

Idaho Resource Conservation & Development Association
Business Meeting
September 3, 2003
Boise, Idaho

Dave Johnson, IRCDA Vice President, called the meeting to order at 8:25 a.m.

Introductions were made.

Present:

Linda Reed, Wood River RC&D
Polly Huggins, Wood River RC&D
Julie Thomas, Mid-Snake RC&D
Russ Manwaring, West Central Highlands RC&D
Bob Bolte, Wood River RC&D
Bob Rodman, Wood River RC&D
Bill Moore, Southwest Idaho RC&D
Steve Smart, High Country RC&D
Joe Twitchell, Southwest Idaho RC&D
Dave Johnson, Panhandle Lakes RC&D
Paul Calverley, Southwest Idaho RC&D
Ken Roberts, West Central Highlands RC&D
Dan Pierce, Clearwater RC&D
David Zwerneman, Clearwater RC&D
Scott Ferguson, Bear River RC&D
Gerald Jeppesen, High Country RC&D
Arin Nesbitt, West Central Highlands/Southwest Idaho RC&D
Kathy Dingman, Panhandle Lakes RC&D
Bonnie Beckley, Wood River/Mid-Snake RC&D
Camille Hansen, Bear River RC&D
Malcom Dell, Clearwater RC&D
Ed Mansfield, West Central Highlands RC&D
Wayne Forrey, Southwest Idaho RC&D (consultant)
Barbara Carey, Uinta Head Waters RC&D (Utah)
Jeff Williams, Great Salt Lake RC&D (Utah)
Richard Sims, NRCS
Sue Ellis, NRCS

NRCS Update

Richard Sims, State Conservationist, addressed the group. Rich discussed the status of competitive sourcing in Idaho. During FY 03, Idaho went through the process of competitively sourcing all the soil conservation technician positions (24), all the soil survey mappers (9), and one RC&D administrative assistant position. NRCS received proposals for each of the disciplines advertised, technical and/or bid reviews of the proposals were conducted, and none of the proposals meet the criteria for one or the other type of review. Therefore, all positions were retained within NRCS. The state geologist position and one civil engineering technician position from Idaho are being competitively sourced at national level. These should be complete by October 2004. Rich doesn't know if Idaho will be required to continue with this process in 2004. The overall goal is to have all positions competitively sourced by 2007. There is legislation in process that would allow us to count Technical Service Providers (TSPs) as outsourced entities, which would be beneficial for Idaho.

Rich reported on the preliminary FY 04 RC&D budget figures. The House budgeted \$52.8 million and the Senate \$51 million nationwide for RC&D. The House and Senate have not yet gone to conference. The FY 03 nationwide RC&D budget was \$50.7 million.

Rich reported that Joan Comanor, Director for the Resource Conservation & Community Development Division, retired and another director has not been selected as of this time.

Rich reported on the status of office closures. The Secretary of Agriculture has committed to close/collocate 200 USDA offices nationwide as part of the President's FY03 budget. RC&D offices were exempt from closures; therefore, field offices collocated with RC&D offices were not identified for closures. Tribal offices and area offices were also exempt from consideration. The target date for office closures is by the end of this calendar year. There are 2600 offices nationwide, 37 offices in Idaho.

Outstanding Councilperson Award

Dave Johnson presented Gerald Jeppesen, High Country RC&D Chairman, with the Outstanding Councilperson Award for 2003. Kent Rudeen nominated Gerald Jeppesen for this award. Dave presented Gerald with a plaque and read an award letter expounding on Gerald's outstanding accomplishments with the High Country RC&D and IRCDA.

Other Awards

Malcom suggested that IRCDA submit Idaho nominees for western awards. Gerald reminded the group that Kent Rudeen is a member of the western awards committee. There are western awards for coordinator, councilman, council, and sponsor. Gerald made a recommendation to structure the IRCDA award process so that state nominees be submitted for consideration for western awards. Malcolm stated that Idaho's awards process should be a competitive process. A committee could review and forward award nominations for the coordinator, council member, and council awards to western. It was suggested a committee be established and comprise of three members, a representative from councils from the north, south, and east.

