

**SWCS Empire Chapter
June 20, 2002
Council Meeting
Minutes**

Present: Jeff Carmichael, Dan Dostie, Ellen Luchsinger, Elaine Dalrymple, Julie Burger, Bill Keating, Rich Wildman, Dick Dale, Margaret Fusco, Henri DeMoras.

President, Jeff Carmichael called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. The minutes of the April 23, 2002 meeting were reviewed. Elaine asked for clarification on the section of the minutes that dealt with spending on publications. \$200 was approved for spending on 100 CD's of the DEC Stormwater Design Manual. Henri made the motion to accept the minutes with the addition with a 2nd from Rich. All in favor.

Jeff handed out a revised meeting agenda.

Treasurer's Report:

National/Regional SWCS Issues:

a. Membership Dues to NE Region: Dana mentioned this at the last meeting. The idea presented was to have states pool membership dues so that a pot of money would go to the greater NE for use on membership. At present, \$5 of our \$60 membership fee comes back to us. Jeff wanted to have further discussion on this. A regional membership report from Craig Cox was handed out. The NE has dropped 18 members in two months, and nationally membership is down by 40. Rich asked if they know anything about the demographics of those that didn't renew. Members get their renewal notices on the anniversary of when they joined, not all at the same time of year. Ellen thinks we need a good individual to head up a membership effort. Bill thinks it is a job of the regional rep to try to contact those who haven't renewed. Jeff would like to get a copy of the list of those who haven't renewed. Jeff will get the list of lost members and send it to the regional representatives. The Council agreed that before a decision is made to give our money to a regional membership campaign, we need to know more about how they are going to use it. Rich thinks it would be better to have more programs and try to get more members this way. Ellen agreed and commented that we may want to direct our funds to our own effort to increase membership. Rich asked if this was a national agenda or a NE proposal and Jeff said he wasn't sure. Dan commented that all the Empire Chapter members are on one list so it is hard for the Regional Reps. to pick out which members are from their region. Bub Barra keeps the mailing list. Rich volunteered to get the membership list from Bub and organize it by region. Jeff will get the regional boundaries to Rich. Margaret suggested that the region number be put right into the list. Rich will do this by the next meeting. The regional membership dues issue was tabled until we get more info.

b. Farm Bill: Craig will still be working to make sure that the funds allocated for the Farm Bill materialize. Jeff thinks that there may be more opportunities for professional development since the private sector will be more involved. Dan said that with the new Farm Bill, NRCS can write contracts with the private sector to do technical assistance. Bill said that President Bush is calling it out-sourcing. Dan said that NRCS is not sure they can train the private sector on field BMP's this summer. Dick commented that he could use the training now. Dan mentioned an old video entitled "Conservation on Your Own" that talks about laying out some field BMP's. Margaret mentioned that each October there is a Conservation Skills Workshop and perhaps this can be opened up to the private sector. Rich concurred that it makes sense to do the training together. Ellen mentioned a Practice Guidelines Handbook that is being redone by NRCS. Job sheets are being redrawn. Ellen has gotten Bill Elder to get the committee going again to get this done. Dan asked if working at the Field Office level is frustrating for the private sector. The guidelines used to be in a book - Technical Release 1. Henri thinks this would be a good topic for the Annual Meeting. Jeff mentioned that perhaps we should have a session on all the materials that exist as part of the Conservation Skills Workshop. Jim Calhoun is heading up the mentorship program, which more or less is set up to train new NRCS staff but perhaps can be extended to others. How does the SWCS fit into this? Who is out there who can do the training? Rich thinks this is a good role for us. What can we provide? Jeff can talk to Amanda to see if the private sector can be invited to the Conservation Skills Workshop. Margaret suggested that we offer to help Amanda set this up. Rich commented that SWCS should match the need.

c. National Annual Meeting: Who is going? Jeff, Dana, Rich are going. Don Lake may be going.

d. 2003 NE Regional Workshop: New York will sponsor this next March. We thought of doing stormwater. Julie asked what past topics have been covered – CAFO, third party vendor stuff. Rich says that usually it is a leadership workshop versus technical training. Jeff will call Jackie at the national office and ask what is expected of us. Rich suggested the topic of changing roles (transition) re: third party vendors, etc. Henri asked if you have to be a member to go to this meeting. Possible date for regional (NE states) stormwater training is November 2003. Margaret suggested looking at the membership list to see if some members have expertise in this area. Location might be Lake George.

