

Minutes of the Watershed Agricultural Council Meeting

January 25, 2011

I. Meeting called to order at 1:00 p.m.

Directors Present:

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Fred Huneke | Darby Hartwell |
| John Riedl | Tom Donnelly |
| Barbara Howard | Steve Reed |
| Tom Hutson | John Verhoeven |
| Richard Giles | |
| Sally Fairbairn | |
| Joe Eisele | John Schwartz, NYC DEP |
| David Cammer | Chris DiBenedetto |

Directors Absent:

Ken Smith

Others Present:

| | |
|---------------|------------------|
| Craig Cashman | Cheryl Marion |
| Jeff Graff | Brian LaTourette |
| Larry Hulle | Tara Collins |
| Challey Comer | Elaine Poulin |
| Dale Dewing | Dan Flaherty |
| Tom Pavlesich | Suzanne Baker |

Fred introduced the newest Council member, Chris DiBenedetto.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the December 21, 2010 WAC meeting.

Motion: Darby Hartwell

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

III. Executive Director Reports – Craig Cashman

A. Operational Report

- **Easement Contract Negotiations/Issues:** Meeting to be held in February with the issue of the “unfunded liability for stewardship” at the center of the discussion. Other items will include voting structure and the water supply permit and side agreement items. Craig stated he was aiming for completion of the contract in the next 6-8 months for a contract start date of 11/2012.
- **Agriculture, Forestry, and Farm to Market Contract Discussions/Issues:** Second discussion with DEP to establish a framework and timeline, and deliverables for completion of a five-year contract to begin 11/2012. Looking at the same 6-8 months and will incorporate the Agriculture, Forestry, Farm to Market, and Outreach

programs into the contract.

- **Implementation of Prioritization:** As a subcommittee of the Ag Committee, the Action Staff is developing Policies, Guidelines, and Operating Procedures to effectively transition from SI. This transition will include the development of a plan to effectively inform and continue to develop buy-in from watershed farmers.
- **Strategic Planning:** In addition to the Directors Retreat, NYCON will conduct a Strategic Assessment with the staff on February 24th. NYCON will also be sending out a stakeholder survey and identifying focus groups.

B. Program Reports/Approvals

- **Human Resources:** Cheryl announced that with the hiring of Heather Ross, Sr. Executive Assistant WAP; Scott Boyce, Engineer Specialist EoH; and John Van Benschoten, Engineer Specialist WoH all WAC positions are currently filled. The HR audit continues to move forward and Craig and Cheryl will be meeting with Mike West, NYCON to review the documents to date.
- **Outreach:** Tara stated that although the new website has gone live this week, it remains a work in progress. The new website has the visitor in mind instead of the organization. WAC was recently a sponsor of the NOFA conference and participated in the Schoharie Watershed Summit. Tara continues her program on radio WIOX with many staff and partners participating.
- **Data Processing:** Extensive work has been done on the Ag and Forestry sections of the Database according to Seth. It is in a stable place and ready to go live soon. James has brought it into a form that is easily viewed and is acceptable. James has also conducted some GIS training with the technicians and has found that as a non-profit we can acquire ESRI licensing at a considerable discount. Flexible reporting can also be created through the database with at least 40 choices to date.
- **CCE Delaware County:** Dale Dewing stated there are presently two open positions in the Watershed Ag Program for CCE staff and they hope to have interviews completed by March. The Dairy and Livestock Conference went well and was better attended than in 2010.
- **Agricultural Program:** According to Larry Hulle, the Ag Program is looking at a prioritization methodology and setting the 2011 goals. In 2011, 247 BMPs were completed for a total of \$3 million. Jan Surface will begin working for NRCS in Walton February 28th and Machel Simmons is expected to start sometime mid-March. Instead of using "cost guidelines" in the future, the program is looking at "ABC" – the average BMP cost -- as a more efficient method. Toward the end of March, Larry would like to have participant meetings where changes in prioritization, annual status

reviews, and BMP replacement will be explained. The new concepts will be explained to all WAP staff first. Council Directors are encouraged to attend the staff training so that everyone representing WAC is carrying the same message.

- **Farm to Market:** Challey is planning a livestock processing workshop. She has taken local food and fiber products to a NYC's New Amsterdam Market. She also met with representatives from NYC Greenmarkets and Delaware County Economic Development in two different meetings.. She will be speaking at the Delaware Valley Growers Roundtable this month. A very successful Farm to Market Connection annual conference is being planned again for March. Buyers have been able to make lasting sales connections with the various producers at this event. The average attendance is 60% farmers and 40% buyers. This year, Challey has received a donation to help defray the costs of this event. The Pure Catskill Guide's distribution was expanded to 50,000 copies last year to accommodate an increasing membership. Challey has been able to acquire a grant to hire a part time person (Farmhearts Fellowship) to assist her with these many activities.

