

KANKAKEE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes October 21, 2019

The Kankakee County Soil and Water Conservation District held its regular monthly meeting Monday, October 21, 2019. Chairman Jeff O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:43 am. Present were Directors Jeff O'Connor, Alan Wissmiller, Larry Kirchner, and Jim Frogge, Associate Director Ed Brown, Resource Conservationist Emilie Janes, Conservation Assistants Crystal Sauder and Dakota Behrends, and District Conservationist Trenton Rader. Absent were Director Dave Peters, Administrative Coordinator Linda Settle, and Associate Director John Settle.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: O'Connor made and Frogge seconded a motion to approve the agenda. Motion passed four to zero.

CONSENT AGENDA: Wissmiller made and O'Connor seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda. Motion passed four to zero.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Minutes of September 16, 2019 Board Meeting

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Approval of Time and Travel
Approve Financial Report
Approval of Bills

CORRESPONDENCE: None

OLD BUSINESS:

NRI Approval – None

Partners for Conservation Cost Share – Behrends stated that she is waiting for receipts from one producer. She will start sending checks and S.T.A.R. forms out this week to the producers. Behrends also stated that when 2020 monies are available, each producer will have to complete a S.T.A.R form when enrolling in cost share programs.

Grants – Behrends stated that we will be applying for the Cover Crop Champions Grant. We will have to reach 150 farmers and 10 crop advisors for the grant, with media not counting towards the direct outreach total. Behrends stated the grant can cover any expense except direct cover crop seeds and no sampling. Janes stated the programs executed by this grant do not need to be focused only on cover crops, but any sustainable topics. They are coming up with different topics that are not typically covered.

Sauder stated that Janes and herself attended the Limestone Township Park District meeting on October 8th, 2019 to introduce the district and talk about the potential projects. She said the native seed for the small prairie expansion has been ordered and delivered. Janes and Sauder

are currently reworking the 2020 Communityworks Grant application that is due in March. Sauder stated she will be contacting Taft Elementary to set up a date to seed the prairie in November and Herscher High School to grow plugs in their greenhouse. Janes added that the 2020 Communityworks Grant will not be a 3-acre prairie restoration site like originally planned because the Limestone Soccer League will be utilizing the fields again next year. The 2020 Communityworks Grant will consist of native trees and shrubs planted along the perimeter with signage and pollinator pockets throughout the park as well.

Sauder stated that Janes and herself met with Jim Duggan and Dennis Crawford from Bourbonnais Elementary School District to discuss future grant partnerships. There are several grants Sauder and Janes will be working on for the different proposed projects, with many applications overlapping with one another. Sauder said she is still waiting to hear back from Duggan on specific locations for the projects. Sauder is also waiting for updated grant applications to be posted.

Sauder stated that she is waiting to schedule classroom visits with Michael Matthews and Daya Snapp to go along with their 2019 Conservation Kits. Sauder also stated that the district will begin advertising 2020 Conservation Kits in January. The applications will be due in May and awarded in June before school is out. The goal for 2020 is to award 5 kits with a budget of \$2,500.

Education & Outreach – Behrends stated that she has 2 Farmer Spotlights scheduled for the next two weeks.

Behrends helped Thad Eshleman, RC Iroquois County SWCD, with an FFA Soil Judging Competition. They would like to do a practice one in the spring due to the rule changes that occurred this year. Behrends stated she and Eshleman are hoping for more participation with the offering of a practice soil judging event. Behrends and Janes did two presentations at Kankakee Community College on Soils. Behrends stated she was invited to do a presentation on soils at Joliet Community College in January.

Behrends stated Eshleman and herself are planning a Winter Workshop for Fall Cover for Spring Savings. The workshop will be on December 17th, at 9 am. What will be covered at the workshop is still being planned. Behrends will be advertising the event with Milner Media.

Sauder stated that the Kankakee County SWCD Scarecrow will be up at Perry Farm Park until November 4th. She presented a Cost Analysis for the scarecrow contest with a total of \$153.50.

