

**Idaho Resource Conservation & Development Association**  
**Business Meeting**  
**November 2, 2005**  
**Post Falls, Idaho**

**Present:**

Alice Wallace, IASCD  
Arin Nesbitt, West Central Highlands and Southwest Idaho RC&D Areas, NRCS  
Bill Moore, Southwest Idaho RC&D Area, NRCS  
Bob Tribelhorn, NRCS  
Bonnie McCauley, Mid-Snake RC&D Council, Inc.  
Buck Ward, Wood River RC&D Council, Inc.  
Chuck Doty, Clearwater RC&D Council, Inc.  
Clyde Hanson, Clearwater RC&D Council, Inc.  
Dan Pierce, Clearwater RC&D Area, NRCS  
Dave Johnson, Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council, Inc.  
Dave Radford, High Country RC&D Council, Inc.  
Dick Hodge, Clearwater RC&D Council, Inc.  
Herman Callins, Benewah SCD  
Julie Thomas, Mid-Snake RC&D Area, NRCS  
Kathy Dingman, Panhandle Lakes RC&D Area, NRCS  
Ken Roberts, West Central Highlands RC&D Council, Inc.  
Kent Rudeen, Three Rivers RC&D Council, Inc.  
Kim Golden, Panhandle Lakes RC&D Area, NRCS  
Linden Lampman, Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council, Inc.  
Paula Jones, Three Rivers RC&D Area, NRCS  
Polly Huggins, Wood River RC&D Area, NRCS  
Rich Sims, NRCS  
Ron Wittman, Clearwater RC&D Council, Inc.  
Russ Manwaring, West Central Highlands RC&D Area, NRCS  
Rusty Parker, Wood River RC&D Council, Inc.  
Sara Wernicke, Clearwater RC&D Area, NRCS  
Scott Ferguson, Bear River RC&D Area, NRCS  
Steve Smart, High Country RC&D Area, NRCS  
Tammy Egbert, High Country RC&D Area, NRCS  
Ted Runberg, Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council, Inc.  
Terry Doupe, Benewah SCD

**Welcome & Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by IRCDA President, Kent Rudeen shortly after 8:00 a.m. Polly Huggins, RC&D Coordinator, Wood River RC&D Area, was introduced as the moderator for the day. Kent asked all those present for self introductions.

**State of the State—Rich Sims, State Conservationist, NRCS, Idaho**

*(Note: Rich actually made the following remarks on November 1 during the program portion of the IRCDA meeting because more time was available)*

- He spoke briefly about his spring-summer 2005 detail to NRCS headquarters in Washington, D.C. where he worked under Tom Christensen, Deputy Chief for Financial Programs. Tom formerly served as Assistant State Conservationist and RC&D Program Manager for Idaho NRCS in the early 1990's.
- He talked about the importance of progress reporting and the "production for dollars" philosophy. Tangible items are needed (acres/miles of wildlife habitat and streams improved, businesses started and expanded, citizens served-especially socio/economic disadvantaged). He briefly reviewed Idaho RC&D progress for FY2005.
- He discussed the new NRCS Strategic Plan that includes items/objectives 10-15-20 years out. Three primary strategies mentioned: Cooperative Conservation (developing enhancing partnerships); Market-Based Approach (increased private investment and funding in natural resources conservation); greater emphasis on Watershed Approach to resource conservation.
- RC&D Budget is "flat" at the present time (not much change from 2005 levels). The net result in Idaho is projected to be \$41,000 less than 2005; some work products may need to be shifted to other budget objectives. Currently, RC&D-funded staff should be charging about 10 percent of their time to Conservation Technical Assistance program funds.
- 2007 Farm Bill: 1) Conservation Security Program (rewards the "best" conservation stewards with economic incentives) goal is for National coverage within eight years. 2) The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) will remain intact.
- Large earmarks have and continue to be pulled out of the National NRCS budget which focuses on specific projects in specific states. This tends to have a negative overall effect for funding availability for staffing in other states.

### **Challenge/Thoughts on the Future-Bob Tribelhorn Idaho NRCS RC&D Program Manager**

Bob said Idaho's RC&D's are doing a good job, with over \$13 million in funds leveraged resulting in 136 new projects and 115 completed projects in Fiscal Year 2005.

