

KONA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

May 11, 2010

Directors Present: Greg Hendrickson Rick Robinson Virginia Isbell
Kawika Marquez Skip Cowell

Associate Directors Present: Jeff Turner,

KSWCD Staff: Mary Robblee

NRCS Staff: Jessica Sternfels

RC&D Kawika Marquez

Meeting called to order at 7:00 a.m. by Chair, Rick Robinson.

MSCU* (S. Cowell/V. Isbell) to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2009 meeting as circulated.

MSCU* (V. Isbell /S. Cowell) to approve Treasurer's Report - available upon request.

1) **Reports:**

A. NRCS Report:

- a) The number of contracts for 2010 is low, 9-10, which is due to man-power shortages. This looks better for the 2011 ranking period and applications are being accepted on a continuous basis, thanks to the District's help.
- b) The final vacant Soil Conservationist position has been posted. Once that position is filled the NRCS outreach and contracting capabilities will improve greatly.
- c) The new DC is learning about the various issues affecting our producers that impact on their success in fulfilling our contracts with them. Her recommendation is: If a producer is having difficulty carrying out the contractual practices, it is imperative that those concerns are relayed to the DC sooner, rather than later.
- d) She will be doing more research on those farms that are not on County water and must rely on water catchment systems as a major issue.
- e) G. Hendrickson recommended approaching this from the viewpoint of how using rainwater harvesting catchment conserves fuel since the water does not have to be pumped up from an aquifer.

B. HACD Report (R. Robinson):

- a) Directors Marquez and Robinson will be attending the entire 2010 HACD Conference. M. Robblee will be attending on Friday to participate in Conservation Planner Training

C. NACD Report: (Skip Cowell)

- a) A new strategic plan is being developed.
- b) Skip has written to NACD to get involved in supporting the Gulf coast agricultural communities in combating the BP oil spill. He suggested the use of straw, old hay and other silage from local farmers to be distributed in and around the oil slick, and as the silage absorbs the oil use the oil-hay biomass as a fuel source to produce electricity. (See attached letter.)
- c) Hawaii's SWCDs should think about their responses to their various communities in the event of man-made or natural disasters.
- d) **MSCU* (V. Isbell /S. Cowell) to approve drafting a letter from our board to NACD that supports the concept of motivation when man-made or natural disasters occur to get people, at the highest levels of organizations or government, directly involved.**

D. Big Island RC&D Report:

- a) RC&D is the fiscal manager for the Kau Coffee Festival that just occurred.
- b) RC&D is also the fiscal manager for the Pow Wow that will be taking place later this month
- c) Currently trying to finalize a 25K partnership agreement with NRCS to keep the RC&D staff member a part-time position.
- c) RC&D is the umbrella organization for a 100K grant for a Hilo Watershed Education Program with a Charter School in the area.
- d) 50 proposals were submitted for the recent HADP grant request for proposals.
- e) Still working with Lokahi Pacific to schedule a collaborative agreement where RC&D will receive training to become a Lokahi Pacific

E. Conservation Assistant Report:

- a) M. Robblee discussed a possible melding of the Beginner Farmer Program and a Graduate Student in Soil Science seeking an opportunity to build her resume. K. Marquez offered to develop an outline for a Beginner Farmer Program. Marquez feels this could be positive for community education and revenue generation.
- b) 4x4 Tour Round-Up: Letters of thanks were sent to the Pace Family and to D. Claustnitzer. After expenses we netted \$65.
- c) Earth Day Round Up: J. Turner advised he hopes to start working on next year's festival now instead of waiting until August. Turner felt that greater participation by the SWCDs around the island would be beneficial and should focus more on food/shelter and sustainability. Robblee reported that there seemed to be fewer people at the fair than last year. Despite the fair being a free event, Turner felt that the economic times may have prevented some people from attending, i.e. affordability of gas to get to the fair.
- d) The report is available upon request.

F. Monthly Report to the County: Available upon request.

2) New Cooperator(s):

8-1-009:022 (5.19 acres) currently produces coffee and has natural resource concerns around soil, nutrient mgmt., water efficiency, ants and feral pigs

7-3-002:025 (15.87 acres) currently produces coffee but has some weedy species issues that need to be addressed.

8-7-014:053 (5.22 acres) currently produces coffee and desires to increase keiki coffee planting, mulching, conservation cover and green manure.

7-8-009:080 (5.46 acres) currently produces coffee and cacao, cooperator is interested in improving natural resources, particularly soil. Also interested in alternative energy and propagating an existing wili wili tree.

8-3-007:035 (1.5 acres) currently produces coffee. Cooperator wants to diversify crop and improve soil.

8-2-008:052 (1.77 acres) currently a citrus orchard, cooperator wants to learn more about growing mango & fig.

7-9-002:006 (90 acres) Past ag use was grazing in the upper section and the lower section used for coffee production. Cooperator wants to clean up lower area particularly and get the land producing again. Currently there is a lot of Christmas-berry, guava, African tulip. Cooperator states there is ample deep soil on this land.

MSCU* (V. Isbell /S. Cowell) to approve the new Cooperator Applications.

3) Correspondence Review:

Available upon request.

4) Subdivision Reviews:

Available upon request.

5) Kealakehe Dump update:

K. Marquez met with B. Fitzgerald, County Director of Parks & Recreation, in regard to the dump site. Fitzgerald would like to see a nine-hole golf course at the site. The District rec'd a letter from Bobby Command, Mayor's Office, regarding remediation of the dump.

6) Sept. 2010 Conference:

Rich Baden Conference Call

Rich Baden explained Washington State's method of funding SWCDs since 1989 has been to attach an assessment on each parcel within a specific District assessment on each parcel in his district's county since 1989. Rich recommended meeting with local elected officials to discuss how Hawaii could do something similar. That funding could be used for leverage to obtain other moneys and start loan programs. There are about 11-12 Districts in Washington that do this. All of the Boards and Districts need to work together to make this happen. Oregon and Wyoming have similar revenue streams but require the approval of the voters. Rich would like to meet with all the Districts on the Big Island, involve the legislators, county council and mayor as an opportunity to "lay some groundwork". Baden advised that having these funds allows him to access even more funding through various government levels and agencies. Rich is to send an outline for such a meeting between district board members and legislators. The State legislature may have to approve legislation to enable the Districts to use this assessment system for a revenue stream.

The draft agenda for the Conference follows our plan for three legs of presentations. Per S. Cowell there are 15 members to each executive committee meeting so we could run presentations concurrently with executive committee. RC&D to meet on Friday morning. Discussion around a tour. We will provide time for people to go to Greenwell Coffee Farm on Thursday morning.

7) Meeting Adjourned:

Next Meeting June 8, 2010

Virginia Isbell, Secretary

*MSCU – Moved, Seconded, Carried Unanimously