

**Empire Chapter Meeting
Soil and Water Conservation Society**

**June 4, 2001
Executive Council
Meeting Minutes**

Present: Jeff Carmichael, Karl Czymmek, John Calhoun, Bill Keating, Bub Barra, Margaret Fusco, Elaine Dalrymple, Ellen Luchsinger, Linda Szeliga

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by chair, Karl Czymmek. The minutes were reviewed and one correction was made to the subsection - N.E. Leadership Report: Dana Chapman's name was incorrectly listed as Dan. The corrected minutes were accepted after a motion made by Margaret, and second by Jeff.

Treasurer's Report: Jeff handed out copies of the Treasurer's Report. The net worth of the chapter is \$39,003.81. Jeff reviewed the treasurer's report and expenses. We bought binders for big blue book. We have just under 1,000 copies now of the Urban Erosion and Sediment Control Guide. There are just two books being sold now, Contractors Guide and the big blue book. Bub asked why there was a charge on the checking account and Jeff explained that the service charge is due to the type of account we have. Margaret asked if there is a problem with having too much money and Jeff said no, not until we are doing over \$25,000 in sales per year. Bill pointed out that most of the books are sold through Don Lake's classes and we get all of the profit other than a small amount going to Cayuga County SWCD for handling.

Jim Hotaling suggested that we recognize Lisa Miller in some way for her help with the books, perhaps with a gift certificate to an Auburn restaurant. There was some discussion on whether we should do this now or during our annual meeting. Bub mentioned that it is really the Cayuga District that deserves the recognition. Jeff commented that he talks to Lisa regularly and she has really helped organize the system and has developed a computerized inventory. Elaine made a motion to give a **\$50 Gift Certificate** to a restaurant to Lisa Miller now and Margaret seconded the motion with all in favor. Jeff will handle this.

There was discussion on presenting Cayuga County SWCD a Special Achievement Award at the annual meeting. One of the Board members needs to remember to write up this award application around annual meeting time. Don Lake should also be thanked. Karl will write a thank you note and have everyone sign it. Jeff thinks we should also present something at the annual meeting. We should find out if Don Lake has been recognized in the past. Margaret would like historical records of awards for the last two years but not before. Dana has history to 1992. Bub said that Don should be recognized at the national level. Jeff said he got an award at the San Diego national meeting but he was not sure what for, maybe CPESC. We should research what he was recognized for.

The national office and Dana need to be contacted Ellen also has some stuff that she will check and Jeff will look through his stuff. Bill said that the national would have info via the past presidents' reports. If everyone finds info on past award recipients, then we should put it in with secretary's minutes.

How do we publicize our awards and perhaps do a press release on the winners? We could write one up and share it with the winners' supervisors so they can release it to their local papers. Margaret will develop a press release format. Ellen would like to get the scholarship award letters out in August. Ellen wants to see if we are doing this at the wrong time of year because we are only getting a couple nominations out of Paul Smith's College.

There was discussion on the **Water Festival at Lake George**, July 27th. Do we want to have a display? It is hard to get District people to help since they do other things. Last year we had a conservation quiz type display. John asked what is the message we want people to get from the booth? Ellen says it is a family event and we try to promote conservation to kids. In the past we have handed out Conservation Voices, had GIS and info on soils. Karl asked if we could make an Envirothon link? Our society display needs some work and perhaps the national office can maybe provide some materials. Karl commented that this ties into the bigger picture of what is our future direction should be. Karl asked if \$250 would help cover the cost of doing the display. John said that we need to let folks know what the society does in a way that they can relate to. Bill commented that we are a professional group, which is not really an interesting thing for families. Margaret thinks we should redo our display so that it goes to other professional meetings to draw members; maybe to water quality training, etc. Ellen took it to NYACD. We need something that can be shipped to move around the state. John moved paying for up to \$250 to implement booth at waterfest. Jeff seconded. All in favor. Karl reiterated that the display issue and where we display it are symptoms of not knowing exactly why we are in business. We need to be clearer on this to get new members. Ellen said that Barb Silvestre of the State Committee might be able to help

