



1320 Research Park Drive
Manhattan, Kansas 66502

MINUTES OF THE STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

1. State Conservation Commission meeting was called to order by Rod Vorhees, Chairman and Area V Commissioner at 9:02 a.m., Monday, February 23, 2015, at the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Manhattan Service Center, 3705 Miller Parkway, Suite A, Manhattan, Kansas 66503.

2. **ATTENDANCE:**

Elected Commissioners:

Ted Nighswonger, Area I Commissioner
Andy Larson, Area II Commissioner
Brad Shogren, Area III Commissioner
John Wunder, Area IV Commissioner
Rod Vorhees, Area V Commissioner

Ex-Officio & Appointed Members:

Gaye Benfer, Assistant State Conservationist, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Dan Devlin, Director, Kansas Center for Agricultural Resources and the Environment (KCARE), K-State Research and Extension

Division of Conservation, Kansas Department of Agriculture Staff:

Greg Foley, Executive Director
Scott Carlson, Mined Land Reclamation Program Manager
Don Jones, Water Quality Program Manager
Steve Frost, Water Conservation Programs Manager
Dave Jones, Conservation District Coordinator
Cathy Thompson, Program Consultant
Kristin Miller, Land Reclamation & Administrative Specialist

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Guests:

Kerry Wefald, Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA)

Robert Large, Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA)

Troy Munch, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Patti Winters, Kansas Association of Conservation Districts Employees' Organization
(KACD-EO)

Stephanie Royer, Kansas Association of Conservation Districts Employees' Organization
(KACD-EO)

Bill Simshauser, Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD)

Bevin Law, Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD)

Allan Roth, Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD)

Herb Graves, State Association of Kansas Watersheds (SAKW)

Ron Brown, Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD)

3. ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

ADDITIONS:

Motion by Brad Shogren to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

Motion by Ted Nighswonger to approve the January 12, 2015 minutes, as mailed. Seconded by Andy Larson. Motion carried.

5. COMMENTS FROM GUESTS:

None.

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a. District Supervisor Monthly Board Meeting Financial Management Checklist –Scott Carlson.

b. Conservation district credit and debit card use policy – Scott Carlson.

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8. NEW BUSINESS

State Conservation Commission Strategic Planning

Outcomes of today's meeting – Kerry Wefald

Overview and discussion of SCC duties and powers under Conservation District Law K.S.A. 2-1901 et. Seq. – Robert Large

Review KDA's Vision, Mission, Priorities and Program Goals – Kerry Wefald

Review the DOC's Objectives and Goals – DOC Staff

Develop SCC Objectives and Goals – Kerry Wefald

Discussion Topics for April Meeting with the KDA Secretary – Rod Vorhees

9. REPORTS:

a. Agency Reports:

- i. NRCS – Gaye Benfer. - See Attachment A.
- ii. KCARE/KWRI - Dan Devlin. Reported on budget cuts, a new water quality field lab, a new irrigation system, and that they are working with Wichita to use urban dollars in conservation. He also extended an invitation to the Commission to visit the water quality field lab and the Konza Prairie.

b. Staff reports:

- i. Don Jones gave an overview of the tentative 2015 Spring Workshop Agenda. – See Attachment B.
- ii. Scott Carlson reported on the February 4, 2015 quarterly Agriland Committee meeting where they accepted the Kansas Conservation Partnership application for inclusion in Agriland in 2015.
- iii. Steve Frost gave a financial report.
- iv. Greg Foley gave a Legislative update and an update on the Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas.

c. Commissioner Reports:

- i. Area I – Ted Nighswonger. Reported that he attended the Rooks County Annual Meeting.

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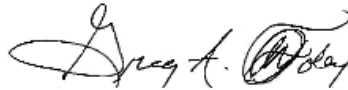
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- ii. Area II – Andy Larson. Reported on the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Annual Meeting.
- iii. Area III – Brad Shogren. Reported on the planning process of the area Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas meetings.
- iv. Area IV – John Wunder. Reported on the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Annual Meeting.
- v. Area V – Rod Vorhees. None

10. ADJOURN:

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday April 13, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at the Kansas Department of Agriculture, 1320 Research Park Drive, Manhattan, Kansas.

Motion by Andy Larson to adjourn. Seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:14p.m.



Greg A. Foley
Executive Director



**NRCS HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES
for the
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MANHATTAN, KANSAS
February 23, 2015**

PERSONNEL

New Hires: Alex C. Heeger, Soil Conservation Technician, Hoxie
Ashley Tokoi, Office Assistant, Programs Staff, Salina State
Office

Reassignments

and/or Promotions: Marcus L. Griffin, Soil Conservationist, Hugoton, to Soil Conservationist,
Stockton
Amber Johnson, District Conservationist, Eureka, to District
Conservationist, Howard
Jose Mendoza, District Conservationist, Hugo, Oklahoma, to Supervisory
District Conservationist, Paola Management Unit
Jasmine A. Wilson, Soil Conservationist, Garden City, to Soil
Conservationist, Great Bend

OPERATIONS

Administrative Transformation—Local Support Structure

- The Assistant State Conservationist for Management and Strategy (ASTC-MS) selection for Kansas is still pending.
- The Financial Resource Specialist position has been advertised with a closing date of February 23.

