



Meeting Minutes

September 12th, 2018, 5:00 PM

USDA Service Center, 432 E, Pioneer Ave Homer, AK

- A. Call to order: 5:20
- B. Roll call: Chris Rainwater, Otto Kilcher, Kyra Wagner, Karin Sonnen, Tim Alzheimer, Devony Lehner, Lincoln Russell
- C. Approval of the agenda: approved
- D. Approval of the Minutes: motioned by Tim, seconded by Otto
- E. Visitors: Karin Sonnen, Lincoln Russell, Tommy Stephens
 - a. NRCS Report: Karen Sonnen Head of the Bay assessment September 27th, helicopter booked

Employee changes:

Pam Voeller, Soil conservationist in Kenai, has been offered and accepted the job as Supervisory District conservationist for the Homer field Office. She will be supervising all of the NRCS employees here in Homer, will run this office, and will report to Meg in Kenai. Homer will remain a part of the "South Hub" under the Kenai office. Pam's start date is October 15, but she may be working in both offices for a time, until she can make the move down here.

Another new face will be here at the end of October – Dorian Perez will be reporting to the NRCS Homer office working as a soil conservationist (like Jared and Sean). His start date is October 29. He will come to us from North Carolina NRCS where he is currently working as a soil conservationist there. He was in the Army for a couple tours, before working for the NRCS, and is reportedly a motivated guy with a great work ethic. He is especially interested in soil health and high tunnels, passive energy use, and agriculture in general. We are excited to welcome both Pam and Dorian, and hope they ride bikes to work.

Jared will be leaving us for Ronan, Montana (western part of the state, an hour north of Missoula) at some point this fall. He does not yet have a reporting date, but is expecting to move in October or November.

EQUIP:

We currently have 17 applications for 2019, and are expecting another 10 to come in before the cutoff. We don't yet know when the cutoff will be. Irrigation management practices are becoming popular, along with high tunnels and the management practices that go with them.

I put together a summary from the last 20 years showing the contracting workload changes (hand out).

We just finished our last contract signing for 2018 funds, last week.

The 2019 cost list is out, and is similar to last year. Some rates went up slightly, and others went down slightly.

The office staff have been busy with planning for next year, wrapping up contracting for this year, and attending to our "walk in" people with questions.

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- b. Others: Lincoln Russell, Tommy Stephens (retired FSA), Katherine Schake (new employee HSWCD). Katherine is organizing invasive conference with CWMA
- F. Financial Report: motioned by Otto, seconded by Tim, approved.

G. Manager's Report

A. Land Use: Trails

- a. **Watermelon Trail:** Have not heard back from ADF&G regarding a possible contract to do work on the Watermelon trail. According to Mike Eastham, DNR would like for us to take on management authority over the one piece of state land that lies in the Watermelon Trail that is not Critical Habitat Area.

- i. **Board Comments:** will need to know more before taking on this role. Kyra to talk to ADF&G/

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Homer Soil & Water

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- b. **Fox River Flats Trail:** Have not heard back from ADF&G regarding a possible contract to do work on the Fox River Flats trail. Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Area meetings to reconvene on September 26th.
 - i. **Board Comments:** State does not like gravel gathering idea, regarding holes in approaches leading to bridges.
 - c. **Homer Middle School Trail:** Today volunteers gathered to build bridges and boardwalk with wood purchased with the last remaining money from the School Yard Habitat and a donation from Deb Lowney. Success!
- B. Water Quality**
- a. **Anchor River:** report on stream flow characteristics to be submitted at the end of this month.
- C. Agriculture/Soil**
- a. **Soil Testing:** Putting up posters around town to remind people to bring in soil tests now to get results in time to plant in the spring.
 - b. **Soil Health Study:** Corey Cole and Casey Matney are coming down next week for site visits.
 - c. **SVT Thriving Thursday:** Brad and Al Poindexter will be the focus of this month's farm tour.
- D. Invasive Weed Program**
- a. **New Invasive Plant Program Coordinator:** We are excited to include Katherine Schake on our team!
 - i. **Board Comments:** Welcome!
 - b. **Seldovia Reed Canary Grass:** Jen and SVT held a community meeting in response to an outcry on Facebook where people were upset by the thought of spraying in Jakalof. One person showed up.
 - c. **Canadian Thistle:** verified growing out East End by the golf course
- E. Education**
- a. **Enviro Ed through EPA:** We have \$5000 from Ag in the Classroom to work with teachers on indoor growing projects.
- F. Administration**
- a. **New office space agreement:** Nothing new...but Cassie assured me that we have nothing to worry about. They won't kick us out.
 - i. **Board Comments:** Concerns over new agreement
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- H. Old Business**
- a. Employee evaluation, board evaluation (Tabled: not enough present)
 - b. Leasing equipment: committee update (Tabled: no Gena)
 - c. Borough Ag plan: (Tabled: Bring comments and concerns to discuss.)
- I. New Business**
- a. Beluga Flats, Agency input for Army Corps. Otto motioned to organize a committee meeting to educate ourselves before we comment on this topic as well as the borough ag plan. Tim seconded. Date to be set the day before city planning meeting. Tentative meeting date the 19th.
 - b. New work with the NERR
 - c. Certification of Cooperators list: Tim motioned to accept, Chris seconded to accept and certify list.
 - d. Management authority on trails? More information needed to be discussed
 - e. Chris trip: Otto motioned to float trip until gets reimbursement. Tim Seconded.

Next Meeting October TBA?, 2018, 5pm

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