



AGENDA

Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition

Board Meeting

Tues., May 5, 2009

11 a.m. – 3 p.m. MST
RC&D Office, Mullen, NE

Conference Call Information

Conference Call: **866-657-8241**

Participant Passcode: **4751659**

Present:

Jim Carr
Scott Cotton
Bob Broweleit
Twila Phillips
Tamara Choat

On Call:

Kevin Fulton
Jim Luchsinger
Mitch Stephenson
Lynn Myers

Chairman Jim Carr called the meeting to order at 11 a.m. MST.

Scott moved to accept the minutes from the April 15 conference call. Jim Luchsinger seconded. The motion passed. Sherry Vinton presented the Treasurer's Report. We currently have \$27,082.76 in the bank account, and a total of \$25,584.12 after accounting for outstanding checks. Scott Cotton moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Mitch Stephenson seconded. Motion passed.

Tamara stated that there were no major updates for the Grant Updates, with the exception of signing the new contract for the NET 09 grant (Rangeland Monitoring Program). Jim C. signed the contracts, and Tamara will submit them to the Nebraska Environmental Trust to initiate the new grant cycle.

Jim reported the Ranch Management Club has not met since the last report. Scott reported that a Panhandle Grazing Association is in the formation process. He has met with ranchers and agency staff around the area. The group has stated they prefer an informal rancher opportunity to meet, and prefer not to have officers, by-laws, etc. They would like to keep it rancher to rancher. Scott will send out a list of activities that this informal group has planned. Rod Christen was not present to report on SENGAs activities.

Bob Broweleit reported on the tax situation he has been researching. He has not found any evidence that NGLC has been recognized as a non-profit (filed with state). Originally Bob said he thought NGLC could file under the umbrella of Sandhills RC&D. In the past we filed under the umbrella of the Nebraska Community Foundation, as they handled our finances. However, as we have received our grant money through our own employer ID number, so we cannot do this. Currently we cannot report our 990 income for NGLC (money from grants). We have 27 months after we officially file with the state to apply to IRS to be recognized as a non-profit. Questions included: Are the monies received since Sept. 2008 (when we opened checking account) retroactively tax deductible? Bob will work with the Sandhills RC&D accountant, Susan Maline out of North Platte, and she is willing to submit and extension for us.

Discussion followed as to how are other state GLCI groups are set up? Wyoming and Colorado are 501 (c3). The board agreed to apply for non-profit status, as the by-laws were written based on the intention to file as 501 (c3). Accountant (Susan Maline, Sagehorne/McChesney, North Platte) will likely charge \$300 for filing our 990. Bob was not sure if there is a fee for applying for extension – however it is a simple form. With acceptance of the extension (due May 15), we will have until Aug. 17 to file a formal 990. Bob recommended we file for extension. Filing as a non-profit will also offer our board of directors liability protection under state volunteer laws.

Scott will confirm that there were original motions to form a 501c3, with the intention to create a non-profit status. If this action was originally approved; he will move forward with this action to file with the state.

In summary, we need to:

1. File extension request to IRS (due May 15) – Bob will work with Susan Moline to do this
2. File with state for non-profit status – Scott will confirm minutes and do this
3. File with IRS for 501 c3 status – who is doing this?
4. File 990 by Aug. 15 (as soon as we get status, will have to file by Aug. 17) – Bob will work with Susan Moline

NGLC sponsored \$100 toward the Gudmundsen Youth Field Day on April 23. Scott reported on the event; approximately 200 youth attended the day and were involved in a variety of activities.

Tamara reported on the Range & Pasture Journal partnership with the South Dakota Grasslands Coalition and Kindra Gordon. South Dakota agreed to the cost share of 35%/65%, for a total cost of \$575 per issue for three issues. Jim Carr and Scott Cotton should be receiving contracts from Kindra Gordon for this agreement. Future issues are planned for June, Oct and April. Tamara will work with Jim Carr to write a column for the June issue. Tamara will also talk to Kindra about replacing the following two proposed topics: 1) NE Forage Lab, 2) Plan for Silage timing.

Tamara stated that NGLC will have a booth at the Sandhills Cattle Association convention, fulfilling the fifth conference requirement for the Value Added Agriculture grant. She has two registrations with the booth, and asked if anyone would be going to take the second registration.