Sauder stated that Janes and herself presented at a STEM Math and Science fair at Moraine Valley Community College on October 5th. The fair was for 5th grade girls. Janes and Sauder presented on careers in conservation, classes and programs they participated in in junior high and high school, and three different activity stations of scientific illustration, microscopes, and insects.

Sauder stated she presented at the Livingston County SWCD Farm Expo on October 10th. There were over 70 presenters, 96 classrooms, and 1600 school kids ranging from 1st to 5th grade. Sauder presented on Pollination and Pollinators to 2nd grade classrooms.

Sauder stated that Janes and herself are working with Kris Junge from Midland States Bank to start planning Earth Day 2020. They met with Kris on October 7th to discuss the steps moving forward. Sauder stated she is working with the ONU Zoology Club and Dr. Derek Rosenberger to plan a Community BioBlitz for first thing fall semester or late spring in 2020/2021.

Sauder stated Sara Smith from IADD has expressed interest in hosting a Drainage District meeting in March 2020 with Kankakee County SWCD.

S.T.A.R. Program – Behrends stated whenever a producer participates in a cost share program, they will have to complete a S.T.A.R. form.

Natural Resources of Kankakee County – Sauder stated that the invitation letters have been mailed to recipients. Some books and thank you letters have been distributed to recipients. Sauder stated in the next coming weeks she will start to distribute more books to recipients. Sauder also stated she is working with the ONU Library to host a copy of the book on the Digital Commons. The library is having to create a new section on the Benner Library website before posting on Digital Commons.

Sales – Sauder stated that the Tree & Shrub sale pickup was on October 18th from 7:30-3 pm. There were 15 orders this fall. The Kankakee County SWCD offered fruit trees this year. Sauder stated that she will be meeting with Possibility Place to discuss the Spring Native Plant Sale. Janes and Sauder are working with the Native Plant Society on offering Pollinator Pockets this upcoming spring. Sauder would also like to get general sale banners to hang under the USDA sign to advertise along Larry Power Road.

Certificate of Deposit – Janes stated she withdrew the 6-month CD and opened an additional 12-month CD of \$50,000 at 2.25%. The next CD will be mature by July 5, 2020.

Peotone Airport – Janes stated that she will be monitoring the Peotone Airport website for when the comments section is opened.

AISWCD Health Insurance – Janes stated that the cost of the AISWCD health insurance would be about \$350-\$400 per employee for the most common coverage.

NEW BUSINESS:

Approval of Employee Training and Events – Janes stated she would like to have Behrends complete the NRCS Conservation Planner Training in order to help NRCS with more CRP work. Additional funds will be brought into the District by having Behrends go through the Conservation Planner training.

Janes stated that she would like Behrends to apply for the Illinois Farm Bureau's Agriculture Leaders of Tomorrow Program. Kirchner made and O'Connor seconded a motion to approve the Kankakee County SWCD to join the Illinois Farm Bureau and for Behrends to apply for the Agriculture Leaders of Tomorrow Program.

Janes stated that there was time off requests for the board for the upcoming holidays. O'Connor stated to put the time off requests in the activity reports in the future.

Annual Financial Report – Janes stated the District will need to find an accountant for the Annual Financial Report at the request of Settle. The Financial Report will be due by the November meeting for Board approval, and due to the comptroller by December 31st.

REPORTS – In addition to printed reports, if necessary

RC REPORT – nothing additional

CONS. ASST. – nothing additional

AC REPORT – nothing additional

DC REPORT – Rader stated he will be getting a Soil Conservation Technician. The job application will be posted in about 6 weeks and will be open for 10 days. He also discussed Conservation Planner Certification Training with the Board.

FSA REPORT – none

COMMITTEE REPORTS – none

The next regular District Board meeting will be Monday, November 18, 2019 at 7:30 am.

Frogge made and Wissmiller seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed four to zero. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 am.