

**Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, March 4, 2014**  
**NRCS State Office, Madison**

Meeting called to order at 8:06 am by Pat Pelky.

**1. Roll Call**

Present: Bad River (Lacey Hill), FCPC (Nate Guldán), Ho-Chunk (Randy Poelma), LCO (Brett McConnell), Menominee (Jeremy Pyatskowitz), Mole Lake (Tina VanZile), Oneida (Pat Pelky), Red Cliff (Chad Abel), St. Croix (Katie Stariha, Tony Havranek)

A quorum is present.

Others Present: Susan Hunter (FSA), Duane Voy (Risk Management Agency), Juan Hernandez (NRCS), Jimmy Bramblett (NRCS), Jim Ruppel (EPA), Chris Borden (NRCS), Keith Sengbusch (WTCAC), Greg Bussler (NASS), JoAnn Cruse (APHIS – PPQ), Pam Engstrom (APHIS – WS), Mary Rasmussen (USFS), Jerry Thompson (WTCAC)

**2. Approval of Agenda**

**MOTION:** Motion to approve agenda. Motion by Menominee, seconded by St. Croix. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION:** Motion to approve the January 7, 2014 WTCAC Meeting Minutes. Motion by Red Cliff, seconded by Menominee. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.

**4. NRCS Update**

Juan Hernandez, Maine State Conservationist, has 5 tribes in Maine that he works with all individually. He would like to form a group similar to WTCAC in Maine.

Jimmy - Budget – EQIP – they have \$8 million less than they started last year with, \$12 million less than where they finished last year. For technical agreements they are \$5 million less than last year. The high tunnel with traditional materials has been finalized and approved. The Farm Bill passed on Feb 7. EQIP and CSP pretty much remained intact. Authorizations for funding were a little less. Easement programs – Agricultural Conservation Easement Program now contains WRP and a combo of farm and grassland reserve programs. Authorizations for funding were cut in half to \$400 million/year. New program called Regional Conservation Partnership Program – 1) Competition for proposal for national, competition for multi-state regions, and an in state competition. Conservation compliance – issues for farms on former wetlands. Tribal outreach and collaboration plan – they are being asked to do specific tribal listening sessions on consultation on the Farm Bill. Details are still being put together. Partnership with USFS to improve coaster brook trout habitat. Chris is going to help Gary Haughn with the effort. They have a “honey bee effort” designed to help provide additional habitat for bees that are housed here over winter and bees that come in from other states. They have \$3 million in the multi-state region to improve habitat, deadline is March 21 if anyone is interested. It is part of the EQIP Program. At least 5% of EQIP funds have to be addressing wildlife related habitat

improvements. They had originally dedicated \$450,000 to WTCAC. Last week, they looked internally and they added an additional \$200,000 to fund all projects including the Lac du Flambeau aquaculture project.

Chris Borden – Aquaculture Subcommittee – they were able to take background information back on how Tribes assess the need for stocking and they were able to figure out how they could make resource concerns that match up with this. In the past they could not fund expansion of facilities or construction of new facilities. They were able to find resource concerns for raising fry to fingerlings for release so they think they can fund expansions and new facilities. Resource concern – *“fish and wildlife habitat – inadequate habitat – cover shelter”*.

Jimmy - Pathways – Greg will be contacting past WTCAC interns for this program. Dan Cornelius stopped by yesterday and asked him about syrup coops. Jimmy thought the harmony training we discussed would have other state conservationists come to Red Cliff, somewhere along the way it got morphed into the traditional 5 day training. They are looking at the week of August 11<sup>th</sup>. USFS would be interested as well. Could EPA attend as well? State personnel could participate but they may have to contribute. It appears there is a decent amount of interest.

#### **4. FSA Update**

Susan Hunter –handout attached

#### **5. APHIS Update**

JoAnn – Project proposals for Farm Bill funding went through however she doesn't know what was approved yet and is not sure when they will find out. EAB – they are short on funding this year but they gave them the approval to move forward and contract EAB trapping that is going on in Wisconsin. More traps are proposed for this year. There will be some trapping in the southern part of state. No new finds to report at this time outside of quarantined areas. Iowa quarantined their whole state, they just had 2 new finds in the central part of the state. Now is a good time to look for woodpecker damage. They are quarantining Iowa County for gypsy moth. Lake and Cook Counties in MN being quarantined for gypsy moths. Highest gypsy moth year on record last year.

APHIS has something called AgDiscovery. Focus on education about APHIS and what the different agencies within APHIS do. It is a 2 – 4 week program at schools, student only responsible for getting to the location but tuition and lodging is paid for. 17 universities that are participating in 2014. Iowa State is the closest. End of March is deadline, the age group is 14 – 17. Menominee College and APHIS are signing an agreement to put on a 2 week program focusing on APHIS activities, “safe guarding natural heritage summer program.”

Pam Engstrom – Wildlife Services handout attached.

Rumor about harsh winter knocking back EAB, it might knock it back, but it won't eliminate it.

#### **6. USFS Update**

Mary Rasmussen (update attached) – Farm Bill permanently authorized stewardship contracting. One of the tools under the Tribal Forest Protection Act. White House announced a proposal

about fire suppression funding. A new emergency fund that provides more of a budget certainty to help fund the fire effort so less is taken from other forests across the country. The Forests are looking at implementing subpart A of the travel management rule. Subpart B has been implemented in all forests. They had to develop a map of motorized routes/roads/trails on the forest. Subpart A requires the Forest to do a roads study. The study involves identifying what is the absolute minimum road system you need. They have road systems they cannot fund to maintain, effort to get road systems down to a manageable size. She handed out cards on this (attached). Important for Tribes to comment on this. This is just the study and there will be formal consultation in the future. New Deputy Forest Supervisor – Linda Riddle – she will be starting in a couple of weeks. She is replacing Owen Martin. They will be filling the Washburn District Ranger. Ottawa – Tony Scardina is moving on in a couple of months and they are working on filling his position. Looking at Forestry subcommittee meeting next month. Mary will email me info to include in the minutes. They have a ton of summer employment opportunities right now. Paul reached out to former WTCAC students and he contacted them before it became public and sent them all the info.