Tamara reported she has worked with various producers to submit applications to present at the 4th National Grazing Lands Conference in Reno, Nev., on Dec. 11-13. Several other agency and university applications were also submitted. The applicants include:

1. **Jim Carr** – invasive species/land improvement
2. **Scott Cotton** – carbon credit opportunities
3. **Sherry Vinton/Jessica Vinton Taylor** – multi-generational ranch issues
4. **Lynn Myers** – Cowboy GPS (rotational grazing)
5. **Lynn Myers and Coordinator** – Cowboy Logic Stewardship Network
6. **Don Reeves** – Reeves Ranch Project
7. **Michelle Wendell** – G.O.A.T.S.
8. **Martin Kleinschmit** – soil improvement/carbon sequestration
9. **Coordinator/Range Tech** – NGLC Rangeland Monitoring Program
10. **Loess Canyons Rangeland Alliance (Doug Whisenhunt)** – prescribed burning
11. **Terry Gompert** – high density cattle grazing

Discussion followed on the possibility of partnering with additional organizations to sponsor a partial scholarship to members of different organizations to attend this conference as a way to draw other organizations into NGLC. It was decided the best plan might be to launch this effort at the Nebraska Grazing Conference in August. Jim C. will work on this idea of coordinating with other groups to support a scholarship. Also suggested that a scholarship be possibly drawn from a pool of rangeland monitoring applicants.

Tamara reported she is working with Aaron Berger, UNL Extension Educator from Kimball County (southern Panhandle area) on a Southern Panhandle Grazing Seminar/Tour on June 16 in Sidney. NGLC is sponsoring the meal at approximately \$500 and also providing a speaker to present on the NGLC Rangeland Monitoring Program.

Tamara also reported plans are underway for the 2nd Annual Ranch Stewardship Live workshop on June 19-20 in Hebron. Curt Pate is presenting a clinic the first day, and the second day will focus on rangeland monitoring with UNL Extension educators Cindy Tusler and Bethany Johnson. NGLC is sponsoring \$2,000 toward this event. Scott said he would work to make sure this event is promoted through the UNL Extension system.

Tamara reported that plans are underway for the SD/NE Joint Bus tour on July 21-22, starting in Yankton. NGLC has \$2,000 allocated for this event. Discussion followed on a reasonable fee for the two-day event, including hotel room and meals. Scott stated that he felt \$99 is a reasonable fee, and the board informally agreed. Tamara noted that we have funds available to charter a bus from Kearney to Yankton. Tamara will work on public service announcements to

promote the event, as well as buy some paid advertisements. It was suggested she work with Ken Rogers, an ag news reporter, as well as the UNL Northeast Research Center, KRVN and the Farm Radio Network.

Next on the agenda was the Reeves Ranch Project. Tamara noted that she was not feeling an overwhelming need for a third graze on the Reeves Ranch at a cost of \$3,000, and wanted feedback from the board on this topic. Discussion followed that if there was not adequate need and enthusiasm, we should look into the possibility of using the money for other venues. She will also work with Dana to get final data from the previous year's monitoring, as well as work with Don Reeves on a final report on the project.

Tamara reported on the meeting she and board member Paul Swanson had with UNL Extension Weed Specialist, Steve Knesevik, and his graduate student, Ryan Reeves. They discussed two options with Steve. The first would be to add a multi-species grazing treatment to an already existing project of Steve's. Steve asked for \$9,000 to go to UNL for oversight of the project, and NGLC would also need to provide labor and supplies for cattle, goats, fencing and management of the animals. The second option would be to propose a multi-species grazing project, possibly in the NE part of the state on island on the Missouri River. Again, Steve asked for \$9,000 to go to UNL for oversight of the project, and NGLC would also need to provide labor and supplies for cattle, goats, fencing and management of the animals. The board agreed that this may not be an effective use of the money, and that NGLC did not have the funds to provide the additional support beyond the \$9,000. Discussion followed on alternative ways to use the \$9,000 from the VAA grant (due Aug. 1), and it was proposed to use this to fund presenters and attendees to go to the 4th National Grazing Lands Conference in Reno. Scott moved to pursue obtaining permission from Linda Fettig at the Rural Development Commission to reallocate this money toward this use. Sherry seconded. Motion passed. Tamara will propose this reallocation to Linda Fettig.