Easement Program: Jeff reported that in the Easement portfolio there are now 117 Properties with 18, 599.6 acres that are closed on and 2847 acres representing 17 properties in contract for a total of 21,446.81 acres. Jeff predicts the total Portfolio by 12/2011 will be 22,489 acres (122 easements). The program has Expended /Encumbered \$37 million of the \$47 million contract. Budget Negotiations for additional \$23 million contract and \$7 million forestry contract begin in February. The program has conducted monitoring on 117 properties in 2010. Two staff now manage all the monitoring in addition to handling 50 open stewardship projects. Comprehensive ASRs have been conducted on over 60 easement properties in 2010 identifying 35 environmental revisions and 24 administrative revisions. Jeff is working on implementation of WSP/AIP deliverables including public meeting format, transparency requirements, completion of remaining guidelines, tax provisions (changes to allocation formula)

- **Forestry Program:** Tom Pavlesich reported the Forestry Handbook has been edited for the year and the Forestry Committee has approved it. The paperwork for an additional model forest is being completed.
- **East of Hudson Program:** Carrie's written report stated the EoH program has completed BMPs this quarter including a manure spreader pad and filter area at Cloverbrook Farm in Dutchess County and a well installation at Tilly Foster Farm, which is part of a solar-powered watering system and watercourse exclusion project expected to be completed this spring. In 2010, the EoH Program implemented 29 structural BMPs and 17 non-structural BMPs for a total of \$543,879.60. A second meeting was held to garner local support for the Clearpool Model Forest. An ad-hoc committee

was formed by Chris Hendershot. Having successfully completed stakeholder outreach, they are now at the concept mapping stage in the development of the Clearpool Model Forest. They have retained the services of Greene County CCE to facilitate the concept mapping process. The 2010 EoH Participant Event was held in December at Tilly Foster Farm, fulfilling an Outreach Program deliverable. The event was a success with approximately 50 people attending including participants, partners, staff and committee members. January 29th Brendan Murphy and Carrie will be representing WAC at Bedford's 2020 Environmental Action Day. The day's mission is to engage all members of the community in a day of education, discussion and networking to raise awareness in the core areas of energy usage, food & agriculture, transportation, waste & recycling and water & land use. Brendan and Carrie will staff a WAC table to promote the Agriculture and Forestry Programs and for part of the day Carrie will be participating in a Food and Agriculture Forum designed to be an interactive question and answer opportunity for attendees. Andy Cheung, P.E. will be presenting on February 2nd in Canandaigua, NY at a conference entitled "Farms, Folks and Funding: Cultivating Leadership through Research and Practice." Andy will share his knowledge and experience designing and implementing a solar-powered livestock watering system at a Westchester County Farm last year.

- IV. Governance Committee – John Verhoeven**
The Nominating Committee recommends the following slate of officers to the Council of Directors Chair – Fred Huneke, Vice-Chair – Dave Cammer, and Treasurer – John Riedl.
Second: Steve Reed
There were no additional nominations from the floor.
Approved Unanimously

The Nominating Committee recommends for Executive Committee members at large Tom Donnelly, and Barbara Howard.
Second: Steve Reed
There were no additional nominations from the floor.
Approved Unanimously

Motion to approve the Chair's appointments of John Verhoeven, Chair; Richard Giles, Steve Reed, Chris DiBenedetto and Barbara Howard to the WAC Governance Committee.
Second: Dave Cammer
Approved Unanimously

Motion to approve the Chair's appointment of Ken Smith, Chair; Darby Hartwell and Tom Hutson to the WAC Audit Committee
Second: John Riedl
Approved Unanimously

V. Chair's Report – Fred Huneke

A. Endowment Committee Update

The Endowment Committee recommends the approval of the Stewardship Endowment Fund Investment Policy dated 12/20/10.

Second: Dave Cammer

No: John Schwartz

Motion Approved

Fred has spoken with Paul Rush to try to schedule the Commissioner's visit for our February WAC meeting. This meeting would initiate a very important conversation that would determine the direction and long term future of WAC's easement program. Dave Cammer and Fred have been working on committee assignments which are 99% complete. WAC has added a non director, Jennifer Grossman, Esq., as a voting member to the Easement Committee. She is the vice president for land acquisition at the Open Space Institute. Fred has known Jennifer for some time and respects her opinion knowing that she shares the same values and interest in agriculture and forestry as it pertains to the working landscape concept. The largest responsibility for the Council of Directors that came out of the Directors retreat was the mapping out of WAC's Strategic Plan.

VI. Finance Committee – John Riedl

- **Motion to accept the November Financial Statement on the recommendation of the Finance Committee.**

Second: Richard Giles

Approved

VII. DEP Report – John Schwartz

Nothing to report at this time.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.