Budget

- States are still waiting on allocations from the national office.
- Expectations are for the budget to be down slightly from last year.
- Nationally, the Watershed Rehabilitation Program has significant funding again this year

PROGRAMS

Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP)

- 2015 CStP Application cutoff deadline is February 27, 2015.
- 2016 CStP Contract Renewal signup deadline is March 31, 2015.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- Kansas had 3 project proposals selected for funding and is in the process of negotiating and formalizing agreements with the lead partners for the following selected proposals:
 - Improving Water Quality through the Implementation of Forestry Practices and the Assessment of Riparian Systems in Kansas Priority Watersheds
 - Project Scope: Watershed assessments and Water Quality improvement in selected Kansas watersheds utilizing forest stand improvement and tree planting practices.
 - Participating States: Kansas
 - Lead Sponsor: Kansas State University
 - NRCS Offer: \$13,000,000
 - Kansas Pheasant Initiative
 - Project scope: Pheasant habitat improvement utilizing cover crops in dryland crop rotations in targeted areas surrounding Keith Sibelius and Waconda Lakes.
 - Participating States: Kansas
 - Lead Sponsor: Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism
 - NRCS Offer: \$800,000
 - Advanced Irrigation Water Management on the High Plains Aquifer in Kansas
 - Project Scope: Installation of irrigation water monitoring equipping to achieve real time irrigation water management scheduling in all GMD areas of the High Plains Aquifer.
 - Participating States: Kansas
 - Lead Sponsor: Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management District 3
 - NRCS Offer: \$2,400,000
- Kansas is a part of 2 other proposals where other states are negotiating and formalizing agreements with project sponsors.
 - Regional Grassland Bird and Grazing Lands Enhancement Initiative
 - Participating States: Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa
 - Lead Sponsor: The Missouri Department of Conservation
 - NRCS Offer: \$5,000,000
 - Middle and Lower Neosho River Basin RCPP Project.
 - Participating States: Oklahoma, Kansas
 - Lead Sponsor: Oklahoma Conservation Commission Water Quality Division
 - NRCS Offer: \$4,000,000
- Mechanisms to deliver project assistance and funds will be developed and established as soon as project agreements have been formalized and signed.
- NRCS will announce the next round of RCPP funding availability soon.

TECHNOLOGY

- Construction is complete for the rehabilitation of Spring Creek R-1 Dam near Garden Plains. Final checkout was completed February 20, 2015

OUTREACH

Kansas NRCS announced five national initiatives are being offered in Kansas through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative, National Water Quality Initiative, On-Farm Energy Initiative, Organic Initiative, and Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative. While NRCS accepts applications for EQIP on a continuous basis, NRCS has set a deadline of March 20 to apply for the initiatives.

Applications are being accepted for up to \$20 million in grants to facilitate the creation of new, innovative markets for carbon credits, providing additional revenue sources for producers to use to address natural resource conservation challenges. These grants are part of the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program, authorized through the 2014 Farm Bill. NRCS will accept pre-proposals for initial review before inviting entities to submit full proposals. Pre-proposals are due Tuesday, February 24, 2015.



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service



Tentative Agenda 2015 Spring Workshops

<u>TIME</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PRESENTER</u>
9:00 a.m.	REGISTRATION	Division of Conservation (DOC)
9:15 a.m.	Welcome/Introductions	SCC Area Commissioner NRCS ASTC-FO
9:30 a.m.	DOC Report/Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • FY 2016 State Cost-Share Program Revisions • CSIMS Update • Personnel Changes 	DOC Staff
10:00 a.m.	NRCS Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014 Farm Bill • Budget Update 	Eric Banks, NRCS
10:20 a.m.	Break	
10:40 a.m.	KACD Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director • 2015 NACD Convention • 2015 KACD Convention • State Fair Booth 	KACD Area Director
11:00 a.m.	Threatened and Endangered Species in Kansas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on cost-share program implementation 	NRCS Staff
11:30 a.m.	No-till and Cover Crop Field days	CD and NRCS Staff
12:00 p.m.	Lunch – Catered on site. Attendees will pay for meal at site.	
12:45 p.m.	Conservation District Financial Management	DOC Staff
1:00 p.m.	Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)	NRCS Staff
1:30 p.m.	Kansas AgrAbility Program	Kerri Ebert, KSU
2:15 p.m.	Open discussion and closing comments	
2:30 p.m.	ADJOURN	SCC Area Commissioner