

BELLE FOURCHE RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP
SEPTEMBER 15, 2011
MINUTES

Call meeting to order: Tim Reich @ 1pm

Present: Tim Reich-Butte CD, Tom Quinn-BFRWP, Karl Jensen-Lawrence CD, Yvette Kirkman-Butte CD, Tanse Herrmann-NRCS, Matt Stoltenberg-RESPEC, Clint Pitts-BFID, Jared Oswald-RESPEC, Joyce Williamson-USGS and Nate Jagim-Meade Co Weed & Pest

Minutes were emailed and there being no additions or corrections, Clint Pitts moved to approve, Karl Jensen seconded, all in favor, motion carried. Karl Jensen reviewed the treasurer's report for those present, there were questions on a couple items and Yvette was able to clear those up. Clint moved to approve the treasurer's report, Karl seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

Matt Stoltenberg then gave an update on the 319 Segment IV and Segment V funding. Matt has been assisting Tanse (Sturgis NRCS) and Sarah (Belle Fourche NRCS) with range planning to take care of their CSP applications. He estimated range planning to be complete on 65-70,000 acres.

Matt also mentioned that the SRF irrigation funding for this year can only be used within the Belle Fourche Irrigation District, and cannot be used for underground pipelines, only for sprinkler irrigation. We will have 2 years to use up the SRF funding. Matt brought up the issue of the possibility of cost-sharing gated pipe. Some discussion on the increase of efficiency using gated pipe over open ditches, the general consensus was that the efficiency gains were definitely there, but there are definitely some administrative issues associated with the payment of cost-share funds for gated pipe. Clint mentioned that gated pipe is still a very popular practice, even without cost-share, and the investment in gated pipe is still reasonable. Also, the group agreed that if the watershed started cost-sharing gated pipe, the watershed and NRCS would be inundated with cost-share applications. The issue was put on hold for now, but can be brought up again at a later date.

Segment V Amendment – Matt went over this with the group. These funds can be invested in conjunction with the SRF funding. Irrigation scheduling was added into the Segment V amendment because there are several producers that would like to continue to do the irrigation water monitoring. This amendment would help cost-share the sensors. Jared still has all the data loggers from the previous grant, so they can be used again. Under the proposed amendment, any producer who participates will also have some investment in the project as well.

Range & Riparian Area BMP's – We are trying to focus on riparian improvement plans for small to medium size ranch operations, 50-150 cow/calf pairs. In eastern SD, some of the producers are getting an exclusion payment but then are having problems with noxious weeds and other invaders coming in. Matt is trying to focus on western riparian area improvement by using the riparian areas as a grazing unit but timing the grazing to benefit the riparian area vegetative species. Also want to

focus on some improved grazing and riparian management on Horse Creek. There have been improvements in the Horse Creek watershed, but there are still more improvements to be made there.

Clint brought up the issue of the needed improvements on the Redwater Irrigation District. The BFID has some lining material left over from a previous lining project, and Jared would like to be able to use that lining material on a part of the Redwater Irrigation Ditch because that would increase flows into the Belle Fourche Reservoir. Karl moved to submit the Segment V Amendment to DENR as reported, Clint seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

Belle Fourche River Groundwater Study Update – Lawrence County decided not to provide match funding. We have not heard from the City of Spearfish yet. Meade County did contribute \$6000. Tom Quinn will check with the City of Spearfish. We also have not heard from the City of Belle Fourche or Butte County.

Dr. Scott Kenner could not be at this meeting, so we did not have an update on the SDSMT proposal. This will be on the agenda again for the next meeting.

The deadline for signing up for EQIP is December 2. Matt Stoltenberg will get information to the conservation district offices about signing up for watershed cost-share also.

Some discussion about adding administrative fees to weed and pest grants, Nate reported the Weed & Pest Commission were out here for a tour, and it might be helpful for a board member from the BFRWP to attend one of their meetings and visit about the need for reasonable administrative fees to be included in grant requests and budgets. It was good for the commission to see some of the problems and issues that have to be dealt with out here. They showed them some of the areas that have been sprayed for Phragmites. They also looked at some of the woody plantings of willow. The flood of this past spring was devastating to some of the plantings, but those that survived the flood, may have a chance at survival. Of the \$35,000 grant that Nate had to work with, \$30,000 was used for spraying and he has saved \$5000 for woody plantings this fall or next spring. Some discussion was held about the difficulty in getting cottonwood plantings to survive vs the apparent successes with willows. Nate's feeling is that we should be able to get the same amount of funding next year as we have received the past few years.

DENR – TMDL – Tim brought up the issue of the TMDL that was sent in by DENR, the BFRWP feels this is a serious issue because TMDL's were submitted by DENR on the Belle Fourche Watershed to EPA that the BFRWP board never saw or approved prior to DENR sending these documents to EPA. According to Jared Oswald, DENR has now sent the TMDL documents out for comment after the fact, but they are still already in EPA's hands. The feeling of the board members was that these documents that were prepared solely by DENR staff with no input from the BFRWP, need to be very carefully evaluated, and any errors in the documents that were submitted, need to be corrected and brought to the attention of DENR and the EPA.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for December 1, 2011 at First Interstate Bank in Belle Fourche.