It was decided that Joe Twitchell, Gerald Jeppesen and David Zwerneman would be the on the awards committee. The committee will request nominations from councils. The nominations need to be in by December for submission to western.

Old Business

Dave gave each of the group a chance to share summer-time experiences.

New Business

2004 Meeting

A 2004 spring or summer meeting was discussed. Ken Roberts offered up the location of Ashley Inn in Cascade for next year's meeting. Ken stated that a decision on the use of this Inn needs to be made today so he can reserve a date. It was discussed when would be the best time, a March or July meeting. Bob Bolte recommended a late summer or fall meeting be held other than a spring meeting.

Malcom made a motion to have the IRCDA meet in September 2004 at Ashley Inn in Cascade, with a date of September 14, seconded by David Zwerneman. Motion passed.

Western RC&D Association/Pacific Rim R&CD Association

Ken Roberts brought up the issue that was discussed at the San Antonio meeting of the benefits of IRCDA staying in the Western Region as opposed to Pacific Rim region. Malcom stated that Idaho is more in line with Wyoming, Montana, other than Oregon, Washington, etc. Joe stated Idaho is better off in the Western Region. David Zwerneman agreed with Joe. Paul Calverley stated that Idaho is better suited to remain in the western region. The Pacific Rim region has coastal problems which do not relate to Idaho. There are 11 states in the Western region (83 RC&DS). It was the consensus of the group for IRCDA to remain in the Western region.

Inland Northwest Economic Adjustment Strategy (handout)

The INEAS web site is: www.inlandnwregion.org

Dick Gardner gave a presentation on the Inland Northwest Economic Adjustment Strategy - Phase 3. This regional partnership is dedicated to strengthen the economic vitality of distressed counties in the Inland Northwest (in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana). The majority of the 137 counties in the Inland Northwest have low or moderately low economic vitality. Dick reported on the project background, the guiding principles, and the desired outcomes to guide the Strategy development. The key strategy areas include business development, industry development, workforce development, infrastructure investments, and community capacity-building.

Dick explained the next steps for the INEAS. They include refining the strategy, reviewing organization options (i.e., regional commission), conducting outreach meetings (this is a first), seeking Federal and foundation funding, implement actions, track results, and gain support from state federal elected officials.

Dick stated the IRCDA could assist by participating the October INEAS Advisory Committee meeting, helping INEAS identify programs, encouraging our Congressionals, governors, and tribal leaders to support INEAS and working together as a regional coalition. Dick also stated that a resolution of support from IRCDA would be beneficial.

Malcolm stated that IRCDA can support the process of the INEAS as it seeks to gain regional development funding from the government. This can be a voluntary process by each Council.

Joe Twitchell stated that he was concerned that sponsors may be against this effort, and he doesn't want to favor something that the sponsors may not approve. Joe does not think it is time for a resolution.

It was discussed that it would be beneficial to focus on existing groups and projects and not spend funding on new projects; use existing plans that are not being funded. As well as look for ways to connect regions.

David Zwerneman made a motion for the IRCDA to develop a resolution supporting the INWEAS, worded in a way that conveys the interests of all the Councils and conveys support for the concept and recommend that counties participate as they see best for their area. Ken Roberts seconded the motion, 1 No , Motion passed.

Action: David will develop a resolution for review by IRCDA.

The issue was discussed if IRCDA should have representation to the Inland Northwest Economic Adjustment Strategy. Malcom currently represents Clearwater RC&D on the INEAS advisory committee.

Motion: Joe Twitchell made a motion that IRCDA appoint an official representative to the INEAS and that the representative be Malcom Dell, Dave Johnson 2nd the motion, motion passed.

Horizon Program

Dick gave a brief overview on the Horizon Program. This program is through the Northwest Area Foundation, and covers 8 states. There are three programs, community ventures, community connections, and community Horizons. The community Horizons program is the capacity building and training program. This program brings training into the town, with the goal of getting people who aren't necessarily leaders, together to provide and promote ideas to reduce poverty in the community.

