

Greenbrier Valley Conservation District

February 15, 2024, 7:00pm
Regular Board Meeting, Approved Minutes

Note: This agenda was amended to include additional matters that developed following the initial posting.

The Greenbrier Valley Board of Supervisors met on Thursday, February 15, 2024, at 7:00pm, in the conference room of the Lewisburg, USDA Service Center.

Those in attendance:

Supervisors Present

Gary Sawyers, Chairman
Timothy VanReenen
Gary Truex
Avery Atkins
Carolyn Miller

Supervisors Absent

Jerry Clifton

Guests:

Amanda Duren, AMJV
Director of Conservation
Partnerships

Others:

Barry Level, GVCD
Jeremy Salyer, WVCA
Kara Grosso, WVCA
Morgan Dial, WVCA
Chelsea Cook, FSA
Brandon Duckworth,
NRCS
Angela Feamster-
Sawyers, WVCA

Chairman Sawyers called the meeting to order at 7:01pm and he welcomed everyone.

Approval of Minutes

Timothy VanReenen moved to approve the draft minutes of the January 18, 2024, regular board meeting, and of the February 07, 2024, special board meeting. Gary Truex seconded; motion carried.

Guests

Amanda Duren from the Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture, a regional bird conservation partnership, discussed a project in the Greenbrier valley region and the Potomac Valley aimed at connecting farmers and producers with Farm bill conservation programs. She mentioned that several partners involved in the project include NRCS, the DNR, WVU, Quail Forever, and Pheasants Forever. The project will begin with a survey to gain insights into regional differences, opinions, and potential challenges that producers may encounter when adopting certain practices and participating in NRCS programs.

She outlined the survey's objective to gain insights into pasture and hay field management, as well as to explore opinions on conservation practices related to their management. One of their main interests is providing training and connecting producers with funding programs to establish warm season grasses in parts of their pastures.

She mentioned that the survey aimed to gain insights into people's thoughts and experiences with certain practices, as well as their challenges. This information would be used to improve the design of trainings and outreach materials to address these concerns.

Amanda explained that the survey is a 15-minute survey, available online, and is completely confidential. She also inquired about the possibility of promoting the survey through the district's communication channels.

Following some discussion, GVCD agreed to promote the survey on their website, social media, and by handing out hard copy postcards alongside their other brochures and materials.

Administrative Specialist Report

Angela Feamster-Sawyers reviewed the highlights of her report, which is attached.

Cooperating Agency Reports

- NRCS – Brandon Duckworth provided updates regarding applications, contracts, and progress for the Greenbrier Valley. He said Greenbrier Valley overall currently has on the books \$11,290,000.00 in contracts and that's on 368 agreements. He said last year they contracted

almost \$2.6 million on 68 new agreements, which is the second-highest funding level in the state.

He also provided updates on cultural resource reviews. He mentioned that until they can find one, Tennessee archaeologists are assisting them with the processes. He reported that 26 Greenbrier Valley projects have been cleared since they took over and four more have been sent in for tribal consultation. He noted that if a project requires a tribal consultation, the turnaround time from sending the four men is 75 days, which is much faster than where they were. He informed the board of supervisors of their plans to hire an archaeologist, either through an agreement or recruitment.

Brandon answered questions about the Howard's Creek Weir survey and told the board of supervisors they could accompany the Engineering team on their site visit and would receive a copy of the report. He recommended a point of contact. Discussion ensued.

Brandon Duckworth also addressed whether NRCS could contract with the district's engineering firm. Mr. Duckworth said that they could, but it would need to be placed out to bid on for competition since it would be funded by federal money and must follow federal rules for competition. Mr. Duckworth said that for engineering assistance, he feels like they're trekking in the right direction if they can get these positions, we have authorized to hire filled. Mr. Duckworth concluded with staffing updates.

- FSA – Chelsea Cook shared a factsheet and updated the board of supervisors on a climate monitoring project that NRCS and FSA are working on together through a Memorandum of Agreement to set up data collection sites statewide.

Fact sheet attached.

- Forestry
- WVCA – Jeremy Salyer reviewed the highlights of his report which is attached.
- Other

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Financial Reports

- **General and CDO Funds Report**

Gary Truex moved to accept the General and CDO Funds Report and file for audit. Timothy VanReenen seconded; motion carried.