### **7. NASS Update**

Greg Bussler – They will be releasing entire data set in May of this year which will include the American Indian statistics. He handed out the preliminary numbers (attached). They are now doing a census of aquaculture.

### **8. Risk Management Agency Update**

Duane Voy – At the RMA website you can get a link to farm risk plans. There is a library of information on risk management and a risk management checklist. There is also an Ag Risk Library that has several tools for beginning record keeping, references, and information for people who are just beginning. Training on how to apply for grants is being offered, let him know if any Tribes are interested. Farm Bill has given them some new incentives to reach out to beginning and new farmers and it has a linkage to conservation compliance. In their policy they built in a link to the NRCS website to discuss cover crops.

### **9. Rural Development Update**

Stan – He and Brad met with the small business administration in Milwaukee last week. There is an MOU between the Secretary and the small business administration in regards to working closer together. SBA has been asked to collaborate and work closely with them. Two weeks ago in was in Washington DC for a briefing on the new Farm Bill. It was the Secretary's opinion that RD was treated well by the Farm Bill. In spite of the fact that some of the toughest areas to build economies are in rural America he wanted them to leave no stone unturned to reach out to local leaders and community groups to try and build these economies. Rural America is only 14% of population. Their travel budget will be a little higher so they will be able to get out more. Emphasis on local, organic, and native foods is still a priority.

### **10. EPA Update**

Jim Ruppel – Last week was RTOC meeting in Chicago and another meeting with Tribal Chairs and Susan Hedman as well as TEPM conference. Right now they are underway with early retirement and voluntary separation process to try and shed staff. Hoping to avoid layoffs. Not clear the impact on the AIEO. Staff will be moved around. The acting IEO Director will

probably be there for a while. EPA is engaging in a climate health assessment and as part of that they are looking for input from the public on climate changes effect on public health but there is also a request for scientific studies or any information. On funding, the NTOC is engaging in an annual exercise to try and figure out how much money Tribes need. They summarize the info and it goes to National Headquarters. Current budgets right now, the Air Program had 16 proposals and \$1.7 million was requested, there was about \$1.2 million available. All 16 will get funded but not at 100%. Water funding – they are pretty much expecting to be able to fund the 106 program at FY12 levels. 319 is fully funded at \$30k per Tribe. Brownfields was not expecting anything to change from previous years.

### **11. IAC Update**

Dan wasn't present but Jerry handed out his update (attached).

### **12. 2014 Tribal Environmental Summit at UW-Madison**

Paul Robbins and Larry Nesper – American Indian Studies Program. They are looking to put together a Summit. He gave a presentation. They work for the Nelson Institute. They know the summit needs to be driven based on what Tribes need. They would like to put together a committee that would work together on the Summit that would be held in October (information attached).

### **13. Internship Program**

2 applicants so far for up to 10 positions. Jerry has not heard anything on the pathways MOU. March 31 is the application deadline and hope to have them selected by April 15. Currently we have \$32,000 from last year's USFS Grant. We need to come up with the match. May need to ask for match waiver, Jerry applied with FCP Foundation for funds as well.

### **14. Next Meeting**

The next WTCAC meeting is scheduled for April 29 at Oneida and we plan to hold an APHIS training on April 30.

### **15. Grant Update**

GLRI – June 2 will be the start date for GLRI employees and can go 19 weeks after that.

APHIS Grant – We got that \$7,000 for instate training and it ends at the end of July.

NRCS Grant – Keith and Jerry will look at the grant on Thursday and look at transferring some money from Randy to Keith to do technical assistance.

CIG Grant – Closes at the end of the month. Thought was to do an aquaculture/aquaponics enclosed system.

### **16. Audit**

He continues to ask Jerry questions. He is down to 2 last things 1) Jerry had to make a request to OAO for documentation of all payment requests and they have not responded 2) He is missing one travel voucher from a Louisiana Tribe.

**17. Northeast Wisconsin Forest Improvement Collaborative (NEWFIC)**

Nate will send out invites to NEWFIC to Tribal Chairs and copy WTCAC reps.

**18. NRCS Technical Review Public Meeting**

Recommendations attached.

**MOTION:** Motion to adjourn. Motion by Mole Lake, seconded by Red Cliff. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:38 pm.

**EMAIL MINUTES 02/14/2014**

**MOTION:** Motion to approve the grant management contract with Innovative Funding. Motion by FCPC, seconded by St. Croix. Six ayes (St. Croix, FCPC, Stockbridge-Munsee, LCO, Menominee, and Lac du Flambeau), zero opposed, motion carried.

**EMAIL MINUTES 04/22/2014**

**MOTION:** Motion to approve placing the student interns into the following positions - John Glover, USFS Civil Engineering Position, Forrest Gauthier, USDA RMA/St. Croix Position. Miriam Waupoose, USFS Northern Research Station/Institute for Applied Ecosystem Studies Position, and Melissa Lewis, APHIS Natural Resources Aid Position. Motion by FCPC, seconded by Stockbridge-Munsee. Seven ayes (St. Croix, FCPC, Stockbridge-Munsee, LCO, Menominee, Red Cliff, and Lac du Flambeau), zero opposed, motion carried.

# **ATTACHMENTS**