



Missouri Department of Natural Resources

MINUTES

MISSOURI SOIL AND WATER DISTRICTS COMMISSION

Knights of Columbus Hall

Salisbury, Missouri

April 3, 2013

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Thomas Bradley, H. Ralph Gaw, Gary Vandiver, and Richard Fordyce

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS: SARA PARKER PAULEY, DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES: Harry Bozoian; **DR. JON HAGLER, DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE:** Judy Grundler; **BOB ZIEHMER, DEPT. OF CONSERVATION:** Clint Dalbom; **DEAN THOMAS PAYNE, UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI:** Rich Hoormann

ADVISORY MEMBERS PRESENT: SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM: Colleen Meredith; NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE: Karen Brinkman; ATTORNEY GENERAL: Tim Duggan; MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS: Kenny Lovelace

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: April Brandt, Christa Moody, Kurt Boeckmann, Matt Elliott, Jennifer Pellett, Jim Plassmeyer, Ken Struempf, Cody Tebbenkamp, Leon Thompson

OTHERS PRESENT: DISTRICTS: **Caldwell:** Bill Hunt, **Chariton:** Bob Cooper, Carrie Henry, Kenny Reichert, Scott Callighan, **Jefferson:** George Engelbach; **Lafayette:** Phillip Boydston; **Randolph:** Ryan Britt; **Natural Resources Conservation Service:** Dick Purcell, Dwaine Gelnar, Mike Snellen; **Missouri Department of Natural Resources:** Van Beydler, Irene Crawford, Mary Culler; **Missouri Farm Bureau:** Kelly Smith; **Missouri Land Improvement Contractors Association:** Jeff Lance; **University of Missouri:** Dr. Ranjith Udawatta

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Richard Fordyce called the meeting to order in Salisbury, Missouri at the Knights of Columbus Hall at 8:42 a.m. Based on the attendance of four farmer Commissioners, Chairman Richard Fordyce determined that a quorum was present.

Commissioner Fordyce thanked the Chariton Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for the invitation and work involved to hold the April Soil and Water Districts Commission meeting and tour. Kenny Reichert welcomed the Commission to Chariton SWCD. Mr. Reichert commented on winning the Olin Sims Conservation Leadership award; he expressed his thanks to the Soil and Water Districts Commission for their support. He commented that the award is a reflection of the partnerships in the state of Missouri.

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B. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1. February 6, 2013 Minutes

Thomas Bradley made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2013 Commission meeting. Gary Vandiver seconded the motion. When asked by the chair, H. Ralph Gaw, Gary Vandiver, Thomas Bradley, and Richard Fordyce voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

C. MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Harry Bozoian presented the Missouri Department of Natural Resources report. Mr. Bozoian reported that currently Senate Bill 416, which would consolidate certain Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Commissions, did not include the Soil and Water Districts Commission in the proposed bill.

Richard Fordyce asked if there is any bill currently that would affect the Commission such as House Bill 880. Colleen Meredith stated that the initial House Bill 880 would have put the Director of State Parks and Director of the Water Protection Program on the Soil and Water Districts Commission with voting privileges. Currently there are two bills that are very similar, House Bill 880 and House Bill 881. Kelly Smith from Farm Bureau stated he had heard that a substitute bill may be submitted with modifications to the portion regarding the Soil and Water Districts Commission that would replace the two positions mentioned earlier and place the Director of Agriculture and the Director of the Department of Natural Resources on the Soil and Water Districts Commission as voting members. The hearing was April 3, 2013 at 8 a.m.

Harry Bozoian formally recognized Richard Fordyce for receiving the 2012 Soil Conservationist of the Year awarded at the Conservation Federation of Missouri Annual Banquet. Richard was recognized for being a great advocate for soil and water conservation and his leadership in 2012 was instrumental to the success of several initiatives including the Drought Assistance Program.

Karen Brinkman formally recognized Kenny Reichert for receiving the Olin Sims Conservation Leadership award, it is a national award given by the NRCS Chief. This award is given to one board member in the nation annually. This award recognizes an individual, district or organization that shows superior service in the conservation community for promoting and leading conservation on private land.

D. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

The video from the February 6, 2013 Soil and Water Districts tour of Washington Carver Farms Lincoln University was shown. The same type of video will be created for this Soil and Water Districts Commission meeting.

1. Drought Assistance Program Update

Kurt Boeckmann presented the Drought Assistance Program update. As of March 27, 2013, there were 5,304 livestock projects totaling approximately \$20.8 million

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and 84 crop projects totaling \$971,000 which totaled 5,388 Drought Assistance projects.