Committee Reports:

a. Publications: Jeff reported that we are still selling books and CD's. All of the orders have been received except for the CD's for NYS Stormwater Design Manual. 300 of 400 hard copy books of this manual have been sold. The big blue book will be redone with DEC money.

b. Scholarship: Ellen e-mailed the scholarship form to various Board members. Someone suggested taking out the financial need criteria. Julie went onto the national

website and printed out their scholarships and mentioned some of their criteria. They do 2, \$1,000 scholarships. Julie thinks the form should be attractive and flashy to attract attention. Ellen thinks it helps if we can make the personal contact. Dollar amount suggested 2, \$1,000. Rich asked what percent of our annual income is given in scholarships? About 10%. What do we want them to do for the money? Summary of scholarship discussion: take out the financial need including for the Fletcher Scholarship (the family decides the dollar amount for this scholarship); use what they submit to us for our newsletter and change the amount to 2, \$1,000. Ellen will let the Fletcher family know that we are changing the criteria for the other scholarships and the dollar amount. Margaret made a motion. Elaine seconded. All in favor.

c. Awards: Dan put the new form in the last newsletter. Julie looked at the awards that the national gives out. They are much harder to get than our awards. We essentially do what they do but they are more stringent. Personal touch will make a difference. Ellen suggested that we put it in our next newsletter again.

d. Newsletter: Deadline for articles will be mid-July. Articles suggested – one on the Waterfest, scholarships, Indianapolis, October training, upcoming stormwater conference in 2003, order form for publications, update on Website, national awards, and upcoming events. Send articles to Dan or Craig.

SWCS mini-grant proposal: Bill handed out a packet with some ideas. Jeff commented that we might want to reduce the number of categories, generalize them and give examples. Also the dollar amount may be too low; should probably be around \$1,000 and maybe a match of some sort. Put a cap on how much we can allocate each year. We should think of the legal issues and we may need a contract of some sort so that the chapter is protected. Jeff thanked Bill for doing this. Henri asked if there should be some justification for the dollars the applicant is requesting, i.e. a budget should be included on the application form. They should state the time period for the project proposed and reiterate that a member can sponsor another group. Spell out SWCS and ESC. Photos are required. Put our vision and mission on the form. Jeff asked if Bill would redraft it and send copies to all Board members. Roll it out at our Annual meeting. Could put an article in the newsletter about this. Henri asked how we are going to publicize this. Dan suggested getting it out to the members. Dollar amount: Dick says we have \$7,000 in our checking and savings accounts and our inventory is built up. Maximum of \$500 for each project suggested. Maximum of a total of \$2,500 for the whole grant program. Henri suggested we put some more information on project selection process in the RFP.

Web-Site Proposal: Margaret suggested that if we have a web site let's make sure that it is a good one. Do we need to include that we want the ability to do orders totally on the web? Perhaps a printable form but don't need to have the ability to take orders on the web. Jeff will check with Cayuga Co. to see if we can use their credit card system. Rich thinks it will help our sales to have ability to take credit cards. Rich made the motion to tell LMD that we will proceed on the relationship as outlined and we reserve the right to evaluate the quality at any time. We would like to see the site

concept/design two weeks before the next meeting, which would be July 31st since the meeting will be Aug. 13th. Julie seconded. Henrie asked if we could have a 'resources available' type section on the website and where to get them. Julie asked if we should have a cap on how much we will spend. We want to have an ongoing relationship with this person so they maintain our website. All in favor.

Empire State Annual Meeting: Rich wondered if we could piggyback on the Conservation Skills workshop time. This may be difficult to schedule. Traditionally mid-November – shoot for November 14th. Margaret suggested we have the business meeting at 9 a.m., awards at lunch. Rich wondered if we have a budget for the Annual Meeting. Last year we paid Craig Cox's plane fare. Rich thought it would be better to spend our membership money that we get from national toward a good program that will attract members versus sending it to NE regional group to promote membership. In order to showcase our accomplishments we should have the business meeting in the middle of the day. We should talk about our publications. We can probably cover two topics and we need good speakers. Bill reminded us that we need to have our annual meeting, as our meeting explaining what we are trying to do, shouldn't give it short shrift. We won't allocate a dollar figure yet for the budget.

Adirondack Waterfest: Ellen handed out a flyer. It will be on July 19th at Caroga Lake. They are looking for help. Bill made a motion to approve spending \$200 for the festival. Margaret seconded. All in favor.

Agenda topics for the next meeting on Aug. 13th in Lafayette: Annual meeting, elections, website, minigrant, regional meeting, regional boundaries, publication pricing. Adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Minutes taken by Elaine Dalrymple