



109 SW 9th Street 2A
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1283

MINUTES OF THE STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

1. The State Conservation Commission meeting was called to order by Rod Vorhees, Chairman and Area V Commissioner at 12:08 p.m., Monday, August 1, 2011 at The Barn Bed and Breakfast, 14910 Bluemound Road, Valley Falls, Kansas.

2. **ATTENDANCE:**

Elected Commissioners:

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

Ex-Officio & Appointed Members:

Eric Banks, USDA, State Conservationist, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Phil Barnes, Associate Professor, Water Quality, Biological and Agricultural Engineering, K-State Research and Extension

Division of Conservation, Kansas Department of Agriculture Staff:

Greg Foley, Executive Director
Scott Carlson, Mined Land Reclamation Program Manager
Max Foster, Public Service Executive III
Don Jones, Water Quality Program Manager

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion by Ted Nighswonger to approve the agenda as mailed. Seconded by Andy Larson. Motion Carried.

SCC MEETING MINUTES

August 1, 2011

Page 2

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

Motion by John Wunder to approve the May 9, 2011 minutes as mailed. Seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried.

5. COMMENTS FROM GUESTS:

Herb Graves, Executive Director, State Association of Kansas Watersheds

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- a. Discussion on the transition of State Conservation Commission (SCC) into the Division of Conservation (DOC), Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) – Greg Foley.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- a. The next regular Commission meeting has been rescheduled to 8:00 a.m. Thursday, September 15, 2011 at the Ramada Inn (Grand Prairie Motel) in Hutchinson, Kansas.

Motion by Ted Nighswonger to hold the September 15, 2011 SCC meeting at the Ramada Inn (Grand Prairie Motel) in Hutchinson, Kansas. Seconded by Andy Larson. Motion carried.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Approve the SCC contribution to the conservation partnership booth at the 2011 Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson, Kansas September 9 – 18, 2011 – Greg Foley.

Motion by Andy Larson to approve a contribution of one-third the cost of the conservation partnership booth at the Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson, Kansas September 9 – 18, 2011 not to exceed \$700.00. Seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried.

- b. Discussion on budget guidance and direction for FY 2013 – Greg Foley.
- c. Discussion on SCC Spring Workshop format and content – Scott Carlson.

SCC MEETING MINUTES

August 1, 2011

Page 3

- d. Review Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) Fall Meeting agendas – Scott Carlson.
- e. Discuss upcoming Kansas Land Improvement Contractors Association (KLICA) conservation field day in St. John, KS – Greg Foley.

Motion by Andy Larson to provide Information/Education funding grant not to exceed \$2,500 for the KLICA conservation practice field day from Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program (NPSPCP) funding. Seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried.

9. REPORTS:

- a. Agency Reports:
 - i. NRCS – Eric Banks. See Attachment A.
 - ii. KSU – Phil Barnes.
- b. Staff Reports – None.
- c. Commissioners Reports – None.

10. ADJOURN:

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for 8:00 a.m. on September 15, 2011 at the Ramada Inn, 1400 North Lorraine Street, Hutchinson, KS.

Motion by Andy Larson to adjourn. Seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.



Greg A. Foley.
Executive Director



Natural Resources Conservation Service
760 South Broadway
Salina, Kansas 67401-4604

Phone: 785-823-4500
FAX: 785-823-4540
www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov

**NRCS HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES
for the
KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
and the
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
VALLEY FALLS, KANSAS
August 1, 2011**

PERSONNEL

New Hires: Anna O. Friedrichs, Soil Conservationist, Seneca, from Student Trainee
(Soil Conservationist), Hays

Reassignments
and/or Promotions: Gregory C. Bauer, District Conservationist, Great Bend, to Supervisory
District Conservationist, Great Bend
Rhonda G. Sulsar, State Administrative Officer, Salina, to Supervisory
Contract Specialist, Washington, D.C.

Retirements: Francis J. Hillebrand, Soil Conservation Technician, Norton
Lyle A. Kohlmeier, Resource Conservationist, Emporia Area Office
Rodney L. Marcotte, Supervisory District Conservationist, La Crosse
Dollie M. Mathes, Office Automation Assistant, Harper
Rickey Porter, RC&D Coordinator, Ottawa
Bobby D. Tricks, Soil Scientist, Hays MLRA Soil Survey Office

