

Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 12, 2010
Red Cliff

Meeting called to order at 9:09 am by Jonathan Pyatskowit.

1. USDA Honor Award

Jonathan Pyatskowit and Pat Pelky attended the award ceremony in Washington D.C. and were given 2 awards that are exactly the same. It was decided that one of the awards would rest in Pat Leavenworth's office in Madison and the other one will be given to each Tribe when they host a WTCAC meeting and will rest with that Tribe until the next WTCAC meeting.

2. Roll Call

Present: Bad River (Pam Roberts), FCPC (Nate Guldan), Ho-Chunk (Sara Schmidt), Menominee (Jonathan Pyatskowit), Oneida (Pat Pelky), Red Cliff (Tracey Ledger, Melonee Montano), St. Croix (Tony Havranek), Stockbridge-Munsee (Bob Frank), Mole Lake (Roman Ferdinand), GLIFWC (Jim Thannum)

Others Present: Matt Otto (NRCS), Michael Stinebrink (NRCS), Melanie Thoreen (Red Cliff VISTA), Sarah Gordon (Red Cliff VISTA), Arthur LaBarge (NRCS), Tom Melnarik (NRCS), Keith Sengbusch (NRCS), Greg Yakle (NRCS), Kathy Mayo (USEPA), Pat Leavenworth (NRCS), Stan Gruszynski (USDA – RD), Renae Anderson (NRCS), Jerry Thompson (WTCAC Program Manager)

3. Approval of Agenda

Several things were added to the agenda: USEPA, USDA Rural Development, and WTCAC Program Manager Report.

MOTION: Motion to approve agenda with additions. Motion by Stockbridge-Munsee, seconded by Ho-Chunk. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

Need to clarify in June minutes on Page 2 #2 on top of the page to say Keith is retiring AND Bad River and Red Cliff need an NRCS liaison to support them.

Replace all occurrences of “plague” with “plaque” in June minutes.

MOTION: Motion to approve July 27, 2010 minutes. Motion by St. Croix, seconded by Red Cliff. All ayes, zero opposed, Oneida abstained, motion carried.

MOTION: Motion to approve June 16, 2010 minutes with modifications. Motion by Stockbridge-Munsee, seconded by Ho-Chunk. All ayes, zero opposed, Oneida abstained, motion carried.

5. NRCS Update

Pat Leavenworth indicated that the big item is recognizing all of us again for all the work we have done over the years and the prominence we have achieved in the country. The Honor Award is a very distinguished award and we are now on USDA's website. She passed around a printout of the website. She also passed around a picture of Jonathan Pyatskowitz and Pat Pelky with Secretary Vilsack, Deputy Secretary Merrigan and Tom Krapf. Pat also handed out a special recognition certificate to each WTCAC Representative.

Matt Otto handed out a response to technical recommendations WTCAC made at the June meeting. For the most part they were able to do most of the requests. Tribes will have their own WHIP and EQIP dockets for 2011. They are currently looking into the staffing issues we raised. They will be taking a look at the aquaculture practices for 2011. Follow up on the technical recommendations for 2009; they will look at including irrigation for 2011. They will also be submitting some new waivers for the upcoming year.

In 2011 a practice called Herbaceous Weed Control (315) will be added. Treatment of all invasive species, terrestrial and aquatic, will be in this practice. It will be considered a management practice so applicants can receive 2 payments not just 1.

Jim Thannum indicated that it would be helpful to get the people making decisions in NRCS out to the Reservations to see what is being proposed and how it fits in. Matt Otto said that would be possible.

Tracey Ledder commented that Tribes need better documentation with more photos so Tribes can show that there is a big difference between the Tribes and large farmers.

6. USDA Rural Development

Stan Gruszynski, State Director for Rural Development (RD) in Wisconsin, gave the update. He was appointed by President Obama on August 3, 2009. He indicated that he is not a stranger to many people in the room, as he worked with RD from 1996 - 2003 and then worked at the Environmental Education Center at UWSP. RD's focus is on economic development, infrastructure, housing, etc. He was honored to get this appointment as it has been a life long passion for him. He grew up in northeast Wisconsin on farmland his parents bought in 1947. This is an excellent time to take stock and see where we want to go and how to do it in the most sustainable way for the environment while best utilizing our resources. We need to come together as a people to partner and collaborate in a way to use one another's expertise that will make a difference in a positive way. He takes the responsibility of his position seriously to make sure this happens. We need to get the state involved to make sure rural communities get what they need. He feels that by working together they can make a difference in people's lives. He brought along some annual reports. Wisconsin RD lead the nation as terms of actual dollars brought back to the state.

