



AGENDA

Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition

Board Conference Call

Monday, Mar. 9, 2009
11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. MST

Present:

Jim Carr
Jim Luchsinger
Scott Cotton
Ross Garwood
Dana Larsen
Twila Phillips
Tamara Choat

On call:

Lynn Myers

Not able to attend:

Kevin Fulton
Rod Christen

Chairman Jim Carr called the meeting to order at 11 a.m. Scott Cotton moved to approve the minutes from the 2/9/09 Board Meeting. Ross Garwood seconded. Twila Phillips provided the Treasurer's Report. All bills are paid, and we have money for cash flow from the NET advance funds. Jim Luchsinger moved to accept the Treasurer's Report; Ross seconded.

Twila reported on the federal USDA budget of this year, which eliminates RC&D in 2010. She provided a press release and handout with more information if anyone is interested in writing to their Congressman promoting support of the RC&D offices.

Tamara reported on the current grants and gave the grant balances. She will email the grant balances to the board. Tamara has finalized the paperwork with Mike Kucera for the new NRCS contract. Jim Carr has not received this final paperwork from the NRCS. Dana will check in on the status of this paperwork with Tim Bottoms.

The 2009 NET grant was initially approved for \$270,000, and will very likely be finalized at the NET April 2 board meeting. We will need to sign paperwork for that contract that is due March 20.

Tamara gave an update on the SD/NE Joint Bus Tour that will be based out of Yankton, SD; dates are July 21-22. Jim Carr agreed to serve as a speaker for the rancher panel. She reported that the cost of a bus for three days, starting in Kearney, picking up participants along the way to Yankton, touring the two-day tour, and returning to Kearney would be \$2,074. Discussion involved considering local grant sponsors such as Farm Credit Services, possibly Farm Bureau, possibly national GLCI. Current NGLC funds set aside for the tour are \$2,000. The board discussed the tour budget and recommended that registration fee not exceed \$50. Our goal is to get one person from each of the networks on the tour. Tamara will create a per-person-cost budget from different areas of the state after the pre-tour and report back to the board.

Jim Carr reported on the Ranch Management Club. Dan Rasmussen will come down to speak on late calving and leaving calves on cows in O'Neill at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 12. They will also promote the SD/NE joint bus tour this summer. Jim reported the group is very interested in learning more about carbon credits. Tamara will send formal letter to Jim and Gary Stauffer with budget for local group: \$1,000 for Ranch Management Club and \$500 for other Sandhills event.

The conversation led to the discussion of a Sandhills grazing association. There is a strong need to follow up with the stewards in each area to formulate these networks. Tamara will continue to work to contact a steward in each area, and determine a leader to start the group.

Tamara gave a report on the NRCS Technical Subcommittee meeting on Feb. 24 and provided a list of programs up for budgeting changes. The board discussed priorities among these programs (*below*), and Tamara will provide this feedback to Steve Chick in helping to make his budgeting decisions.

Tamara reported that she submitted a request to Kyle Shell with the South Dakota Grasslands Coalition requesting a cost-share of 35%/65% on the *Range & Pasture Journal*. Kyle said his board was meeting on Tues., March 10, and they will have a response at that time. *(At the time these minutes were edited, the SD board meeting was cancelled due to weather, and so a response will not come until their April meeting)*. Tamara reported she also visited with Kindra Gordon at the Women in Ag Conference about the decision by the board to move forward with a partnership on the *Range & Pasture Journal*.

Discussion followed on award program nominees. The board discussed award programs and the proposal of supporting funding of the Leopold Award (Sand County Foundation). Discussion followed on philosophies of Aldo Leopold, and the backing behind the award, as well as the overall purpose of the award program – to recognize a good conservationist and promote stewardship. Discussion followed on Tamara's bid to coordinate an application for the ESAP award. Tamara will also create a grid of the different award programs and the related deadlines and present them with each agenda. The board will nominate an applicant for each award as they come along. Based on the extent of the application process, Tamara will either help write the application or submit a bid for the work on a per-case basis. Thorval Hanson and Gail Nason were both mentioned as possible applicants for awards. Dana will possibly work with Thorval to conduct interviews, and Tamara will assist with writing an application for the upcoming Master Conservationist sponsored by the Omaha World Herald, due April 1.

Board bios have all been submitted. Tamara presented prizes for the first and last to have his/her bio submitted among those present. ☺ Remaining board members and advisors who have not submitted In-Kind hours include:

DONE

Jim Carr

Scott Cotton

Lynn Myers

Paul Swanson

Michelle Wendell

Dana Larsen

Brett Plugge

MISSING

Sherry Vinton

Rod Christen

Kevin Fulton

Ross Garwood

Jim Luchsinger

Mitch Stephenson

Bob Broweleit

Jerry Volesky

The progress of the web site was reviewed. It was noted that the current site is a work-in-progress still with a lot of changes and corrections needed in the overall design.