- **WVCA Restricted Funds Report**

The GVCD board of supervisors was unable to approve the presented WVCA restricted funds report due to the provision of a reconciliation statement for the incorrect month.

- **Payment of all bills, per payables list**

Gary Truex moved to pay all General Fund Bills, per payables list as presented. Avery Atkins seconded; motion carried.

Gary Truex moved to approve the CDO Personnel Plan for FY25 as presented. Avery Atkins seconded; motion carried.

Gary Truex moved to approve the proposed CDO Budget for FY25 as presented. Timothy VanReenen seconded; motion carried.

Gary Truex moved to approve the following LOR:

LOR ID: 15111

Purpose: FY23 Audit Reimbursement

Amount: \$3,500.00

Agr: 1071-05

Avery Atkins seconded; motion carried.

Education Outreach/Events Committee

Carolyn Miller reported that the Land judging contest would be held on April 23rd, 2024, and that budget approval for supplies is listed further along on the agenda.

Agricultural Enhancement Program Committee

Timothy VanReenen moved to approve the following contracts:

- **Contracts for Approval**

Kalab Hughart - CPD - \$10,000.00

Jeff Erskine - PDF - \$2,312.50

Total - \$12,312.50

Gary Truex seconded; motion carried.

Timothy VanReenen moved to approve the following payments:

- **Payments for Approval:**

Will Nester – Lime -\$1,500.00

Will Nester – CPD - \$1,990.80

➤ Total Payments \$3,490.80

Carolyn Miller seconded; motion carried.

Grassland Committee

Gary Sawyers moved to delegate authority to Gary Truex to approve future gravel purchases for the equipment and building parking lot. Timothy VanReenen Seconded; motion carried.

Gary Truex made a motion to reimburse \$250.00 each for John Hendrick, John G Hendrick, and Kalab Hughart to attend the Appalachian Grazing Conference, totaling \$750.00. Avery Atkins seconded; motion carried.

It was noted that a receipt will need to be provided in order for the reimbursement to be processed.

Building/Equipment Committee

The board of supervisors reviewed Eugene Wickline's monthly report, which is attached.

Watershed

- Payments for Approval

Timothy VanReenen moved to approve the following payment:

- Southern Conservation District- Invoice# 5749
 - O&M Howard's Creek Channel- \$14,080.00
 - Landfill Cost - \$23.20

➤ Invoice Total - \$14,103.20.

Carolyn Miller seconded; motion carried.

Timothy VanReenen moved to approve the Emergency Action Plans for Marlins Run & Howards Creek as presented. Avery Atkins seconded; motion carried.

- SCD Work Estimates – **Pending counteroffer; action not taken.**
 - Howard's Creek Dam (Mow and Weed eat) - \$4,350.00.
 - Marlin Run Dam (Mow and Weed eat) - \$3,000.00.

319 Committee

Gary Truex moved to approve the following LOR:

- LOR ID: 15114
 - Purpose: NPS1737 Anthony Creek
 - Amount: \$60000.00
 - AGR: NPS1737

Timothy VanReenen seconded; motion carried.

319 Financial Report – The board of supervisors reviewed what was presented by Kara Grosso.

Gary Truex moved to return Fish and Wildlife service funds back to Guthrie for \$731.10. Carolyn Miller seconded; motion carried.

- **Contracts for Approval**
 - **Anthony Creek**

Timothy VanReenen moved to approved state funds not to exceed \$21, 746.00 for the stream restoration project tree harvest. Avery Atkins seconded; motion passed.

Gary Truex moved to approve federal funds not to exceed \$300.00 for purchasing native seeds as part of the Anthony Creek stream restoration project to seed tree harvest area.

Concerns were raised by Jacob Lavender about the approved funds for stream restoration and the project's timeline. The approved amount is solely based on the estimate provided and does not account for any potential increases in bids. There would be no time to put the project back out to bid without having to risk missing the grant deadline. Conversation ensued.

Following some discussion, Timothy VanReenen moved to amend the stream restoration project tree harvest for the amount of state funds not to exceed \$25,000. Avery Atkins seconded; motion passed.

Gary Truex moved to delegate authority to himself for the Anthony Creek Stream Restoration Project Phase I and Phase II. Avery Atkins seconded; motion carried.

Note: in the instance that the bids come in above \$25,000 the board of supervisors agreed to hold a special board meeting following the bid opening to approve the bid amount. Special Board meeting will be set up for Friday, February 23, 2024, at 9:30am, by Angela Feamster-Sawyers.

