

Education Focus Area Committee Meeting Minutes
AISWCD Quarterly Board
Northfield Inn, Springfield, IL
March 13, 2012

Members/Advisors Present:

Don Beisiegel
Sue Davis
Valerie Keener
Jerry Snodgrass, Chairman
James Todd
Rich Nichols
Barb Klinger
Marty McManus
Tom Beyers
Renee Weitekamp
Joe Rothermel

Members/Advisors Absent:

Jim Bell
Terry Bogner, Envirothon Chairman
Lee Bunting
Dave Dornbusch
Tim Keller
Jim King
Barb Lieberoff
Don Lloyd
Randy Molitoris
Debbie Ruff

Chairman Jerry Snodgrass called the meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda- A motion was made by Tom Beyers and seconded by Jim Todd to approve the agenda with the addition under New Business of Renee Weitekamp to speak on License Plates Initiative, motion carried.

IDNR Report-Valerie Keener reported that 24 Habitat Grants had recently been funded. She reported that after getting Rich Nichols' approval, a Rain Garden demo will be installed at the AISWCD office, this is funded with Fish and Wildlife Service money. Valerie reported that the IDNR budget has been cut 13% more and that 34 more staff could be cut.

IDOA-Marty McManus reported that he will be holding new Director Training for his area on March 15 and also a Chairman's Meeting. Most other Reps will do 1 on 1 training with new Directors. The Annual Report should be out by summer and the new Acting Director of Ag is Bob Flider. Marty also stated there are CD's for new directors to use for training.

Open Meetings Act-Rich Nichols gave an update on the OMA. He stated that HB 5315 made it through committee last week and should be assigned to a 3rd reading in the House soon. He hopes it will pass but emphasized that even if it does pass it will **not change** anything for the requirements that are in place for this year. The Directors will still have to do the online OMA Training for this year. He stated it takes about 1 ½ hours to do.

Director Training Taskforce Update- Jerry Snodgrass stated that the AISWCD had received approval from NACD for the Director Training.

Envirothon Taskforce Update-The Envirothon Coordinators had sent a report. Sue Davis was asked to read the report to the Committee. It was stated that FFA teams will now compete at the State Envirothon and that the FFA will pay the \$150 per team for them to participate. Rich Nichols stated that since there are extra teams going to the State Envirothon, that more Study Buckets were needed for the added FFA teams. A motion was made by Tom Beyers and seconded by Don Beisiegel to purchase 16 Study Buckets at \$83.50 each for a total of \$1,336.00 for the FFA teams for the State Envirothon, motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS-NONE

NEW BUSINESS

Envirothon Sponsorship Proposals- The list of the sponsors the Envirothon Coordinators have contacted are as follows (per their report):

- IEPA-Barb Lieberoff and Sara Seelbach stated last year that IEPA may be able to sponsor this year due to the Current Issue Topic relates to IEPA
- Pheasants Forever has agreed to donate
- 19 Districts and one Land Use Council have donated
- Illinois Farm Bureau has donated
- ISWCDEA has donated
- Illinois Headwaters RC&D has agreed to donate pending approval
- And letters were sent to the following for donations: ADM, Illinois American Water, IEPA, 1st Farm Credit Services, AISWCD Ladies Auxiliary, and Cargill. And Rich is going to meet with Stone Seed from Pleasant Plains.

McKibben Scholarship Review Committee Assignments-It was stated that there is \$500 this year to give out the McKibben Scholarship. The whole Education Focus Area Committee is assigned to the McKibben Scholarship Review Committee. The McKibben Scholarships will be reviewed at the June Quarterly Board Meeting. Valerie Keener will put the information about the McKibben Scholarship on the IDNR list-serve and Rich Nichols will send it to the four colleges that are eligible for the Scholarship.

License Plates Initiative- Renee Weitekamp gave a presentation on the License Plate Initiative. She stated that at a Land Use Council 7 meeting held on March 7, 2012 a motion was made to unanimously support the License Plate Initiative. If other districts and Land Use Councils are agreeable, monies collected would aid the Envirothon. She gave the background, benefits, what needs to happen and other details of how this would work. 1500 License plates would yield \$37,500 for the SWCD's which would be a substantial amount for the Envirothon. All monies collected with the requests would go into a Soil and Water Conservation District Fund in the State Treasury, regardless of whether the plates are printed or not, the money will come back to the Districts through the fund. The License plates design is still in the planning stages. We need to secure 1500 requests for this specialty plate by December 2012, 16 plates per District. Renee stated that they are trying to start at the LUC level and send out through the ISWCDEA to Districts and work on at Summer Conference. A motion was made by Tom Beyers and seconded by Joe Rothermel for the AISWCD to work on the Conservation Specialty Plates with the ISWCDEA, motion carried.

December 2011 Minutes- There is no minutes from the December 2011 Education Focus Area Committee meeting.

Kelly Thompson from New Berlin has been hired to replace Jim Nelson as Watershed Liaison at the AISWCD. Kelly starts this Thursday, March 15, 2012.

A motion was made by Don Beisiegel and seconded by Jim Todd to adjourn, motion carried.

Submitted by: Sue M. Davis
AC, Christian County SWCD