Mr. Boeckmann reported that 40 employees in 28 soil and water conservation districts received drought compensatory time payments totaling \$32,424.25.

Mr. Boeckmann also handed out the U.S. Drought Monitor for the Commissions information.

2. **FY13/FY14 Cost-Share/SALT Fund Status**

April Brandt presented the Fiscal Year (FY) 13/FY14 Cost-Share/SALT fund status update as of March 28, 2013. The FY13 Regular Cost-Share allocation was \$20,978,006, and \$16,876,929 was obligated. The comparison between FY12 and FY13 showed that percentages were similar between the two years.

Ms. Brandt also presented the AgNPS SALT fund status. Roughly, \$1.6 million dollars has been allocated out to 22 projects across the state. Approximately 63 percent has been obligated and 36 percent has been paid.

Ms. Brandt also presented the FY14 Advanced Allocations as of March 28, 2013. As of this date, 96 districts requested advanced allocations totaling \$5.1 million with \$1.5 million obligated. Districts could request 18 percent of their FY14 cost-share allocation be placed in any combination of resource concerns as long as the requested amount did not exceed the FY14 allocation amount for that resource concern. The two exceptions are Animal Waste Management and Nutrient and Pest Management that had the entire FY14 allocation amount provided in January.

The full FY14 allocation for Animal Waste Management is provided early due to the length of time needed to complete a project. The Nutrient and Pest Management allocation for FY14 is received in full on January 1 due to the April 15th deadline for board approval of these contracts. To date, 26 percent (\$239,000) of the approximately \$900,000 that was allocated has been obligated in Nutrient and Pest Management. Last year districts obligated \$450,000, so it is expected to see a substantial increase in obligations.

3. **FY13/FY14 Budget Update**

Colleen Meredith presented the FY13/FY14 Budget update. Ms. Meredith stated the department's budget of which the Soil and Water Conservation Program is included, had a few changes made by the House of Representatives. A revised pay plan for state employees of a flat \$500 per employee per year beginning in January of 2014 was approved. If this pay plan is approved for state employees, district grants may increase so district boards may provide the same increase to their employees that are funded through district grants. The FY14 budget has been sent to the Senate and the Senate mark-up has yet to be rescheduled. The FY14 budget must be finalized and sent to Governor Nixon by May 10, 2013. The current Legislative Session ends May 17, 2013.

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The supplemental budget Bill (House Bill 14) could potentially be finalized very soon, which would increase the Soil and Water Conservation Program's cost-share appropriation by \$5.2 million because of the funds used for the Drought Assistance Program. If the supplemental budget is approved, most of the funds will be used for regular cost-share projects. The Commission at the February meeting had tentatively approved a seeding practice to be completed by April 15, 2013. Because the supplemental budget has not been finalized and with April 15th deadline, Ms. Meredith requested direction from the Commission.

Colleen Meredith presented an alternative option, to use the \$1 million to ensure every district has at least \$25,000 in unobligated funds. Districts with \$25,000 or more in unobligated funds as of April 1, 2013, would not receive any additional funding. The districts that have under \$25,000 would receive additional funds that would bring that district to \$25,000. Also these funds can be moved between resource concerns.

After some discussion, Gary Vandiver moved to concur with the Program office's option to allocate to all districts that have less than \$25,000 unobligated funds, up to \$25,000, with the ability to move the funds between resource concerns. Thomas Bradley seconded the concurrence. When asked by the chair, Thomas Bradley, H. Ralph Gaw, Gary Vandiver, and Richard Fordyce concurred.

4. **Matching Grant Regional Workshops**

Ken Struempfh presented a report summarizing the Matching Grant Regional Workshops. The Commission at the February 6, 2013 meeting directed the Program Office staff to carry out five regional meetings to obtain district input on matching grants in response to the many letters asking for potential reinstatement of this program to purchase equipment. The information gathered from these meetings will be provided to the Program Delivery and Operations subcommittee and will be available on the intranet site for all districts. The regional slide presentations reviewed and gathered input on the matching grant program by utilizing anonymous voting software. The regional sessions were conducted between February 25, 2013 and March 6, 2013 in: St. Joseph, Macon, Cape Girardeau, Springfield, and Jefferson City. Mr. Struempfh presented the Commission with a summary of the questions and feedback received at the five Regional Matching Grants Workshops. In addition to other discussions, Mr. Struempfh stated that districts had discussions on liability insurance for rental equipment and the differences between the districts. The Commission indicated that this was an area that more information needed to be made available to districts. Chairman Fordyce was asked if there have been issues with districts competing with local private enterprise. Mr. Fordyce responded stating there have been a few issues and this subject warrants future discussion.

