

## **EMPIRE STATE CHAPTER SWCS**

**February 3, 2005**

A meeting of the **Local Arrangements Committee** (LAC) was held on February 3, 2005 at Gander Mountain Sports in Cicero, NY.

In attendance were Tony Esser, Dan Dostie, Bill Keating, Sarah Kron, Robert Remillard, Don Kuhn, Tibor Horvath, Ellen Luchsinger, Kris Skopeck, Steve Machovec, Jim Hotaling, Dana Chapman, Gary Sick, John Wildeman, Don Wild, Jeff Carmichael and Lisa Miller.

### **Finance Committee:**

Jim Hotaling submitted a Summary Budget for the 2005 SWCS National Meeting. He indicated that the budget was a first draft and doesn't reflect incoming funds for support activities such as the social night, sightseeing tours etc. that will generate some income to cover those budgeted activities through activity charges.

Jim has received a preliminary contract from NYS DAM that was a member item generated by Senator Hoffman. There is some concern that until the money, \$20,000, is in hand that we should not count on it. Jim has signed the contract and returned it to NYS DAM. They need to finalize the contract and return to Jim. The way the contract was written, the funds would go directly to the Cayuga County SWCD. A proposal for the contract was distributed to all present.

Funds currently on hand are \$2,593.75. No NRCS funding will be provided as has been done in the past. Tony Esser is currently working with Craig Cox to see if funds may somehow be restored. Tony also reported that he has received a commitment from NYS DEC for \$1,500. Gary Fick indicated that based on his past experience, the Chapter will need to have \$40,000 in hard cash to pull the meeting off.

Tony has prepared a request for funding support letter to be sent to NY businesses. Jim stated that Cayuga SWCD will be responsible for mailing out the requests. This is an item that appears in the contract and can easily be documented for payment under the contract. It was also recommended that we solicit support funds from all SWCD's, RC&D Councils. John W. suggested that any SWCD contributions should go to the NYS CDEA. That way they may be able to secure a vendor space if the total exceeds \$3,000. In a request letter, it needs to indicate that the Empire Chapter has contributed to NYS CDEA events in the past.

**Facilities:**

Arrangements with the Hotel have been finalized. There will be rooms for 10 concurrent sessions during the meeting. Tibor has secured 14 projectors and 13 laptop computers for use during the sessions. He estimates that he will need at least 20 volunteers to handle the equipment during the sessions.

**Tours:**

All technical and social tours have been finalized. Handouts were presented to those present detailing each. This information has been sent to Ankeny so they can begin developing the material.

**Program:**

All symposia and concurrent sessions' topics have been finalized. Pete Wright is now coordinating with the presenters to determine their media needs.

**Publicity:**

Kris will begin work on identifying some broadcast media contacts that may be willing to provide coverage during the meeting. She will attempt to make some contacts at the upcoming NY Farm Show the last week in February.

**Volunteers:**

There was considerable discussion about the need for volunteers. Several of the committee chairs indicated that they will need several individuals. Tony has asked that each committee provide him with an estimate of needs. That way, the full need can be identified and we can become more aggressive in soliciting help.

**Arrangements:**

Sarah Fusco (**BUSH**) {corrected 3/29/05} has agreed to sing both the National Anthem and the Canadian National Anthem. Kris will use her contacts to have a Color Guard present the flags at the opening ceremony. It was felt that the opening should have an inspirational speaker to kick things off. Jim suggested that he has access to an excellent slide show that has been used by the Cayuga SWCD in the past. He will check with Bob Brower to see if it can be located. Jim will also work with the Monroe SWCD to firm up local speakers to start the sessions. It was recommended that Congressman Randy Kuhl be invited as a speaker. Mr. Kuhl is a member on the House Agriculture Committee. Jim will make that contact.

Robert has not been active on the signage that will be needed as it is too early. As we get close to the actual meeting date he will begin preparing the signs.