Gary Truex moved to approve state funds not to exceed \$1,700.00 for the purchase of native trees and seeds as part of the Meadow River/Mill Creek stream restoration project.

Gary Truex moved to approve the septic repair/replacement contract cancellation for Lynne Bowman. Carolyn Miller seconded; motion carried.

Gary Truex moved to approve sending the cancellation letter to Lynn Bowman. Timothy VanReenen seconded; motion carried.

Gary Truex moved to approve the septic repair/replacement contract cancellation for Bernard Chestnut Jr. Carolyn Miller seconded; motion carried.

Gary Truex moved to approve the septic pumping contract cancellation for Bernard Chestnut Jr. Carolyn Miller Seconded; motion carried.

Gary Truex moved to approve sending the contract cancellation letter to Bernard Chestnut Jr. Timothy VanReenen seconded; motion carried.

Payments for Approval

Gary Truex moved to approve the following payment pending receipt of the duplicate payment:

Second Creek

- SGS - \$399.72

Timothy VanReenen seconded; motion carried.

Gary Truex moved to approve the following payment:

○ **Anthony Creek**

- Lynne Bowman - Septic system pumping \$170.00.

Timothy VanReenen seconded; motion carried.

Other Business

Carolyn Miller moved to approve a budget of \$500.00 to cover costs for the SCD and GVCD Land Judging contest to be held April 23rd, 2024.

Gary Truex seconded; motion carried.

Some discussion was held regarding Farmer's Day.

The board of supervisors reviewed a letter from U.S. Department of Agriculture sent from Senator Manchin's Office and Chairman Sawyers completed a feedback form that was provided with the letter.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned by consensus at 9:37pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gary M. Sawyers".

Gary Sawyers
Chairman

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gary K. Truex".

Gary Truex
Secretary/ Treasurer

GS/GT/as

Improving Agricultural Lands for Grassland-nesting Birds in West Virginia

This project will utilize social science to improve and expand the delivery of conservation programs to benefit grassland nesting birds in West Virginia. We will engage with agricultural producers in West Virginia to understand barriers and motivating factors to participation in management to benefit grassland-nesting birds, such as delayed haying, warm season grass establishment, or prescribed grazing. Surveys and listening sessions will provide regionally-specific information to guide the development of an effective outreach strategy aimed at increasing enrollment in NRCS financial assistance programs.

Team Members

Kyle Aldinger, WV NRCS, State Biologist

Jeff Barr, WV NRCS State Resource Conservationist

Rich Bailey, WV DNR, State Ornithologist

Sarah Taylor-Goldizen, WV NRCS District Conservationist (Potomac Valley South- Petersburg, Moorefield, and Franklin offices)

Matt Murphy, WV NRCS South Area Resource Conservationist

Chris Lituma, West Virginia University

Rebecca Royal, WV NRCS Acting District Conservationist (Potomac Valley North)

Lee Haggerty, WV NRCS Grazing Specialist

Sheldon Owen, WVU Extension

Shawna Weatherholtz, Farm Bill Biologist, Pheasants Forever

Noah Cable, Quail Forever (Morgan, Berkeley and Jefferson counties)

Objectives

1. **Develop an understanding of local interest and potential barriers to participating in delayed haying and/or improved pasture management programs.**
 - Conduct online survey of agricultural producers
 - Host a listening session with agricultural producers in the Potomac region
 - Host a listening session with agricultural producers in the Greenbrier Valley
2. **Launch an outreach campaign to identify and engage interested landowners**
 - Conduct a GIS analysis to identify priority parcels for enrollment based on eBird and Breeding Bird Atlas data on priority bird species occurrence
 - Design a suite of outreach materials for agricultural producers to increase enrollment in NRCS programs. Materials could include flyers, brochures, social media content, news articles, and presentations
 - Conduct an outreach mailing to owners of priority parcels
3. **Improve pasture and hayfield management for grassland-nesting birds on at least 250 acres.**
 - In partnership with NRCS, host a field day event for interested landowners to present and discuss options for improved grassland management
 - Enroll at least 250 acres into NRCS programs for improved grassland or pasture management.
4. **Learn from participant experiences to improve and expand program delivery**
 - Conduct interviews with participating landowners to learn about interest in continuing practices, unforeseen benefits or difficulties, and incurred expenses



Help us record drought conditions through CMOR

The National Drought Mitigation Center, the National Integrated Drought Information System and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Climate Hubs are working with states, tribes and others across the country to collect Condition Monitoring Observer Reports on Drought (CMOR-Drought), including photos. We want to know how drought is affecting you.