Bob Frank commented that RD was thrown out as a potential funding source for hatcheries or aquaponic facilities. Not as an economic endeavor but as a way to bring healthy foods to Tribal members. What are the opportunities? Stan indicated that the National Office says they are very interested in local foods and sustainability. If they can get the federal government to see that this will lead to the regional economies they want then they should get the resources we need. Can WTCAC do anything? Bring as much pressure to the entity as possible in a good way to bring this to the forefront.

Jim Thannum indicated there was a real interest from Tribal Chairs as to how to get traditional foods into schools, community kitchens, garden projects, etc. Any help RD can give Tribes would be greatly appreciated.

Pat Pelky commented that the reason we worked well with NRCS was that NRCS was open to a change and there was a partnership to figure out how to work together. He does not know what RD all does so there is a large learning curve for Tribes to figure out what RD is all about. RD needs to do a better job of finding out what needs Tribes have so RD can figure out what needs to be done.

There is a RD tribal liaison however Stan will be designating someone else and they will report directly to them. Pat Pelky suggested that the liaison should be a full time position, however, even though he agrees, Stan said they have gone from 120 staff to 102.3 staff and he has to make sure they have enough people in place for everything they need to do. He indicated he will get to that point if he lasts long enough. Stan's contact info: stan.gruszynski@wi.usda.gov, 715-345-7600.

7. USEPA Update

Kathy Mayo, USEPA WI Tribal Liaison, gave the update. She indicated that she is the new WI Tribal Liaison in a 1 year temporary position. She is filling the position until they can hire someone full time. She has a technical background as a biologist in Ashland with USGS. She will participate in all WTCAC meetings and is trying to figure out how she fits in.

EPA is currently working on a National Consultation Policy and comments are due in September. It is a general policy for tribes to tell EPA how we want to work with them. The regional one will be more specific. They will be developing a working group to develop the regional plan.

There is a major change to WQS regulations and there is a tribal listening session on August 19 via conference call. They are changing regulations related to anti-degradation.

She wanted to say thanks as she has visited a lot of Tribes this week. She hopes to be a lot more active and looks forward to working with everyone.

8. WTCAC/Tribal Caucus

Jerry drafted a position paper on using WTCAC as the structure to meet as the WI Tribal Caucus for EPA (it is attached to the July 27 minutes). The Tribal Caucus just meets quarterly and one meeting will be at the annual GAP conference in Chicago. So there would be 3 meetings that would be joint meetings. If we go this route, how exactly will meetings work? Potentially have a 1/2 day meeting first day with the Tribal Caucus and the 2nd day have the regular WTCAC meeting. Everyone agreed that it was a good idea to incorporate the Tribal Caucus into WTCAC as it falls within WTCAC's mission. Therefore, there will no longer be a "Tribal Caucus", WTCAC will be the "Tribal Caucus." US EPA will just become a regular agenda item for WTCAC with more extensive time spent on US EPA issues 3 times a year.

9. WTCAC Update

Jerry handed out his time sheets for April, May, and June 2010. He spent most of April working on APHIS-VHS Agreement. He finished the 1st Quarter reports in July for the APHIS-VHS Agreement. They had everything processed in about a week and Brett has the money to pay FCPC and St. Croix. We will be returning a bunch of money for salary and sample analysis. APHIS sent out an email saying that if any of the Tribes produced any publications they wanted to review them to see if they wanted to put their logo and name on them. If Stockbridge-Munsee is going to produce something they would like to review it.

Technical Recommendations – He put in a bunch of time working on pulling the technical recommendations together.

2501 Grant - WTCAC was approved for the grant for FY2011. We put in for 3 years, they reduced all awards down to 1 year, but they gave us \$300,000 for 1 year. Jerry redid the proposal to account for the extra money. We changed it to 5 student internships for next summer. It doesn't matter which agency would host them and WTCAC would pay their wages and such. APHIS and USFS are interested. We are going to do a training session for Tribes on how to form TCACs; the extra money will be used to pay for travel to get people to Wisconsin. We would like Pat Leavenworth to be involved to help get it kicked off. We have had requests from MI, MN, AZ, WA, and FL to help with getting TCACs established. We really need to get state conservationists here for the training. NRCS will be willing to cosponsor it. We need to clarify what we can spend the small project money on.