Student Trainees:
(Summer 2011) Vincent A. Brazelton, Soil Conservationist, Marion
Jessica E. Bruington, Soil Conservationist, Belleville
Stacey D. Domingue, Soil Conservationist, Lincoln
Kari A. Friedrichs, Engineer, Manhattan Area Office
Morgan L. Halderson, Soil Conservationist, Burlington
Charley G. Hunter, Soil Conservationist, Hiawatha
Rickey L. Jackson, Soil Conservationist, Pratt
Matti B. Kuykendall, Soil Conservationist, Smith Center
William D. Lavergne, Soil Conservationist, Osborne
Steven M. Lewis, Jr., Engineer, Emporia Area Office
Ashley M. Montgomery, Soil Conservationist, Washington
Lisa C. Montgomery, Soil Conservationist, Independence
Andrew R. Quintana, Soil Conservationist, Manhattan
Adria E. Smith, Soil Conservationist, Hays
James L. Ungerer, Soil Conservationist, Medicine Lodge
Kevin A. Vaughn, Soil Conservationist, Concordia
Jasmine A. Wilson, Soil Conservationist, Paola

OPERATIONS

Additional Program Contracts System (ProTracts) and eContracts training to further assist the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with conservation plans and program administration was completed for 17 conservation district employees.

NRCS is currently working on the Kansas 2012 Budget proposal. This is the first time that the states are preparing a budget proposal for submission and approval by the national office. The budget proposals are based on a State Resource Assessment (SRA) that was completed earlier this year, reviewed, and ranked by priority with the Kansas Technical Committee. The budget proposals are due to Washington by August 5. The budget proposals will target the major resource concerns in Kansas as identified in the SRA in regard to program and technical assistance funds.

Kansas, along with several other states, is currently going through a Program Delivery Oversight and Evaluation review by an NRCS team from Fort Worth. They are looking at all programs NRCS has responsibility for including review of contract files in 12 management units plus the state office. Interviews will be conducted with field, area, and state office staff during the review.

The Pheasants Forever partnership biologists located in Abilene and Seneca resigned. We are currently in the process of interviewing to fill those vacancies.

Kansas has made three requests through a special conservation technical assistance grant process with NRCS. If approved, these grants would guarantee funding through 2013 for the 10 employees through the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Conservation (formerly State Conservation Commission) Soil Conservation Technician Agreement, the 7 employees through the Pheasants Forever Agreement, and the 5 area biologists through the agreement with Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism.

PROGRAMS

- Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)
 - Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management District (GMD) 3 had five approved AWEP contracts for a total of \$1,008,734
 - Kansas received an additional \$1,113,546 for a second allocation of 2011 AWEP funds—with those funds, 4 of the 11 applications from GMD 2 were selected for approval for a total of \$1,043,810
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
 - General CRP Sign-up 41 offers were sent out by FSA and NRCS was granted an extension to complete conservation plans on approved offers by September 2nd. NRCS has until September 2nd to complete conservation plans on General CRP Sign-up 41 offers
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
 - Kansas had a successful sign-up for fiscal year 2011 CSP (over \$12 million was obligated to 458 contracts and the total acres enrolled this fiscal year are 834,019.7)

- Currently modifications are being completed on 2010 CSP contracts to address the national issue of applicable versus applied acres in contracts—all modifications must be done by September 2011
- Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP)

We still have 10 sites in six counties (Labette, Cherokee, Crawford, Chautauqua, Linn, and Dickinson) on the national waitlist for EWPP funding. The total financial assistance that has been requested is \$254,250. The 10 sites include 7 for debris removal and 3 for streambank stabilization. We expect to have some EWPP requests due to the Missouri River Flooding.
- Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
 - Kansas received a second allocation of \$750,000 in 2011 EQIP funds for EQIP (General)
 - Kansas Received \$2,500,000 for the Ogallala Initiative—Water Quantity applications on hand located within the Ogallala Aquifer Recharge Area were eligible for funding under this initiative
 - The Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) received additional funding for a total of \$37,366
- Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

Kansas NRCS has closed on 17 easements in FY 2011 on 8,845 acres. Eight new easement applications have been enrolled in FY 2011 on 5,116 acres. The totals include one GRP Cooperative Agreement with the Ranchland Trust of Kansas on 137 acres.
- Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative
 - An additional \$25,600 was received, enabling the approval of all eligible applications received for this initiative
- Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program

Federal assistance funds for the RC&D program were zeroed out by Congress in FY 2011. We are in the process of completing an orderly close-out of the program. Existing Kansas NRCS RC&D coordinators have the option of accepting a buyout and (if eligible) early retirement, or will be reassigned to new positions sometime after August 31. Local RC&D councils are still active and are open for business. RC&D council staffs that were co-located in NRCS space are in the process of finding new office space.
- Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program
 - North Black Vermillion Flood Control Dam Site 4
 - Replanting of needed trees has been completed
 - A total of 853 trees and shrubs were planted
 - Additional funding to armor the auxiliary spillway has been received--the watershed district is preparing the contract for construction and construction is expected to begin around the 1st of August
- Watershed Rehabilitation Program
 - Wakarusa Site 24 (Yankee Tank), Douglas County
 - The design has been completed
 - The watershed district is currently working on obtaining the needed land rights and permits
 - Construction is expected to begin in November 2011