How does this benefit you?

Your reports help us understand how drought is affecting local conditions. They appear on a map. The U.S. Drought Monitor (USDM) author may consult the CMOR map to help identify areas that need more attention. The USDM triggers drought responses, including the Livestock Forage Disaster Program and Internal Revenue Service tax provisions. State agencies, including emergency management and public safety, may also make use of maps to know where to direct assistance.

Where do you find CMOR-drought reporting?

Landing page for CMOR-drought:

go.unl.edu/cmor_drought

Includes current and archived maps of reports, and QR code for current form

Direct link to current CMOR-drought form:

go.unl.edu/CMOR

Works on mobile*, tablet or computer

**To report from your mobile phone, see "Getting started with the field app"*

How often should you report?

We recommend that you submit a photo each month or each season, to provide an ongoing comparison of wet, dry and normal conditions. Of course, we also welcome more frequent submissions.

Questions?

Please email DIRinfo@unl.edu.

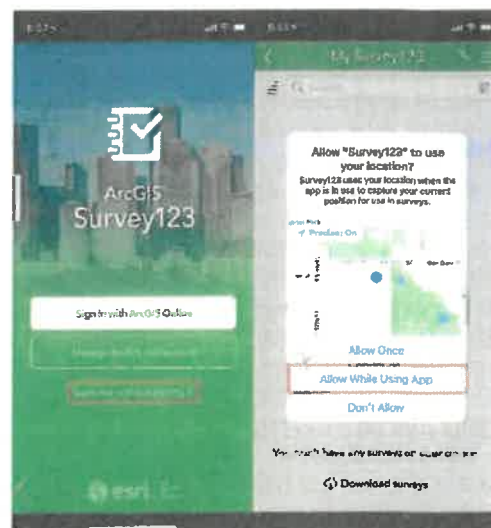
Getting started with the field app

Install the app

CMOR uses Esri's Survey123 field app. Install the app, either by searching for Survey123 at the app store or by entering go.unl.edu/CMOR into the address bar or scanning the QR code, which will prompt you to download the app.

Click on "continue without signing in."

When it asks about geolocation, choose "Allow While Using App" for best results.



Download the survey

You must go outside the app to download the survey for the first time.

From your phone or tablet, enter go.unl.edu/CMOR into the address bar or scan the QR code with the camera, and this time choose "Open in the Survey123 field app." That will download the survey and open it for you to use.

Climate Monitoring

A West Virginia NRCS & FSA Collaboration



The WV Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and WV Farm Service Agency (FSA) are working together through a Memorandum of Agreement to establish data collection sites across the state.

Each agency, in delivering products and services, recognizes that both short- and long-term weather occurrences and environmental conditions can have an impact on the success of its efforts. By collaborating we hope to gain a better understanding of the frequency, quantity, and patterns of air temperature and precipitation, the effect of topography on soil moisture and temperature, and characteristics of water tables across the landscape. In this, we hope to gain a clearer understanding of our environment so we are better able to provide services.

Data collection will consist of three approaches:

DAILY WEATHER

Approximately 210 weather stations will be distributed across the state with representation in each county. Wi-Fi enabled, they will continuously collect and send data to our data stewards as well as the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS), more commonly recognized as the US Drought Monitor. Website: [Monitoring Drought](http://MonitoringDrought.gov) | Drought.gov.

WATER TABLE PRESENCE

Based on the four primary Major Land Resource Areas (MLRA's) in the state, water table dataloggers will be installed within landforms considered to be most hydrologically active (footslopes, terraces, and floodplains). While the approach is landform focused it will provide a landscape scale perspective of soil water in the root zone.

SOIL MOISTURE AND TEMPERATURE

This approach is also based on MLRA's but with a focus on hillslope shape, steepness and aspect. Soil moisture and temperature influence land management, plants and animals, and ecological interactions. Understanding the range and timing of soil moisture and temperature can guide land use planning and decisions and ecological outcomes.

Instruments will collect data continuously on a preset schedule. Agreements will be made with landowners to house the instruments for five years. Our objective is to place the equipment in locations that are relatively secure, accessible, and meet the project criteria. We will be looking at state, federal, and private lands and welcome those interested to contact us for more information.