The Horizons program is an 18-month program. There will be 10 training units selected. There will be clusters of three communities; each cluster will get a full-time coach. The coach will organize training, do planning and implementation. Each cluster will receive \$50,000 to get people to the training.

A Horizons Showcase will be held in Idaho this fall, as well as in Washington and Montana. To be eligible for the program, communities must go to this one-day training. RC&D coordinators should encourage community folks to participate and perhaps work towards a cluster.

There was discussion on who in Idaho could deliver this service; possibly the Association of Idaho cities, the Department of Commerce, Action agencies, IRCDA, etc.

Fire Mitigation Planning – NW Industries

Wayne Forrey, a local facilitator and consultant for Southwest Idaho RC&D, (for John McGee) gave a report on the progress of Elmore County Fire Mitigation Plan. This assistance is being provided by the Southwest Idaho RC&D Council and Northwest Management. To date, a complete set of satellite imagery have been developed, field crews are checking the maps, SCA members are doing inventories of homes in wooded areas, questionnaires were sent out (w/40% return rate), and four community workshops are scheduled in Elmore County starting next week.

Fire Education Programs

Council members and/or Coordinators gave brief reports on local fire education activities in their respective areas.

County Mitigation Fire Plans

David Zwerneman, Clearwater RC&D gave a report on the progress the Clearwater RC&D is making on the County Wildland Fire Mitigation Plans in Northern Idaho.

David reported on the Resource Guide that has been completed. He has a disk for each Council which includes PowerPoint information on the Resource Guide that might be useful for reference. David also has GIS information on disks, which includes roads, structures, etc. for the 5 counties that the Clearwater RC&D Council has been working with on plans. Each county plan assists in the development of multiple projects at county level, utilizing existing groups. The completed plans are turned over to the individual counties. As part of the plan, there is a funding proposal for BLM to assist counties to work on projects.

David reported that in addition to the work on the county fire mitigation plans, Clearwater R&CD is involved with clean-up projects with the Tribes, with emphasis on areas significant to the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial. David passed around several reports of clean up projects for the group to see.

Joe Twitchell thanked David for all the information he has shared on the fire mitigation plans and other information. It is very helpful!

Reports

San Antonio Meeting

Paul Calverley gave a report on the National Association of RC&D Councils meeting held in July in San Antonio. Paul reported that there were 1500 registrants. There were 24 people representing Idaho, which was much more than any other state in the western region.

Paul stated that he is on a “Drought Committee”. If anyone would like to serve on this Drought Committee, be sure and let Paul know.

ACTION: Kathy will get information from Paul on the 8 deliverables.

Other Western Region RC&D information

Paul stated that the Western Region officer’s teleconference is held the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. (MST). Information about this meeting can be accessed on the Western Region RC&D web site. Meeting minutes can be found on the web site as well.

Bill Moore added that a western directory (mailing list) is on the Western Region web site. Bill asked that councils check their information for accuracy.

If Councils want success stories/reports added to the Western Region web site, contact Kathy Dingman.

Bill requested that the group take time to review the draft policies and procedures for the Western RC&D Association, which are posted on the web site. These will be reviewed at the next western meeting in January 2004.

Paul gave a BIG thanks to Bill Moore for his help on Western RC&D efforts.

ACTION: Russ suggested IRCDA send a letter of thanks to SCA for their assistance with the IRCDA display at the national conference.

Treasurer's Report

Gerald Jeppesen reported that the IRCDA has an estimated balance of \$5,091.00. \$376.02 was spent for expenses for the national conference. These expenses included costs for the booth for the display, and registration for SCA members. Gerald could not provide a written report due to a computer virus.

Idaho RC&D Council Contact List

Polly passed around a copy of the Idaho NRCS RC&D and Council contact list and asked the group to make changes on the list and return it to Sue Ellis to update.

Action: Sue will distribute electronically to RC&D Coordinators when updated.