Bob discussed his role as Program Manager for the RC&D Program. He has been striving to visit all RC&D Councils throughout the state.

### **National Strategic Plan**

- Councils need to be aware of how they can get more involved with other NRCS programs that tie into the NRCS National Strategic Plan. Examples include: CSP, TMDL, EPA-319, EQIP, Wildlife Incentives Program, Hazard Fuel Treatment and other programs that deal with nutrient management and rangeland improvement.
- Fiscal Year 07' "Allocation" funding is to be based upon goal attainment and program requirements including the Annual Plan of Work and current 5 year Area Plan that are captured in the RC&D reporting system. Bob stated that he felt the Council's did a good job of obtaining goals this year (2005). We are in a "transition" funding mode in FY 2006, with each state receiving not less than 95 percent of their 2005 funding levels (refer to Rich Sim's comment about \$41,000 overall RC&D budget reduction in Idaho). Critical items for RC&D's to capture in progress reporting relate to: jobs created, businesses created, wildlife acres treated, acres of water bodies improved, and miles of streams improved. Moreover, progress that relates to reduction in poverty, unemployment and distressed communities will be important to show. A new term has been used recently: "RC&D Centric", indicating the tying in of RC&D projects with other NRCS programs.

- Program Operations Information National Tracking System (POINTS) is not finalized. There will be POINTS training for Coordinators and Program Managers in March 2006 (subsequently rescheduled to June 2006, Savannah, GA).
- Bob felt that there would be performance incentives – more funding for states that accomplish the National goals – if goals are not met, then less dollars would be available.

A common goals summary gleaned from each Councils' long range plan was handed out (entitled Long Range Planning – Idaho RC&D's).

The current IRCDA Plan of Work (2003-2006) was distributed as a handout.

Copies of the recently developed Board Manual/RC&D Directors Guidebook were handed out by Bob, also.

Bob highly encourages Idaho RC&D Councils to apply for “Circle of Diamonds” certification status. This amounts to a national “Mark of Excellence”. Information can be found on the National RC&D web page. There are only 20 RC&D Councils with this distinction in the nation.

Bob summed up his comments by encouraging Councils to participate in the June 2006 National Association of RC&D Council's conference in Savannah, GA. He said that RC&D Councils need to keep doing what they've been doing and stressed the need for Area Plans to be updated and maintained current.

#### **Additional Comments from Rich Sims**

The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is driving RC&D programs. RC&D needs to get from “red” to “green” (referring to the low PART (Program Assessment Rating Tool) score received from OMB last year. This is why it is important to spend dollars consistent with the intent of the program. OMB looks at the RC&D Program on a national basis, not by individual state.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

David Radford presented the 2005 IRCDA treasurer's report (handout). Ken Roberts made a motion to accept the 2005 IRCDA treasurer's report. Clyde Hanson seconded the motion. Motion passed to accept 2005 expenditures as reported. David presented the current 2005 ledger (handout).

#### **Circle of Diamonds—Bill Moore**

Bill presented information about the “Circle of Diamonds” certification program for non-profit organizations at the National RC&D level (handout). Guide Star was also mentioned by Russ Manwaring as another certification option that is available.

#### **Strategies for State Funding-Steve Smart**

Steve relayed to the group that the Alabama RC&D program received supplemental funds amounting to \$1.32 million from that state in fiscal year 2006. The funding comes through the State Conservation Commission allocation originating from the General Fund. A smaller portion

also comes through the Cooperative Extension Service – education funds. The funding is split between nine RC&D Councils who are very involved in environmental projects. The process was started years ago when a lobbyist was hired that cost about \$8,000 for the first year to lobby for the state funding. RC&D received their first State appropriation in 1997. This venture requires serious partnerships and political activity.