Karl discussed a **teleconference** he had last week with various **northeast** chapter leaders. (Marilyn Stephenson is a contact for awards info.) Our issue of dwindling membership also exists on a national level. National membership in 2001 is 6830; in 1996 it was 8464. NRCS provided the core group and their numbers are decreasing. Margaret commented that SWCS sort of missed out in getting more members through the CCA certification program. Cox, the Executive VP at national level, has helped turn our organization around in many ways, through grants and lots of publicity for SWCS but some folks at the national level think that membership is not that important. Dana would like to change the membership decline in the NE. At national they figure each year they lose 20%. Linda asked if we all had membership brochures. We need to get more. Bill commented that professional societies are expensive to join. Bub – we need to build the organization to something they want to join before we promote it. We need to have something we can hang onto; we need to find our purpose in life, redefine ourselves. Bill – if they join they are joining a national organization not the Empire Chapter. Bub – but people join because of local activities. Karl – RUSLE and P index trainings and CAFO walks are

some possible activities. We need to have a plan and niche. Karl - people do want regional training opportunities. GIS training. A new RUSLE program is coming out; anyone can get RUSLE. A website with RUSLE 2 would help promote us. Bruce Hopkins was wondering if there was an opportunity to have an Envirothon type thing at the college level. Would the national office help us? Karl had problems getting a response from them in regards to the survey. Define ourselves and that will help us prioritize our activities. We do have a chapter mission but needs to be dusted off. Many organizations develop:

1. Vision
2. Mission
3. Goals
4. Objectives – who undertakes what

Karl outlined a possible structure for improving our organization. He drew a bull's eye type sketch with the council leadership in the center, and regional representation in the next ring, committees in the next ring and membership in the outer most ring. If we increase committee members, we increase the pool of candidates for the inner rings. Bub suggested that we could possibly discuss this structure at the annual meeting and Bruce or others that can help lead us in this type of discussion. John commented that he would be hard put to say what the Empire Chapter does. Ellen said that in the past we have done training sessions that would also involve family members but people left early. Karl is disappointed that the national association should be driving this effort but they aren't doing a lot. Bub – you need to have active members versus just members. John – who has the old mission statement? Karl – how do we proceed with the process of self – evaluation? Get a draft mission and then bring in some other members such as Bruce, Mike Dennis, etc. Have vision and mission basically done and focus on goals and objectives. Bub found a chapter mission. It is quite broad. Ellen said that in Toronto someone commented that we have gotten too broad. Jeff said that we need to redefine ourselves; everyone does periodically. Bub found some objectives that were done in 1998. No one can remember how it was developed. We need to revamp it. Jim Hotaling may have chapter handbook on disk. Elaine will ask him if he has it. Need to get council members who can help get it underway and then others. Others - Mike Dennis, Dan Dostie, Julie Burger, Bruce Hopkins, Gary Lamont, Fred Gaffney, Paul Webb, John Lacey, Pete Wright, Rick Wildman, Dick Dale, Dale Gates, Dana Chapman, John Wildeman, Aaron Paul, Ted Feedak, Mark Usher(possible facilitator), Don Pettit, John Whitney, Jim Hotaling. Need to look at the surveys for ideas. We may want the whole council. Paul Webb recommended by Margaret as a facilitator. NRCS state office might be a good location for the meeting.

Karl will talk to Paul Webb; confirm room dates; list several dates amongst ourselves. First, Karl will talk to Paul to get his input. Jeff will have someone in his office summarize the surveys. We won't invite anyone from national just yet. Empire Chapter – Vision for the Future is a possible title for this meeting. We are the second largest donor to the Envirothon; \$2,500 for scholarships yearly, the Erosion books, 170 members, travel scholarships for annual meeting, training at annual meeting on CAFO's.

Linda said we should have an insert in the national membership brochure talking about the Empire Chapter.

Travel Scholarships: Three nominations – Bub Barra, Julie Burger, Mike Dennis. Margaret made a motion to approve all three and John seconded. All in favor. We should invite them to a Council meeting. Elaine moved that Karl be our official delegate at the national meeting. Jeff seconded. All in favor.

Survey drawing: First Prize: Frank Winkler - Free membership next year.
2nd prize -Aaron Paul – SWCS t-shirt.

Vice President: Lisa Fields was suggested. Karl will ask her if she is willing to do this.

Special Award for John Wildeman. John couldn't get a national award awhile back because he wasn't a member.

Karl said that the national office is going to call all non-renewing members. Apparently they get a fairly good response rate.

Annual Meeting: Ideas were discussed - Karl will perhaps show slides from his China trip; we will discuss the mission and vision and goals; perhaps have Craig Cox come and present something on the national meeting; maybe Don Lake on CPESCS. Bill - Have as many subjects that define what the chapter is. Jeff will put together a draft agenda for annual meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine Dalrymple
Secretary