

Down East RC&D
Sept. 25, 2014

Present: Nate Pennell, Gary Edwards, Kathy Upton, Barbara Tibbetts, Dale and Dorothea Crowley, Jolene Stanley, Orissa Sargent, Peter Steenstra, Kathryn Lewis. Also, Mark Whiting and Dave Lavway.

Motion to approve minutes Dale, second Gary with note that these are sent far and wide to several email lists. Motion passed.

Treasurer's report: We've managed to right the ship a bit, with charging a nominal fee for services and cutting some expenses. Motion Dale, second Jolene to approve. Motion passed.

President's report: National asked our opinion: Is Maine willing to host a national conference? Well, of course. It would be in Portland, probably in 2-4 years. This goo, not only for Maine to showcase its work, but for the entire New England Association.

Gary then reminded everyone of the Maine Rural Partners listening session with Mark Hews this Oct. 1.

DART/WCCOG update: The transition begins the first of October. Crystal will be working in the office and we will continue our rent as well as fiscal managing arrangements.

Dave Lavway, Deputy Commissioner of the Maine Department of Agriculture and Forestry, spoke of the results of combining offices involving agriculture and forestry. This also includes the State Planning Office which makes for a very diverse department. They handle grants and help people organize such things as tours and then try and follow newly-passed laws such as the bill to arm forest rangers. It turned out not as cheap nor quite as expected, with 75 rangers to be trained for the job. The rangers typically handle forest fires and were sent out west to help with fires and prove invaluable cleaning up roads after storms, etc. Included in their equipment are 11 helicopters used to douse fires but can also be used for rescue in remote areas.

The department is also geared to advocate for small business which includes a lot of programs for farmers. There followed a brief discussion on conservation and development don't appear to some people to be compatible but actually are and a good example is Tide Mill farms.

Project Updates:

- WCDC/Cutler: The site has been looked at and shows promise but the buildings are deteriorating fast. The SCEC has put out a 10 year 12 page preliminary proposal for the facility which includes an administration building, maintenance shop, warehouse, and several other buildings such as the gym. The housing has been sold and converted mostly to condos being managed by Adam Mayer out of Portland. Some ideas for the site include cottage industries involved in local natural resources. It was thought growing salmon in one of the buildings might be a good fit since it's not far from the shore and water can be pumped in. The salmon farmers in the area have discovered there are a lot of problems growing them in the ocean: pests and diseases, predators, and complaints from fishermen and others. But why stop with salmon? Lobsters and other sea food sources could also be grown there. The Maine Seafood Alliance would likely be interested since they are looking for another purpose.
- Cherryfield Academy: While hoping to receive the New Century Grant in November, officials will come to examine the building October 4. The timing couldn't be better – they will see what good use the building is getting.
- Food Alliance: The first fall meeting will be in November this year. Monthly meeting will run until April. They are concentrating on marketing techniques and would recommend the Salty Dog Farms as a good example of what can be done on a spot of land between two salt marshes. They have hoop houses and grew over \$5000 worth of tomatoes last year. They are well worth a visit.
- Destination Cherryfield: There is a wide diversity of people signed up for the event. 17 or 18 vendors, a farmer's market, wagon rides, live music, street dances and the Misty Morning Stables who have a blind boy who rides.
- Sunrise County Arts in the Park is currently planning for the 2015 season. They received a grant from UMM and are working on a website

Mark Whiting of the Maine DEP had a slide show outlining the success of placing clamshells in the water of streams in Washington County. This improves the pH and calcium to a lesser extent. Clamshells are ideal returning the streams to a better pH level. As they deteriorate they release calcium carbonate which improves the pH. This is better than limestone which tends to smother the bottom. Fish actually like the spaces between the shells. Unfortunately there's a big discussion of "dirty" clamshells vs. "prepared" shells to such an extent the program is all but shut down. Shells were obtained from Albert Carver, Inc. who runs a seafood company and he's happy to make money on shells he's ordinarily be trying to please the state in their disposal. This is as it should be; every seafood company should be able to use all its parts. For instance, lobster and crab shells make great compost. The results are encouraging, but apparently not enough. More calcium needs to be introduced, the method of applying the shells could be improved; certainly more sources for shells must be found. The Norwegians have been doing this a long time and say it takes 20 years to get the streams back to normal. Some of their methods can't be used here or could if they weren't prohibitively costly. This was such a promising beginning, and then Project SHARE pulled the plug and fired Mark Whiting, so he's looking for a new home for the project. Federal permits take two years but they're free but the state, although it can take as little as six months (this took almost a year), require a discharge permit and cost \$900 per year. SHARE doesn't have capacity to finance, but it would be nice if they'd put someone else in charge of the project which is technically still operational. Nate said the Soil and Water District is a partner with SHARE and believes it has seriously overstepped its bounds and is looking for projects like this. It has recently received some funding and could be looking for more to finance projects like this. The two years it would take to get permitted could be an opportune time to zero in on improvements and alternate methods.

Meeting adjourned 12:10 pm.