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5. **Our Missouri Waters**

Mary Culler from the DNR Northeast Regional Office presented information on Our Missouri Waters Initiative, Lower Grand River Watershed. Ms. Culler introduced herself as the Watershed Coordinator. Watershed-Based Management is a systematic approach to watershed planning that includes various aspects such as: building partnerships, assessing and documenting concerns, setting watershed goals, identifying solutions, and developing an implementation plan for completing activities.

The three pilot watersheds were selected based on their diversity and opportunities to include projects where permitting, grants and other tools will be used to improve water quality and quantity. The three watersheds are: Lower Grand River, Big River, and Spring River. Ms. Culler reviewed the Lower Grand River watershed and some of the resource issues that have been identified.

The duties of the Watershed Coordinators are to: develop knowledge of watershed issues, develop working relationships, facilitate stakeholder meetings, provide community outreach and knowledge of grant opportunities, and serve as a communication point. Ms. Culler reviewed some recent efforts and the groups that she had met with during the past year.

Future activities that Ms. Culler will be working on include conducting a watershed inventory, developing outreach materials, field days and watershed conferences, 12 digit hydrologic unit code (HUC) nine-element watershed management plans, establishment of a Watershed Coordinating Committee (WCC), and providing support and coordination to local partners and stakeholders.

6. **Pilot Cover Crop Policy Review**

Matt Elliott presented a review of the Pilot Cover Crop Policy. Chariton County currently has 23 cooperators that have signed up for the Cover Crop Program with a total of 669.3 acres enrolled and \$50,197.50 obligated. The average cost to seed cover crops is approximately \$20 per acre. The incentive payment for the practice is set at \$75 per acre. This incentive payment covers seed cost, nutrient management costs, setting and calibrating drills, as well as the cost to make modifications to equipment. Each cooperator can enroll in a maximum of 40 acres.

There are two levels of participation for cooperators. Cooperators participating in Level 1 would be eligible for an annual incentive payment for three consecutive years of cooperation. The cooperator must implement no-till practices, nutrient management, establish cover crops, and implement at minimum a two-crop type rotation such as corn-soybeans for three years of participation. The cover crops may be a single species following corn or soybeans, but cannot be the same species two consecutive years. Also, in one year of Level 1 you must plant a minimum of two cover crop species.

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Cooperators in Level 2 would be eligible for an annual incentive payment for four years of cooperation. The cooperator must implement no-till practices, nutrient management, a conservation crop rotation that includes three distinct full season crops and includes three crop types, as well as a minimum of two species of cover crops following wheat, one of which must be a legume and must be at least 50 percent of the mixture.

Operators applying for the practice are ranked for eligibility. Cover crop seeding dates must be appropriate as stated in the NRCS Cover Crop 340 Standard. The cover crops may be terminated by frost or immediately prior to seeding the subsequent primary crop by chemical application, mowing and/or properly timed roller/crimper operations.

In response to a question on use of rye in Level 1, Matt and Scott Callighan responded to allowable seeding mix using rye.

Scott Callighan presented a review of district administration of the pilot project and an overview for the tour. Mike Snellen, District Conservationist for the Natural Resource Conservation Service, reviewed guidance for the pilot project, overview of the research farm and review of this past year's project and some of the lessons learned. Kenny Riechert and Bob Cooper of the Chariton SWCD Board of Supervisors talked about some of the challenges addressed during the past year.

7. **Cover Crop Research Project**

Dr. Ranjith Udawatta presented an update on the research aspects of the Chariton County demonstration farm funded through an NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant. The main focus of the research project is to show producers how cover crop systems can improve environmental diversity, soil quality, water quality, farm income and sustainability. In previous studies it has been found that 48 percent of annual phosphorus loss and 57 percent of annual nitrogen loss occurred during a crop free period. Runoff volume and sediment loss also contributed to rivers, lakes and estuaries becoming impaired. The research project hopes to show that cover crops will improve the soil's physical, chemical and biological properties while providing a protective cover that reduces nonpoint source pollution and improves water quality. There is great producer interest in the area, but less than 5 percent use of cover crops. Throughout the project producers will gain knowledge as well as have a visual example of the benefits involved in these management systems shown in the field.