Robert said he would do them rather than have to pay to have signs made. He has the foam board that was used at last years national meeting so there is no need to purchase anything new.

### **Exhibits:**

Exhibits and exhibitors are handled out of the Ankeny office.

### **Transportation:**

Don Kuhn has made contacts with the local bus companies. He needs to know how many buses will be needed for the social and technical tours. Tony explained that at this time that is an unknown. It will depend on how many individuals will sign up for each activity and that won't be known until registration ends. That should be approximately 30 days before the actual meeting. For each social or technical tour, the committee's established a minimum and maximum participation. If the minimum number is not reached, the tour will be cancelled. Once the registration is completed, Don will have a handle on how many buses will be needed.

### **Hospitality:**

Jo Beth Bellanca is chairing this committee. She was not present to make a report but it was indicated that she has it under control. As to a welcoming reception, it was decided that the Empire Chapter will host it. Gary suggested that rather than have finger foods as was done last year, that it would be advantageous to have the hotel provide a buffet. He has checked prices with the hotel and they have estimated the cost to be between \$13,000 - \$14,000. The group authorized Gary to finalize the buffet within the dollar range stated. The buffet would have a time certain start and end. If people arrive late, they will be on their own for that night as to food.

### **Registration:**

Ankeny will handle the registration materials and will be present to staff the registration desk. It is anticipated that 35 volunteers will be needed to handle just registration. Each person will do a 4 hour shift. Dick Winnett, chair of this committee, has indicated that he has several volunteers already but will need more.

### **Silent Auction:**

Dana is the chair of this committee. He will be soliciting donations for the silent auction soon. The items will be stored at the Cayuga SWCD until the meeting. Dana will be contacting all of the national SWCS Chapters to ask them to donate an item for the auction.

### **Student Chapter:**

Greg Albrecht, chair, presented a Student Activities Track and a proposed budget. Two budgets were presented as options, one for \$2,200 and a second for \$2,750 dependent upon the Activities Track. No action was taken by the LAC at this time relative to the budget request. The door prize categories were accepted as is and authorized for publishing in promotional materials.

### **New Business:**

The idea of a keepsake bag was brought up. Several ideas were generated but nothing was decided upon at this time.

The LAC adjourned their meeting at approximately 12:05pm.

## **Empire Chapter SWCS Business Meeting**

A meeting of the Empire Chapter of SWCS was held following the LAC meeting. Members present were Esser, Dostie, Keating, Kron, Remillard, Kuhn, Horvath, Luchsinger and Machovec.

Dan opened the meeting by thanking Tony, Outgoing President for all the work he has done the previous year and the leadership he has provided.

### **Meeting Minutes:**

Minutes from the past business/training session were reviewed. Some minor edits need to be done and Dan asked that those changes be made and sent to him so that he can finalize the minutes.

### **Chapter Report:**

Dan indicated that a Chapter Report needs to be completed and sent to Ankeny within this month. The report is only two pages long and just captures some general chapter information such as membership, officers, etc. Tony volunteered to prepare the report and send it to Ankeny.

### **Chapter Awards:**

Dan indicated that the Chapter needs to consider awards as they will be presented at the National Meeting. He reviewed all the eligible categories and past recipients. Our Chapter has done fairly well in the past, receiving our last award in 2003. There was discussion as to cut off dates for award

recommendations. It was felt that it may be too late at this time to nominate the Chapter or an individual. Sarah volunteered to check on the deadline issue and if it is not too late, prepare some recommendations. However if the process is too complicated and time is short, she will not be able to prepare a recommendation. If that is the case, she will develop an award recommendation for the Empire Chapter that can be presented for next year based on our hosting the 2005 National Meeting.

Currently there is no Student Chapter in NY. Dan feels that Greg Albrecht may be trying to revitalize a Chapter at Cornell.

### **House of Delegates Meeting:**

Dan will represent the Chapter at the House of Delegates Meeting in Rochester. If any members have any issues that they would like to raise to the Delegates, an issue paper needs to be developed and given to Dan no later than April 29.