Idaho Rural Partnership (IRP) (handout)

Sara Braasch, Director for IRP (formerly Executive Vice-President with the Idaho Cattle Association) gave an overview of the IRP. The goal of IRP is to be responsive and progressive to continue and sustain rural Idaho. Sara's personal goal is to solve problems in a community and make sure same problem don't happen somewhere else. Communication is essential. David Zwerneman represents IRCDA with IRP.

Sara addressed a question about the relationship of IRP with INEAS. Sara is on steering committee for INEAS in her capacity with IRP. She feels IRP and INEASE work together hand-in-glove, IRP on a state level and INEAS uses a regional approach.

Sara stated that IRCDA can help IRP by continuing the interactions with communities, and making connections. Sara ask IRCDA to keep in touch with her, to give her heads up on issues, let her know about issues that IRCDA/Councils do not have time for, but somebody needs to know.

IRP is hosting a Rural Summit, November 18-19, Coeur d'Alene. IRP Newsletter will be distributed soon, maybe as early as the week of September 8th.

Action: Sue - Forward current Idaho RC&D contact list to Sara Braasch. Done 9/5/2003

DUNS Number/Federal Audit Requirements (handout)

Russ Manwaring gave an update on the importance for Councils to acquire a Dun & Bradstreet Number and register on the Central Contractor Register System (CCR). Russ stated this is an important step for Councils when working with grants and agreements.

Effective October 1, 2003, recipients must be registered in the CCR in order to receive agreements, contacts, etc. from most Federal agencies. This registry will be used for reference (i.e., foundations, federal entities, etc.). Russ encourages councils to register in CCR and obtain a D&B number.

Audits (handouts)

Dan Pierce provided information on presentations at the national conference on the auditing process. The information provided on indirect costs, general expenses, general operating funds, equipment, etc. is pertinent to Councils. Dan explained the three levels of audits; compilation, review and audit. Of the three types, the "audit" would be most applicable for RC&Ds. Russ stated that Councils should fully understand the legalities of grants, and that tracking is important (direct and indirect costs, administrative fees, etc.) IT is important to know how to set up the books to correctly track expenditures.

Polly suggested having a CPA as part of the agenda for the next meeting to provide information on this issue. Russ feels it is NRCS' responsibilities to train Councils on grant management.

ACTION: IRCDA make a request to Richard Sims, providing him the background on this issue and explain why NRCS should provide this training to Councils and Coordinators on nonprofit accounting..

Julie stated that *Management Concepts* provides this kind of training, which includes information on the OMB Circular and Indirect Costs (3-day training). Julie suggests this is a good method of training.

Gerald would like an overview shown to the IRCDA to present the principles to be taught, as an organization. It was suggested the IRCDA look at a set of books for one Council which shows the correct way to set up accurate books. Dan made the suggestion to have someone that does non-profit audits spend 3-4 hours providing training to IRCDA. Polly stated that this is important for the Councils to be part of this; but the coordinators are not responsible for this.

Gerald Jeppesen made a motion for the IRCDA to approach NRCS with a request to provide training to Councils and treasurers on the process to understand the difference between in-direct and direct costs for audit purposes and audit requirements. Bob Rodman seconded the motion, Motion passed.

Julie stated that NRCS has hired a grants and agreement specialist who could do a good job on this type of training at an IRCDA meeting (a brief overview of the processes). Dan stated that might be good from the Federal standpoint, but thinks someone familiar with non-profit organizations and audits is needed.

Steve Smart stated that districts should be considered in this type of training, as well. The Councils need to completely understand what Councils are signing when they sign an agreement/grant. There are many aspects involved (NEPA, Cultural resources, ESA, etc.).

Other comments

Dave asked the Utah guests for comments on the meeting. Barbara Carey stated the meeting was very informative and there are things she can take back to the Utah Association. Jeff Williams seconded Barbara's comments.

Bill Moore suggested that it might be beneficial if someone from Idaho to attend a Utah meeting at some point.

Gerald reminded the group to review the action items in the IRCDA five-year plan.

Meeting was adjourned.