Tamara provided a link to the "almost ready to launch" Web site at: <http://grazinglands.intellicomweb>. She will continue working with Intellicom to finalize the content and appearance, and get the site live.

Tamara reported that a draft brochure is ready to go for the Cowboy Logic Stewardship Network program, and also provided a draft application for new stewards and noted that she was working with several producers to be listed as new stewards. Tamara noted that there seemed to be a divergence in objectives of the program, with one direction being in the original grant and program that was structured to facilitate developing mentoring relations among established ranchers and other established ranchers interested in learning from them, and the second direction being to provide funding support for people to attend events and report and share their knowledge learned with others. Discussion concluded that we will handle all requests on a case-by-case basis and continue to pursue and merge both directions of the program. She noted there was still a concern over what action steps we are asking the stewards to take to be involved as stewards. It was decided they are "To be available to serve as experts and provide expertise." We also want to steer away from the terms: relationship, mentor, friends, and focus on the business angle.

Discussion followed on who we will accept for the funding assistance criteria. Tamara proposed four applications that are in the works for Cowboy Logic.

The first is a proposed project from Rod Christen to send him to work with Lynn Myers to see operations on the Western side of the state. Tamara had requested Rod to submit this to serve as an example of the program and what can be done. Sherry moved and Scott seconded to approve Rod Christian funding up to \$250 for this exchange. Motion passed.

The second proposed application is supposed to be coming from a young man who is involved with the SENG program. It was agreed that we will wait to see his application, and also, since he is just trying to get started in the industry, to encourage him to attend the Ranch Practicum. NGLC has 3-5 prepaid scholarships to this program from a past grant that were never used. Tamara will check with Jerry Volesky or Brent Plugge about the Ranch Practicum scholarships and work with Joel and Rod Christen on this.

The third is a pending application from John Hirschler for attending the Planned Grazing Seminar in Center, NE. Discussion followed on the need to show proof of sharing the knowledge gained from such events with others. As

this application was already in process, we will allow pre-approval in this case, but in the future only provide reimbursement for applicants pending proof of sharing. Scott moved to approve John Hirschler's application, pending statement of sharing with others. Sherry seconded. Motion passed.

The fourth application was from Sherry Vinton to attend the Wild Branch Writing Workshop in Vermont, sponsored by Orion magazine. Scott moved to accept Sherry's application for Cowboy Logic. Kevin Fulton seconded. Motion passed.

In summary of decision made on Cowboy Logic applications:

- Application should be submitted to Coordinator approx. one month before event
- Applicant should fill out pre-activity questions and provide summary of estimated expenses
- Coordinator will take applications to the board at monthly meetings
- Board will vote on each application, and how much funding to allocate to each
- Coordinator will report decision to applicant
- Applicant will attend event and share information gained with other individuals or group
- Applicant will show proof of "sharing" and answer follow up questions on application
- NGLC will provide decided reimbursement to applicant
- If repeat applicants apply, they will reviewed by the board along with all others
- NGLC will also work with NET to utilize their scoring system to use as a decision-making tool

Tamara will continue to work on the promotional packet for Cowboy Logic, including the new brochure, and send it to UNL Extension offices, NRCS offices, Farm Bureau YF&R, Nebraska Cattlemen groups, and the Sandhills Cattle Association.

Next on the agenda was the Rangeland Monitoring Program. Tamara reported on the program development she has conducted on this program since the grant was approved in March 09, including: securing the grant and handling contract and budget work, creating a brochure, compiling monitoring kits, writing a press release and article, writing a job description and facilitating applications, and recruiting applicants.

Based on the work she has done on the project so far, Tamara requested permission to submit an invoice for compensation for the work done on the rangeland monitoring project for March-June. The grant had allocated \$30,000 for coordination of the project. Tamara reported she took this amount and divided it by 16 months, being March 09 to June 09 (end of the grant year one), which amounted to \$1,875/month. She also noted that there was an additional \$1,000/month available from the NRCS grant for the coordination of the Rangeland Monitoring Program. Discussion followed on the percentage of work completed toward year one of the project thus far. Tamara said she estimated 30% of the program development was completed, and expected to have 50% done by the end of her contract (June 09). Sherry moved to allocate \$1,875 to the coordinator for the next four months to come out of the NET 09. Kevin seconded. Motion passed.