Possible proposal put together to develop a WTCAC weed management area. He wrote up the proposal and then he got to the match page and after reading the criteria he cannot come up with any match money. He shelved it because they couldn't make it work.

Jerry will be pulling together an annual WTCAC report so he needs stuff from all the projects that were worked on. This would be anything that was done from October 1 - September 30. Jerry would like to get the graphs Renae had made to update them for the last years to use as training material. **Mail Jerry CDs of pictures and reports or email as long as they are small enough.**

He attended the aquaculture training the last 2 days and he thinks he will be able to use some of it to work with NRCS. Topics discussed included water conservation issues, water quality (pathogens), waste management, and bio security. It costs anywhere from \$80,000 - \$140,000 for systems. It would meet NRCS needs to improve water conservation. Rural Development could also help with some of these costs.

GLRI with EPA and NRCS - We would like to take a look at noxious weeds on Tribal nations to see if we can put a proposal together to help eradicate them.

He asked if he could get timelines for when NRCS would role out programs so we can establish some for ourselves.

He discussed having WTCAC sponsor Arthur LaBarge as a work study student to help Jerry get other students to apply for next year's internships.

10. Small Projects

Miles Falck gave a final report for GLIFWC's Invasive Plant Risk Assessment/Prioritization Model small project.

There was only one proposal brought forward for the remaining small project funds. Ho-Chunk proposed a small project titled "Soil and Vegetation Contaminant Analyses" for \$9,483.

MOTION: Motion to approve Ho-Chunk's small project titled "Soil and Vegetation Contaminant Analyses" for \$9,483 with the stipulation that Ho-Chunk provides a more detailed description of the project. Motion by FCPC, seconded by Stockbridge-Munsee. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.

Update – Ho-Chunk emailed a more detailed description to all WTCAC Representatives.

Small Project Updates:

Oneida Sugar Camp – Pat indicated their project will be completed.

Bad River Culvert Replacement – Pam indicated that it will be done in September. She proposed a budget modification to allow for more culvert assessments.

Bad River Invasive Species – Pam was not sure where it was at. After the meeting Pam sent out an email indicating that the project will be completed by the end of September.

MOTION: Motion to approve the modification to Bad River's Culvert Assessment and Remediation small project to move \$991.29 to allow for the completion of additional culvert surveys. Motion by FCPC, seconded by Ho-Chunk. All ayes, zero opposed, motion carried.

Bad River Well Project – Pam did not know the status at the meeting however after the meeting she sent out an email in which she indicated that bids have been received and they are in the process of awarding the well installation.

LCO Fish Cribs – Brett is not at the meeting, Nate will check with him.

FCPC Otter Creek Stream Restoration and Fish Habitat Improvement Project – Nate indicated that the project will be completed.

Lac du Flambeau Powell Marsh Survey – No one from Lac du Flambeau is at the meeting, Nate will check on it.

*****Everyone needs to start thinking about small projects for the 2501 Grant.**

11. Interns

APHIS already has a Bad River Tribal member interested in an internship with their wildlife program.

Jerry will talk to WLWCA about sponsoring the internships again.

12. Farm Bill

Jerry thought about developing a white paper on the Farm Bill to highlight that NRCS could fund all TCACs across this nation for a small amount of money.

13. Logo

Jonathan will send out latest versions so we can finally get them approved.

14. Financial Report

WTCAC will likely have extra money in the NRCS agreement that we will not be able to spend by the end of September. Nate will track it and see if we can get close to using all of the funds.

15. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for October 6 and 7 at St. Croix's new casino in Danbury starting at 1pm on the 6th and 8 am on the 7th. October 6 will be the EPA agenda.

MOTION: Motion to adjourn. Motion by Red Cliff, seconded by Stockbridge-Munsee. All ayes, zero opposed motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:37 pm.

EMAIL MINUTES 8/19/10

When Jonathan was in Washington D.C. the National Tribal Relations Coordinator invited him to sit on a panel in September to discuss tribal relations and NRCS. He believes this would be a good opportunity for WTCAC representation. NRCS will be picking up travel for this trip.

MOTION: Motion to appoint Jonathan to the panel to discuss tribal relations and NRCS Motion by FCPC, seconded by Mole Lake. Nine ayes (FCPC, Ho-Chunk, St. Croix, Red Cliff, Oneida, Stockbridge-Munsee, Mole Lake, Bad River, LCO), zero opposed, motion carried.