was held. Heber is also a member of a Game Fish & Parks focus group about deer management that will meet again on 1/08/24, so requested that the next District meeting be held on Tuesday, 1/09/24. The board agreed to the date change. Entenman mentioned that the Friends of the Big Sioux tested Wall Lake water and levels were good, indicating that the Gevik Site is doing it's job.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Service Report (bio-solids, tree planting, grass planting, Gevik Site, Water Festival)

Bio-solids: Sampling is done for the season. Trees: Many tree plans are in place. Grass: 7 people have reserved the drill for spring planting already (about 1,000 acres). Gevik Site: Crew will be working on cutting fabric around trees this week. Water Festival: Event will be held March 11-13-2024 at USF. 2489 students have signed up, with 104 teachers from 45 schools. Looking for presenters. Let Parker or Krone-Hedman know if interested in presenting or volunteering.

2. Budget - 2024

Parker presented copies of budget. This will be approved at the January meeting.

3. National Convention 2024

San Diego, CA on February 10-14, 2024. Early discount rate in effect until 12/22/23. Total cost with registration fee, hotel, and meals will be about \$2,500 - \$3,000. Let Parker know if interested in going. The District will pay some of the costs.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Soil Health Coalition – Gevik Educational Ideas by Austin Carlson and Chris

Austin Carlson and Chris Goldade (with the Soil Health Coalition) met with Parker and toured the Gevik Site. They talked about some of their ideas for the site. The Soil Health Coalition has some funds available to help with improvements. They discussed methods to rejuvenate the grasslands, such as burning, flash grazing, mowing and chemical. They also suggested replacing the food plot with a pollinator garden area, seeding native forbs. They mentioned site

preparation for a no-till garden in the Urban Garden site, as well as creating a kiosk with informational signs for both the Gevik site and the Urban Garden site. Another meeting will be held in the future.

2. Board Positions for 2024

Postponed until the January meeting.

3. Employee Reviews

Will be held in January.

Executive Session (if needed) – None

CONSERVATION PLAN SIGNING - None

OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

MSP to adjourn at 4:17 p.m. by Severtson and Bonander. All ayes.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Tuesday, January 9, 2023, at 3:00 pm – USDA Service Center

Submitted by Denise Fletcher, Recording Secretary