Currently, we have received only one application for the position of Rangeland Technician. Discussion followed on the possibility of creating one full-time position with the funding combined (\$40,000 target salary). It was decided to interview the one candidate based on the current job description. Tamara will send the application materials for the current candidate, Justin Frick, to the Rangeland Technician interview committee, consisting of Scott Cotton, Sherry Vinton and Dana Larsen.

Tamara noted a need for stock photos for NGLC to have for promotional materials, and proposed a photo contest. Would set a deadline of July 30, 2009, and showcase the winners at the Nebraska Grazing Conference in August. First place would be \$75, 2nd place \$50, 3rd \$25, and five honorable mentions at \$15/each. It was noted that we would need applicants to sign a photo release. The board informally approved the contest and Tamara will move forward with promotion.

The need for new board members was proposed. Tamara provided the names of stewards who had indicated a willingness to serve on the board. They include:

- Larry Lange
- Arnold Mendenhall
- Kevin Schultz
- Vern and Marjean Terrell
- Brock and Heidi Terrell
- Wayne Eatinger

The board discussed the regions currently represented by the board. It was decided to invite all the willing stewards to serve on the board, as well as add Stan Pilcher, George Wagner, Louis Day and Howard Daharsh to the list. Tamara will also work with Terry Gompert to recruit new board members from the Northeast region. Tamara will also email the map of current board members to the board and they will continue to provide suggestions for new board members.

Discussion followed on the applications for the Coordinator position. Currently, there are nine applicants, including:

- Amanda Johnson
- Amy Bortner
- Justin Pierce
- Kaylee Reed
- Lowell Schroeder
- Marcy Hunter
- Micky Wilson
- Tanya Storer
- Wesley Leithoff

The applications were reviewed and the top four candidates were determined by agreement. Scott moved to direct Jim C. to conduct phone interviews with Amanda Johnson, Marcy Hunter, Micky Wilson and Tanya Storer. Based on these interviews, Jim will determine who to invite for a personal interview at the next board meeting on June 1.

Bob provided an article detailing the differences between a contract employee and a staff person. There are currently some infringements going on with the current coordinator, including having business cards with the NGLC logo, and an email address with the NGLC URL. These are concerns that need to be addressed in the contract with the future coordinator.

Jim presented a letter from the Nebraska Youth Range Camp committee asking for support of the camp. Scott moved to allocate \$300 to the camp as well as a grazing stick for each participant. Sherry seconded. Motion passed.

The next NGLC Board Meeting will be held Monday, June 1, in Mullen, starting at 10 a.m. MST. Interviews of candidates will be conducted, followed by board discussion of agenda items.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamara Choat

NOTES on NGLC Tax Exemption Status from Bob Broweleit (via email, May 8):

NGLC executive committee – I received a call back on our answering machine from the IRS specialist. As I understand this, because NGLC approved the articles of incorporation on August 11, 2008, NGLC officially formed or incorporated at that time. Previous incomes were reported by your fiscal sponsor (Nebr. Community Foundation). NGLC then has 27 months to receive IRS income tax exemption. NGLC would file IRS form 1023 to apply for that exemption. The message also stated to include schedule E with the 1023 form, as that would allow extra time (27 months from the date of postmark of the 1023 app).

Not related to the federal tax exemption, I found out all NGLC needs to do to be recorded as a non-profit corporation with the State of Nebraska is mail the articles of incorporation with original signature to the Secretary of State along with the fee (\$10 + \$5/page= \$25). Also mail a copy of the articles that the state returns with their seal (state keeps original signature).

So attached are the articles that I have for NGLC.

Scott – the minutes from Aug 11, 2008 mention, (Note: Scott Cotton maintained changes and amendments to Articles and ByLaws, and a comprehensive review of all changes made is not included in these notes). Scott please look these over and compare for changes. Let me know if the attached are correct.

Then we need to get Jim Carr to sign the articles and a witness to sign, (witness signature is not required by the State). The Bylaws are not required by the state.

Once we receive the signed articles back from Jim, then Twila can write a check to cover the application cost and the RC&D will send the articles into the State for NGLC.

We have directed Susan Maline to file an extension for filing the IRS 990 form, so you will then have until August 17th to submit the IRS 1023 form and file NGLC's first 990 (under the "pending" tax exemption category).

I have attached the Articles, Bylaws, and Aug 11 minutes recording action to accept them and the minutes of Oct 6, approving Aug 11 minutes.