The Multi-Species Grazing Project (VAA grant) was discussed. Steve Knesevik was contacted about a possible partnership, and he proposed a continuation of a project he had worked on in the past that was not funded this year. His proposal would involve a grad student conducting some of the work. His proposal is for \$10,000. NGLC has \$9,000. Suggestions were that if NGLC is to fund this project that we have input in the project and the grazing process. Scott moved to offer \$8,500 to Steve Knesivik to fund this proposal, with the contingency that NGLC will have a representative to provide input and project design. Ross seconded. Tamara will draft a written response for Steve Knesivik, proposing the above motion.

Tamara will coordinate the final grazing session on the Reeves Ranch with Don Reeves and Michelle Wendell, if Michelle is available. This project will be funded through the 2008 NET/Equipment & Services budget, with \$3,000 allocated.

The need for a grassbank in the Loess Canyons area was discussed. The suggestion of grazing CRP every five years in preparation for the prepared burn was offered. Possibly use NRCS (CCIP) funds to pay for grazing in alternative location? Possibly create a clearinghouse of names of people who have grazing available? Is the issue funding for deferred grazing or finding available grazing? NRCS recommends 1,500 lb./acre of grass saved to prepare for a burn. Sherry will find out more information about the need for the grassbank and report back to the group. Tamara will work with Sherry to organize a meeting in the Loess Canyons area to bring in specialists to address these questions.

Tamara announced that her husband has received a promotion with his company, and she will be moving back to Indianapolis for his job. She will not be able to renew her contract with the NGLC if offered, but will continue working through the end of June 2009. She agreed to help as much as needed in the process of finding a new coordinator, and looks forward to a busy next four months. Tamara will draft duties of the coordinator job; suggest locations to send a job announcement; and help send out an announcement by April 1. The board agreed to a timeline of:

- Job application distributed by April 1
- Applications due May 1
- Interviews and selection of new coordinator 1st and 2nd week of May
- Training of new coordinator throughout June

Tamara reported on her meeting with Tyler Sutton, President of the Grassland Foundation. She was invited to the Grassland Conservation & Sustainable Communities Lecture at the UNL Center for Great Plains Studies in Lincoln on Wed., April 1, and the invite-only seminar the following day. The emphasis of the Grassland Foundation's interest with NGLC involves helping ranchers develop eco-tourism options related to prairie chickens. Tyler said the Grassland Foundation was also involved with the proposal for the UNL research project on prairie chickens submitted to the Five State Research Consortium in February, which NGLC signed a letter of support for. The board encouraged Tamara to attend the meeting.

The Rangeland Monitoring Program, funded through the new 2009 NET grant and the NRCS agreement, was discussed. Issues such as the monitoring technique, timing of the project, and promotion and marketing of the project were discussed. Jim C. appointed a committee to meet and discuss the details of implementing the Rangeland Monitoring Program. The committee consists of: Jim Carr, Scott Cotton, Ross Garwood, Lynn Myers, Dana Larson, Mitch Stevenson and Tamara Choat. They scheduled a conference call on March 17 at 6 p.m. MST/7 p.m. CST. Dana will contact Walt Schacht about participating in this committee, and will set up the conference call.

Taxes for NGLC were also discussed during the meeting. Tamara will contact Twila to find more details on the organization's tax requirements.

A board meeting **conference call** was scheduled for **April 15 at 9:30 a.m. CST**. A **full board meeting** was scheduled in Mullen for **May 5 at 11 a.m. MST**.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m. MST.

Respectfully submitted,
Tamara Choat, NGLC Coordinator

Ranking for 2009 NRCS EQIP Allocation

- Support work on the Riparian Area Invasive Species, especially in the Republican River. Highly support the targeted grazing projects. This program is a high priority.
- Place a priority on Beginning Farmers (and Ranchers) more than the federally required 5% — would like any extra funds to go to support the Beginning Farmers program.
- CCPI — do not have an understanding of it at this point. Would strongly support any kind of the partnerships that are listed in the federal objectives, including: multiple agricultural operations, producers sharing and information and technical resources, and cumulative and demonstrable conservation benefits.
- NE Legacy SI — recognize the popularity of this program; have some concerns but realize the benefits as well
- DEQ 319 Water Quality SI and Riparian Area Invasive Plants SI — Prescribed grazing in effect benefits water and invasive species, and therefore we support any combination of these efforts in these special initiatives.
- Forestry SI — concern with planting of Eastern Red Cedars, as we are also working to control these as an invasive species in many areas.