The collected data will assist the agencies in program delivery, database development, soil survey data improvements, and the conservation planning processes.

For more information contact **Brian Nester (NRCS)** at brian.nester@usda.gov or **Chelsea Cook (FSA)** at chelsea.cook@usda.gov.

How do you submit a report?

- If you are using the app on a mobile device with location enabled, it should pinpoint your location automatically. For less precision, enter the name of the nearest city or county, or the island and local jurisdiction, in the map widget search window.
- From a desktop computer, if location is enabled, use the compass icon on the map widget to pinpoint your location, or enter the name of the nearest city or county, or the island and local jurisdiction, in the map widget search window.
- Provide the date.
- How dry or wet is it? Pick from seven levels, ranging from severely dry to severely wet. Your answer to this question will be the first way that people see your report on a map.



- The questions related to your years of experience help us frame your observations as “1 in 10” or “1 in 20,” which is how the U.S. Drought Monitor categorizes extremes.
- Click on the triangle to expand “Report normal or wet conditions” to submit observations during non-drought times. This helps develop a basis for comparison with drought conditions.



No geometry captured yet.

- What impacts of drought are you experiencing? Click on the triangle for a category or sector to expand a list of potential impacts and check any that you have experienced.
- You can upload up to five photos. If you are showing drought conditions, please consider uploading a “before” photo taken during normal conditions, to provide context. If you upload a photo, you as the copyright holder agree that it may be used by the National Drought Mitigation Center, and shared with and by government and academic partners, for drought monitoring, management, and education. Your photo will become part of a permanent public archive. The drought center reserves the right to remove objectionable content.
- Check the box that best describes your role: Extension, agricultural producer, water supplier, homeowner, climate or weather professional, outdoor enthusiast, or other (fill in the blank).
- Enter a display name. A display name will let users of this information see whether multiple reports are from a single individual.

Especially if you submit reports consistently over time, this helps you build a credible track record. You can use your real name, come up with a descriptive username such as “NDRancher07,” or use a random string of letters and numbers. If you forget your display name, you can zoom in on the map to find your previous report and see what you used. If the drought center uses one of your photos, we may use your display name as attribution, i.e., “Photo by HappyRancher42 via CMOR.”

Please provide your name and email address for the benefit of people assessing drought in an official capacity. This information will not appear on public-facing maps, but we may contact you for follow-up information.

Report normal or wet conditions

Conditions are normal or wet
Please use the checkboxes to tell us which of these conditions you are seeing.

☒ No rain or snowmelt for time of year

☐ More green than usual for this time of year

☐ More standing or flowing water than usual for this time of year

☐ Increased moisture or humidity

☐ Groundwater wells above normal static level

☐ Soil moisture is adequate to good

☐ More irrigated crops or pastures are doing well

☐ Lawn and garden watering is not necessary

☒ Low fire danger

☐ Abundant insects or water-loving wildlife

☐ Fisheries in good condition

Your role
Please choose one or more roles that best describe you.

☐ Extension or Farm Service Agency (FSA)

☒ Farmer or livestock operator

☐ Water supplier

☐ Homeowner

☒ Natural or water resource professional

☐ Environmentalist

☐ Climate or weather professional

☐ Public official

☐ Other

Display Name
A display name will let users of this information see whether multiple reports are from a single individual. Especially if you submit reports consistently over time, this helps you build a credible track record.

You can use your real name, come up with a descriptive username such as “NDRancher07,” or use a random string of letters and numbers. If you forget your display name, you can zoom in on the map to find your previous report and see what you used. If the drought center uses one of your photos, we may use your display name as attribution, i.e., “Photo by HappyRancher42 via CMOR.”

