

BELLE FOURCHE RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP
MARCH 20, 2008
MINUTES

Call meeting to order: Tim Reich @ 1:01 pm

Present: Tim Reich-Butte CD, Karl Jensen-Law CD, Jared Oswald-RESPEC, Matt Stoltenberg-RESPEC, Dale Lundgren-Elk Creek CD, Tate Lantz-NRCS, Diane Gronlund-NRCS, Tom Quinn-NRCS, Clint Pitts-BFID, Matthew Odden-NRCS, Win Bauer-Butte Co. Weed & Pest, Joel Roehl-BASF Corp., Dick Sackett-Crook Co. Weed & Pest and Andrew Canham-MidDak

The meeting was called to order by Tim Reich and introductions were made around the table. Tim asked for approval of the minutes from the last meeting, Karl moved to approve, Clint seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

Karl Jensen reviewed the treasurer's report and there was some discussion on the funds in the implementation fund. Dale moved to approve the report, Clint seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

Belle Fourche Watershed Weed Management Area –

Dick Sackett - Crook County Weed Management Area, presented a review of the BFWMA. Their project area is the whole Belle Fourche watershed in South Dakota, Wyoming and Montana. To date, their primary focus has been trying to control/eradicate salt cedar. Dick also went over the 2008 accomplishments to date. Salt Cedar has not been found to date below Orman Dam. The BFWMA has been in existence since 2004. They plan to apply for more grant funds in the future but also need some partners in this effort to control invasive species due to cost and sheer size of the watershed. Pampas Grass has become a very serious problem along the irrigation ditches, canals and major riparian areas. Pampas Grass is very competitive and will choke out other very desirable species, and spreads by rhizomes and seed. Any spraying has to be implemented very carefully, due to potential for residual spraying and harm to beneficial plants. It can even crowd out willows and cottonwood. Pampas Grass is not palatable and can get up to 10' tall. It is probably not as much of a water consumer as salt cedar. From a chemical stand point, it costs about \$90/acre to control and then a helicopter would have to be hired to apply. Pampas Grass usually exists in a long, narrow band along primarily perennial streams, so 1 acre would cover quite a bit of river or stream length. There is a Weed Management Area that has been existence for about 3-4 years along the Cheyenne River, and they are still active. So far, the BFWMA grants have focused on early detection and information/education. They have also used grant funds from various sources

for some survey equipment, small boats, etc. for the survey work they've done so far on the Belle Fourche River. Most of the grants the BFWMA applies for are pass-through funds that can be used to offset control expenses by private landowners. All landowners have been very cooperative to date. In the last nine years, they have distributed close to \$900,000 out to weed management areas to try to get some control on noxious weeds in the area.

Tim asked the group how they envisioned working with the BFRWP. Andrew stated the first thing would be communication and then partnering with other groups like the BFRWP. Secondly, if we join together to pursue funding opportunities, we might be more successful in securing funding for weed control efforts in the watershed.

Matt Stoltenberg reviewed the funding recommendations with the board and then discussed the requests, ranking and recommendations (see handout).

The first group Matt went over was the applicants for upland practices. Discussion centered on possibly adopting a \$40,000 cap on upland practices to try to maximize use effectiveness of these limited funds. The group discussed the environmental cost index so that all board members fully understood the process. Matt reviewed the total amount of funding available, which is \$275,376, which is this year's allocation plus the remaining funds from 2007. Clint Pitts asked about irrigation funds, we reviewed the list of who was funded and all who have applied so far for assistance on sprinkler irrigation or underground pipelines.

Matt then went over the rangeland practices, amounts requested, environmental points, etc. so everyone could understand how funding recommendations were made. He also brought up the request for an individual producer, that entails partial funding of a fence along the Belle Fourche River along with two of his neighbors which creates a long 3-mile corridor to improve water quality. The board felt this project was very worthwhile.

Discussion on the rangeland applications was held and Karl moved to set a cap at \$40,000, due to possible impacts of the above mentioned project, move this project into the funded group, and then follow the list to fund as many as possible based on ranking. The total number of funded applicants will be fluid depending on the level of funding required by one producer in 2008. The remaining applicants will be considered for future funding sources. Dale seconded the motion, all in favor, motion carried.

Karl moved to approve the irrigation applications as presented, Dale seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

The group discussed the need for a display at home shows. The display in mind is a water erosion display requested by Tammy Bosel, Sturgis, who has requested the use of some erosion displays for elementary school kids to review. Also discussed was the purchase of pens, etc. for advertisement and banners for the booths at home shows, etc. Dale moved to spend up to \$4000

for promotional materials including the water erosion display, Karl seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

Jared reported that on April 22, Rod is having a meeting with DENR, RESPEC and BFRWP to try and educate DENR and any other interested parties on the water quality benefits of high condition rangelands. Jared also reported on the automation efforts that are taking place, everything is on schedule and Clint reported that the BFID is also putting in about \$55,000 to further the progress on the automation efforts. Jared reviewed the handout that was passed around, there was some discussion on the budget graph, verbally, Jared has told DENR that we would need about \$900,000 for next year, but indicated that next year's funding will be a battle. RWA's are finally completed and billed out. The CIG grant is moving along and Jared has 10 producers lined up to work with.

Next meeting will be held on May 22, 2008 at 1st Western Bank in Belle Fourche at 1:00pm. BFID needs a letter of support to apply for canal lining to the Bureau of Reclamation, there were no objections from the board. Also Matt Stoltenberg stated that SDSU is requesting a letter of support for a project on rangeland.