### **Treasurers Report:**

The Treasurers report was provided to Dan by Jim Hotaling. Dan stated that Lisa Miller has been doing an excellent job in dealing with the Chapters finances. Currently assets are \$58,000 with most of that income being generated through the sale of the Stormwater Guides. There was discussion about the future of this income stream as NYS DEC is now making the guide available on-line or through a CD. Tony has been communicating with them on this issue. It was felt that the Chapter may need to look at additional revenue streams in the future.

### **Envirothon:**

No report available. Jim Hotaling is our official delegate to the National Envirothon Committee.

### **Scholarships:**

Ellen reported that the deadline for scholarship applications ended on January 29. There were 10 applications for the regular scholarships and 2 applications for the Ron Fletcher Memorial Scholarship. Mark Burger will be reviewing the Fletcher nominees and will meet with Ron's family to make a final recommendation on the scholarship recipient. Sarah questioned as to if the evaluation criteria for a scholarship was current or should be revised. Ellen explained how the criteria were originally established. The issues were really about recipients being "traditional" students or individuals who may actually be employed by NRCS or a SWCD as an example. Ellen and Sarah will review the criteria and make recommendations to the Chapter if changes need to be made.

Dan asked if any Society level scholarships were received in New York. Ellen stated that she has referred individuals in the past but she was uncertain if any of them had actually applied. Ellen will promote this opportunity in the future for SWCS members.

### **Awards:**

Sarah reported that she has taken no action on awards at this time. One possibility was mentioned that we should have a Media Award to present based on this year's National meeting. Sarah will keep awards on our agenda so that we will not have to be scrambling at year's end to solicit award recommendations. The National awards process is more complicated so we need to be well prepared prior to deadline dates.

### **Web Site:**

Dan will be updating the web page as information becomes available. He asked those present to help in this effort by providing him with information when it is relevant.

Tony will continue to do the Chapter Newsletter for the remainder of this year. He will try and get a news letter out every 4-6 weeks to keep the information flowing. He expects to get the next newsletter out the first week in March.

### **Chapter History:**

Dan has a Chapter History that is in hardcopy but it is very outdated. The last updates occurred in 1992. Dan has asked Dana to help with the update since that time on past officers, committee chairs and membership. Tony stated he can scan the hardcopy so that it can be put onto the web site.

### **Membership:**

The Chapters total membership now stands at 134. Eleven new members have been added since the November 4, 2004 annual meeting. Members are encouraged to seek out non-members and explain the benefits of membership.

### **Mini-grants:**

Bill passed out a copy of the latest mini-grant applicants. The current process is an open application period so they can come at any time of the year. It was felt that there needs to be a definite time frame for the application process. It is possible that if a grant was not awarded during any given year, and the grant request still sits in our list, that the work may have already been completed or the purpose of the grant may have changed. Bill has tried to contact all who had requested a mini-grant to see if the request was still valid. Feedback was inconsistent.

The council members present decided to deny all applications and start with a new process. This would ensure that only valid projects were considered and funding decisions could be made when the grants were still fresh.

**Annual Business Meeting:**

The annual business meeting date is November 2, 2005. No meeting location has yet been determined but it was recommended that the Ramada Inn in Auburn worked well last year and we should explore the possibility of having it there again.

Steve Groff, a Pennsylvania no-till producer has agreed to be a guest speaker. He is sponsored by SARE so the only fees the Chapter would have to pay are for his travel.

**New Business:**

A request was submitted by the Hamilton County SWCD to provide financial support for this years Adirondack Waterfest. The request was for \$100.00. Bill Keating made a motion to approve the request, Tony seconded and the motion was approved by all present.

There being no other new business, a motion was made to adjourn by Esser, seconded by Horvath. The meeting concluded at approximately 1:30pm.

The next meeting date is April 7, 2005. Location to be announced at a later date.

Steve Machovec  
Secretary