- Spring Creek Site R-1, Sedgwick County
 - NRCS Engineering Staff is working on the design.
 - Construction is planned for 2012
- Switzler Creek Site 7, Osage County
 - King Construction was awarded the contract
 - Construction is expected to begin the week of July 18
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
 - Additional general WHIP funds in the amount of \$332,000 were received allowing all remaining contracts to be funded

TECHNOLOGY

- State Conservation Commission (SCC) Streambank Agreement
 - Seven projects have been designed.
 - Five projects have been built.
 - Five projects are in various stages of construction.
- Architect and Engineer (A&E) Contracts
 - The last of the nine task orders issued for the design of animal waste management systems in 2010 have been completed, and the drawings and documentation have been given to the EQIP contract owners.
 - Paperwork has been issued to start three more task orders for the design of animal waste management systems.
- Resources
 - NRCS is assisting the Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition with Adult Range Schools August 16-18 (Tall Grass) and August 23-25 (Mid-/Short-Grass)
 - Assisting with the development of information/criteria for upcoming FY 2012 program year
 - Updating new and revised standards/specifications
- National Resources Inventory

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Kansas has just completed the field portion of the 2011 Grazing Lands On-Site Survey. The Kansas data collection consisted of 95 locations which were more concentrated in the southern portion of our state. The field data collection which began late in May was completed by the end of June by twenty employees. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has entered into a partnership with NRCS in this year's data collection. This is truly exciting news as the BLM feels that our rangeland assessment activities are beneficial to them as well. While this partnership does not impact our data collection here in Kansas it will add significantly to the assessment of our nation's grassland. The Rangeland Resource Assessment report which reflects data collected in prior years can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/NRI/rangeland/>.

OUTREACH

- News Releases (provided to field offices, media, Kansas Technical Committee)
 - Emergency Watershed Protection Program
 - Additional Funding Received
 - Student Trainees
 - “CRP Expiring Acres Makeover” hears from a southwest Ellis County producer whose farming philosophy is “farm the best and leave the rest”
 - “High on the Little Blue” visits high tunnel owners in Washington County
- Conservation Planning Campaign
 - News releases were provided to all field offices
 - Several posters were provided to field offices promoting conservation planning
 - Ads promoting Conservation Planning were placed in the Kansas ag newspapers—*FarmTalk, Kansas Farmer, High Plains Journal, Grass and Grain*
 - News releases about conservation planning were also sent to the ag newspapers
- Meeting
 - Women Managing the Farm, statewide meeting, will be held February 10-11, 2012, at the Hyatt Hotel, Wichita. The Speakers Committee will meet July 29, to begin the process of selecting speakers for keynote and breakout sessions. Save the Date e-postcards were sent to all field offices, Kansas Technical Committee members, organizations, and agencies asking for help in beginning to promote the event.
- Field Days
 - Manhattan Plant Materials Center celebrated its 75th anniversary with two field days, June 7 and 8--one for the public and one for agencies, partners, and NRCS staff. NRCS staff attended from Oklahoma, Colorado, and Nebraska. Several people that had worked at the PMC returned to take part in the celebration. PMC Manager Richard Wynia was interviewed by Ag AM in Kansas.
 - The 2nd annual Manhattan Plant Materials Center Butterfly Count was held on July 13. The count was held in conjunction with the Xerces Society 37th Butterfly Count. Notices of the event were posted to several online calendars and flyers provided to field offices.
- State Fair
 - The Kansas Conservation Partnership—NRCS; Division of Conservation Kansas Department of Agriculture; and Kansas Association of Conservation Districts are partnering with Kansas Forest Service at the State Fair, September 9-18, 2011. The theme is “Working Trees for Kansas.” The United Nations designated 2011 the International Year of the Forests. The booth will follow the theme with educational packets, posters, handouts, live trees, and activities promoting trees in Kansas. On Friday, September 16, Kansas Forest Service will give a demonstration about how to properly plant a tree. A tree will be planted on the fairgrounds.
 - Kansas NRCS continues to provide information about the Female and Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers claims to various places such as libraries and post offices.
 - NRCS field offices and conservation districts are participating in the Feds Feed Families project.