Happy Farmer 72

Greenbrier Valley Conservation District's Administrative Specialist Report February 15, 2024

- There will be a Job Showing for the Wade-Bowman tree removal on February 16, 2024, at 10:00am. Bid opening is on February 23, 2024, at 9:00am.
- An update was received today that the SCD & GVCD Land Judging & Homesite Evaluation Contest has been scheduled for Tuesday, April 23, 2024, if you all agree. (It is listed on the agenda for the 30th of April, which was the initial date under consideration, contingent upon the availability of the plant material center).
- RFQ's were mailed out to three (3) qualified firms or individual certified public accountants to perform agreed upon procedures for FY24-FY29. Written estimates are to be received at the district office by 12:00 p.m., March 11, 2024.
- The Following Funds have been received since my last report:
 - FY24 Q3 District Support Allotment- \$16,691.00 (LOR#13962)
 - NPS1829 Spring Creek Phase II - \$50,000.00 (LOR#15106)
- Total Funds received: \$ 66,691.00.
- A Copy of the District Policy and CD Employee Manuals were provided to supervisors in the February committee meetings. Annual policy review will be held along with committee meetings on March 13, 2024.
- It was voted and approved in the February 23, 2023, regular board meeting to appoint Kevin Johnson as GVCD's representative to the Monroe County Solid Waste Authority, effective upon the resignation of Bill Shiflett. I was notified yesterday of Mr. Shiflett's resignation. The correspondence is prepared and awaiting the chairman's signature. It will be sent to the Monroe County Commission, Monroe County SWA, WV Solid Waste Management Board to

notify them of Mr. Johnson's appointment to fill the unexpired term. I will also send a copy to Kevin Johnson for his records.

- All emails not requiring action have been forwarded to the supervisors. All mail, bills, and statements have been routed to their respective destinations. All deposits were scanned, forwarded, and filed in accordance with established protocols.

Dates to remember:

Upcoming GVCD Committee/ Board Meetings

March 13, 2024: GVCD Committee Meetings

March 21, 2024: GVCD Regular Board Meeting

Other

March 22, 2024: Central Area Meeting – GVCD



February 2024 WVCA Report

2024 Dates for WVACD Quarterly Meetings

April 8 MCD Morgantown
April 9 SCC Morgantown
July 15 & 16 EPCD Harpers Ferry
October ? Days Inn, Flatwoods

Conservation Farm Contest

It is time for the districts to be thinking about the conservation farm families to be awarded this year. District winners are due to the District Operations Manager by June 15. A copy of the new Conservation Award Program is attached.

Agricultural Enhancement Program (AgEP) Administrative Review

To comply with the requirements from the program documentation, including the Legislative Rule, the traditional AgEP spot check procedure has been reevaluated and is now referred to as the Administrative Review.

Each District's Administrative Specialist will conduct a review of 10% or a minimum of 3 files with applications that fiscal year and submit the Administrative Review Form to their District Operations Manager by January 31st. By completing this review halfway through a fiscal year, staff will have time to find possible procedural errors and take steps to prevent them from happening in the future.

The Administrative Review process will allow WVCA to ensure that all proper documentation is physically accessible in the district cooperator file, and that the districts' online database records system is in agreement with WVCA financial records system.

Request to Conservation Districts

The WVCA is encouraging Conservation Districts to review and update your **District Policy Manuals**. In addition to your policy manual, you are encouraged to review your CD Employee Manual (if you have one) and your CD Plan of Work. If you are already doing the reviews, please disregard this request. However, please let us know with a written response that you are already reviewing or will be reviewing the documents.

The **district personnel plan** is due to SCC in March, so please add to your February agenda for review and approval.

Conservation Districts are asked to begin the **Agreed Procedures Engagement (APE) audit** if you haven't already. Please check your current agreement to make sure it is valid.

O&M agreements: CDs are encouraged to continue to work with local sponsors for O&M funding. The change will be that these agreements will not be matched dollar for dollar as they were in the past. The WVCA will be allocating funds on a watershed basis moving forward to help with O&M costs.

**Greenbrier Valley Conservation District
Monthly Equipment Report**

Month/Year Jan 2024

Equipment	Number of Days Rented	Number of Acres	Total Revenue	Total Cost of Repairs & Maintenance	Total Field Service Mileage
Tye #1					
Tye #2					
Great Plains #1					
Great Plains #2				\$149.62	
Great Plains #3					
No-till Seeder Totals					
Cricket					
Grasshopper					
Big Silver					
Lime/Fertilizer Totals					
Chemical Sprayer					
Litter Spreader #1				\$28.27	
Litter Spreader #2					
Litter Spreader Totals					
Post Driver #3				\$45.43	
Post Driver #4				\$45.43	
Post Driver #6					
Post Driver Totals					
Potato Planter					
Potato Sprayer					
Potato Hiller					
Potato Totals					
Portable Scales					
Other					
Shop Supplies					
GRAND TOTALS (all equipment)				\$268.15	