Steve’s conversation with one Alabama RC&D Coordinator who played a key role in the project brought forward some key points:

- A long process of promoting values and strengths.
- Attempts to obtain State funding cannot compete with or threaten any other existing programs.
- Must be able to deliver results that matter to partners and legislators.
- Cultivate and maintain partnerships

Next, a discussion was held concerning funding options in Idaho. Opportunities and obstacles were offered by those present and recorded by Scott Ferguson, RC&D Coordinator, Bear River RC&D Area:

#### Opportunities

- Strength of partnerships with mayors
- Land Grant Colleges
- Any state funding must go first to an RC&D partner or other agency (could also be an opportunity)

#### Obstacles

- The IRCDA could be seen as a threat to existing funds for the SWCDs
- What are the funds going to be used for if received
- Any state funding must go first to an RC&D partner or other agency (could also be an opportunity)
- Limits on RC&D Association Lobbying (refer to IRS Form 990)

### **IRCDA Long Range Plan & Plan of Work—Dan Pierce**

Scott Ferguson: Recorder

Dan reviewed the items that were recorded on November 1 during the roundtable group discussions and also encourage the group to think about things they had heard during the Circle of Diamonds, State funding concept discussion and/or any other items that were discussed the past two days. The group was asked to record what they believed to be some priority projects/activities they think would be appropriate for the State Association to work on or “take on”, that directly relate to any of the four major goals set by the National RC&D Program guidance. A few items and thoughts were recorded as follows:

#### Land Management

#### Land Conservation

- Buffer Zones

#### Water Management

- Water use issues – water quality, quantity and management for improvement

- Water adjudication on the Snake River

### Community Development

- Capacity Building, Marketing, Etc. (from existing Plan of Work)
- Urban Forestry - Community Forestry Position Fulltime Position
- Education of P&Z

It soon became apparent that the time allotted to this exercise was falling far too short to obtain quality feedback and ideas. Therefore, the following action item was recommended:

**ACTION ITEM:** Each roundtable facilitator (Paula Jones, Russ Manwaring and Kim Golden) will type up their respective group's list of priorities from the previous day's flip chart notes and send to Dan for summarization and subsequent distribution to all RC&D Offices. Once received, each RC&D Council is asked to carefully review the list and select items they believe are appropriate for the IRCDA to adopt as future projects. *(Note: Dan distributed the consolidated list via E-mail to IRCDA President Kent Rudeen and all RC&D offices on November 17, 2005).* This process will be ongoing until the March 2006 IRCDA meeting in Boise.

### Secretary's Report-Ken Roberts

Ken presented the March 2005 IRCDA meeting minutes for review (handout). Clyde Hanson made a motion to approve meeting minutes from the March 2005 meeting. Chuck Doty seconded the motion. Motion passed to approve March 2005 IRCDA minutes. Ken reviewed the completed action items from the March 2005 meeting and reminded everyone to list the Idaho RC&D Association web address on all correspondences. [www.idahorcd.org/IRCDA/state.htm](http://www.idahorcd.org/IRCDA/state.htm)

### Committee Reports

Awards Committee (see below).

### IRCDA Award

President Kent Rudeen presented Dick Hodge, Clearwater RC&D Council, with the Outstanding Council Person Award for 2005. Dick was awarded the 2005 "Jack Shaffer Memorial Award" Dick's Outstanding Council Person Award nomination will be submitted to the Western RC&D Association for consideration at the Western regional conference in January 2006.

Inland Northwest Economic Adjustment Strategy (No Report)

Nomination Committee (no nominations due)

### Old Business/New Business

- An Idaho RC&D display will be set up at the upcoming Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD) annual conference in Boise. Each Council is asked to send a short project story to Jody Fagan, NRCS Public Affairs Specialist to be displayed along with handouts of their project.
- It was recommended that the IRCDA replace the warped panel on the IRCDA display.

- Joe Twitchell, Chairman for IASCD RC&D Committee will be giving a presentation at the IASCD meeting.

**Council Project - Concern, Funny Story or Calamity**

Each Council presented a project story (success or otherwise) to the group.

**Next Meeting Date**

If there are conflicts in March 2006 please send those dates to Paula. The March meeting will be held in Boise.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:44 a.m.

Ken Roberts  
Secretary

(Notes prepared by: Arin Kay Nesbitt and Dan Pierce)