On the research farm there have been 220 soil cores taken that will be analyzed and used to rate the soil quality. Eight flumes have been installed to monitor water quality and quantity that cover the 8 watersheds throughout the farm. Total nitrogen, dissolved nitrogen, total phosphorus, dissolved phosphorus, sediment, pesticide, herbicide and dissolved organic carbon will be measured. Throughout

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the life of the project these parameters will be plotted and compared to a system that is not using a cover crop system. Soil moisture sensors were inserted in the soil at different depths to measure soil infiltration rates and soil moisture holding capacity. A total weather station was also installed to monitor precipitation levels, wind speed and direction, temperature, humidity and net radiation. The research project will produce an online cover crop tool to guide landowner decisions for different systems as well as models demonstrating the economic benefits of a cover crop system in hopes of increasing regional adaptation of cover crop use.

Jim Plassmeyer gave an overview of the tour planned for after the Commission Meeting.

E. REQUESTS/REVIEW

1. Supervisor Appointments

a. Wright SWCD

Kurt Boeckmann presented the Wright Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) supervisor appointment. The Wright SWCD board requested to appoint Mr. Jack Barnett to complete the unexpired term of Ms. Jacklyn Shaffer. Ms. Shaffer submitted a letter of resignation and Mr. Barnett and the board chairman have signed the new Verification of Supervisor Eligibility form, verifying the candidate meet the qualifications to serve on the board.

The following was presented for Commission consideration: Approve the appointment of Mr. Jack Barnett to complete the unexpired term of Ms. Jacklyn Shaffer.

Gary Vandiver made a motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Jack Barnett to the Wright SWCD Board of Supervisors. H. Ralph Gaw seconded the motion. When asked by the chair, Thomas Bradley, H. Ralph Gaw, Gary Vandiver, and Richard Fordyce voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously

F. REPORTS

1. University of Missouri

Richard Hoormann presented the University of Missouri report. Mr. Hoormann reported the staff implementation for the regional extension faculty is in progress and will start for campus staff in the fall. A hand out on activities related to soil health was distributed.

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2. Department of Conservation

Clint Dalbom presented the Department of Conservation report. Mr. Dalbom reported that youth turkey season is coming up and spring turkey season starts on the 15th of April. Missouri is the only state that is seeing an increase in hunter participation.

Mr. Dalbom also stated they have been experiencing some activity with spring fire season around the state.

3. Department of Agriculture

Judy Grundler presented the Department of Agriculture report. Ms. Grundler reported on Environmental Protection Agency Region 7 and 8 meeting held in Colorado, that she recently attended. The meeting included looking at what had been done in the Missouri's Drought Program as a possible model for other states.

Ms. Grundler also reported this is invasive species month and the Emerald Ash Borer surveys are starting. Also other surveys to be looked at will be Thousand Canker Disease of Black Walnut and for the Gypsy Moth.

4. Natural Resources Conservation Service

Karen Brinkman presented the Natural Resources Conservation Service report. Ms. Brinkman reported they are in the process of obligating the Environmental Quality Incentives Program with a request for \$6 million in addition to the \$25 million received.

Ms. Brinkman stated they are still working to implement the Emergency Watershed Program funds. All projects must be completed by May 1, 2013 totaling \$33.5 million.

Technology systems upgrade to Windows 7 is still in process, which will affect the engineering field tools used in the field offices. Deployment is May 1, 2013, with complete installation by August 2013.

Pilot highly erodible land, HEL, compliance reviews is being done in Missouri.

The state announcement for the Conservation Innovation Grant opportunities will be released soon.

J.R. Flores State Conservationist will return from his and resume his duties at the end of May.

5. Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Kenny Lovelace presented the Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts report. Mr. Lovelace reported that Beverly Dometorch and he went to the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Spring Legislative Fly-in. They met with legislators to discuss the Farm Bill...

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G. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

H. SUGGESTED DATE(S) OF NEXT MEETING(S)

The suggested Soil and Water Districts Commission meeting is June 19, 2013 in Adair County, at Frank and Judy Oberle's Farm. The Commission consensus is to meet on that date at that location.

I. ADJOURNMENT

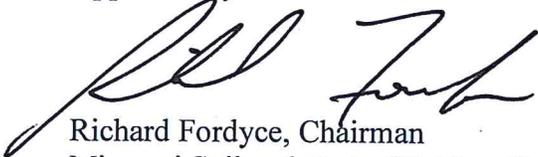
H. Ralph Gaw moved the meeting be adjourned at 12:26 p.m. Thomas Bradley seconded the motion. A poll vote was taken. Gary Vandiver, Thomas Bradley, H. Ralph Gaw, and Richard Fordyce voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Colleen Meredith, Director
Soil and Water Conservation Program

Approved by:



Richard Fordyce, Chairman
Missouri Soil and Water Districts Commission

/clm

