

**Next Task Force Meeting:**

The next Task Force meeting is on **Thursday February 20th** at PepperMill Restaurant in Valentine. The meeting begins at **10:00 a.m. central.**

**Agenda Items:**

- 10:00 Meeting called to order
  - Opening Prayer
  - Introductions
  - Approval of minutes
  - Financial report (Kelly)
  - Strategic Planning Committee Update (Committee)
  - Wind Energy in the Sandhills Symposium update (AB, Homer, Mel, Mike and Jim L)
- Project Coordinator update (Van Winkle)
  - Transition plan for files, duties & equipment
  - Discuss interest in additional easement projects
  - FRPP Sheridan County project status
  - Lake Renovation opportunities (Jim & Kyle)
  - WEA updates
  - Slides from past STF projects
- Gordon Creek Restoration (Kyle-Kenny)
- 12:00 Lunch
  - 1:00 STF Board Photograph
  - Discussion of STF board member vacancy
  - Sand County Foundation Leopold Funding
  - Staffing Committee update (Exec Board plus Mel, Ted Jim L. and Ben)
- 2:30 Adjourn

**2014 NET grant status**

Jim submitted the NET grant for matching funds to complete our Sheridan County easement project in the amount of \$240,813.30. The preliminary announcement was made in early February. We will be fully funded to complete the project assuming we can comply with all aspects of the FRPP and NET requirements.

With projects in the development stages varying from water control, stream restoration, lake renovation to grazing system development it is expected that 2014 will result in significant NET expenditure of our Sandhills Native Ecosystem grant.

The third year of our NET/Price/Gracie Creek grant will result in full funding of our easement defense fund.

Jim recently completed the 2013 Grant reporting requirements for both open grants.

**Strategic Planning Committee**

Recent contact with Ted LaGrange indicates NGPC will proceed with the printing of our updated STF Strategic Plan. Ted's commitment to detail and inclusion has resulted in a draft plan that should serve STF well for many years to come.

**Bookkeeping Banking and Grant tracking.**

Milt Willnard of Willnard & Associates of Lincoln has made slow and steady progress on developing a QuickBooks accounting system. Kenny's format for tracking individual grants from various sources is planned to be incorporated at some point. Work has progressed on setting up a project specific tracking system that would be available to STF board members and partners online. To date the online data is limited to banking and expense related information and is current through October.

**North Platte Wind Symposium.**

Held Feb 12<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 to 3:00 in North Platte. The committee will update the entire board on the day's activities. Homer Buell wrote a very informative article about the symposium in the Nebraska Cattlemen magazine and also completed an excellent radio interview that aired on NC's statewide radio network. Approximately 200 in attendance.

**NPPD RLine status.**

It is expected that the preferred route through the Sandhills will be announced by NPPD in March or April of 2014.

**VFD Award Program**

Following the STF board decision to continue our VFD program supporting VFD's assisting landowners with prescribed fire we continue to make contact with landowners and VFD staff that have expressed interest. A mailer will be sent soon with details and an announcement that funds are available for 2014. Board members should feel free to discuss our program with interested individuals in their area.

**Long Pine/Bone Creek Watershed Project.**

The STF supported a successful grant application to NET to kick off restoration planning for this severally degraded stream in Brown County. The first open house meeting was hosted in Ainsworth by the Middle Niobrara NRD. A standing room only crowd was enthusiastic about finding solutions. JEO was selected as the engineering firm

and is collecting data and full on planning efforts are underway that should be completed within one year. Opportunities should emerge for STF projects with landowners identified during this process.

**Barb Cooksley new NC Vice President.**

Barb was elected at the recent NC Annual Convention.

**Kyle Graham on the move.**

Kyle was recently selected to participate in the Franklin Covey leadership program at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown West Virginia.

**Future Sandhill Lake Renovations.**

Kyle and Jim have continued to focus on various opportunities for major lake renovation projects across the Sandhills. Jim and Kyle began discussions with UNK professors and NGPC employees on using their available resources to better understand water chemistry, the impacts of carp on water quality and the enhancements to water quality that may be generated with future lake renovation projects.

**Sand County Foundation**

Craig Utter has asked the STF board to consider funding the 2014 Nebraska Leopold award in the amount of \$4,000.

Jim Van Winkle