

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 10:05 a.m., Friday, July 7, 2023. The meeting was held virtually via Teams.

2. **ATTENDANCE:**

Elected Commissioners:

Ted Nighswonger, Area I Commissioner

Jed Fleske, Area II Commissioner

Sam Sanders, Area III Commissioner

John Wunder, Area IV Commissioner

Rod Vorhees, Area V Commissioner

Ex-Officio & Appointed Members:

Kris Ethridge, Acting State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Terry Medley, P.E., Water Structures Program Manager, Division of Water Resources, Kansas
Department of Agriculture

Peter Tomlinson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Extension Specialist for Environmental Quality
Agronomy Department, Kansas State University

Susan Metzger, Associate Director, College of Agriculture, K-State Research and Extension, Director
Kansas Center for Agricultural Resources and the Environment (KCARE) and the Kansas Water
Resources Institute (KWRI)

Division of Conservation, Kansas Department of Agriculture Staff:

Andrew Lyon, Executive Director

Steve Frost, Assistant Director

Dave Jones, Water Quality Program Manager

Kristin Kloft, Riparian & Wetland Program Manager

Marsha Setzkorn-Meyer, Conservation District Program Coordinator

Cathy Thompson, Program Consultant

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Christy Koelzer, Administrative Specialist

Guests:

Keri Harris, Franklin County/Miami County Conservation District Manager

Taylor Nikkel, Director of the Stockgrowers Division, Kansas Livestock Association

3. NEW BUSINESS:

a. FY 2023 Unallocated Water Resources Funding (Lyon)

- i. Andrew Lyon informed the commissioners the DOC recommends opening the over \$1,000,000 in unallocated Water Resources funding carried forward from FY 2023 in a common pool of cost share which will be made available to all conservation districts on a first come first serve basis beginning mid-July 2023 until funds are allocated. These funds would be used for the following project types: Soil Health, Nutrient Management, Irrigation & Water Conservation, Riparian Area Protection, and Pasture & Rangeland Management. These project types represent practices that are management related as opposed to structural practices. This is by design as over \$3,000,000 in SFY 24 Water Resources funding is already allocated with most going towards structural practices. There is concern that this additional funding would not be utilized in completed contracts within State Fiscal Year 2024 as contractors are already overscheduled with existing funding. Conservation Districts would need to have all base funds allocated to contracts before requesting the pool funds. Underfunded FY 2023 rollover projects would not be eligible for these pooled funds.
- ii. DOC suggested opening the additional funding as soon as next week while counties are currently ranking projects. The additional funding would remain open as long as it takes to get allocated.
- iii. The commissioners discussed whether there should be a limit on the amount of funding per county to ensure that all counties had an opportunity to utilize the additional funds and allowing adequate time for information to be provided to district managers. It was agreed that \$35,000 was a reasonable county limit and opening the additional funding on August 1 would allow adequate time to communicate with district managers.
- iv. The commission requested an update at the August 16 meeting.

A motion was made by Ted Nighswonger to approve opening the \$1,000,000 in unallocated Water Resources funding carried forward from FY 2023 on August 1 with a \$35,000 county

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limit, for counties that had used all FY2024 WR funds first, and to review at the August 16 meeting. The motion was seconded by Peter Tomlinson. Motion carried.

4. UPDATES:

a. Agency Updates:

- i. Kris Ethridge (USDA, NRCS) informed the commissioners the State Conservationist position is being advertised.

b. DOC Staff Updates:

- i. Andrew Lyon informed the commissioners that registration is open for the Ag Summit on August 17 and rooms have been reserved for them.

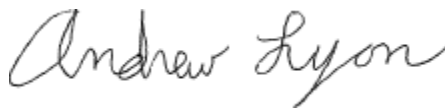
c. Elected Commissioner Area Updates:

- i. Ted Nighswonger (Area 1) informed the commissioners he has had a question on the landowner limit for landowners that own land in two different counties. Andrew Lyon will address the issue at the next meeting.

5. ADJOURNMENT:

The next SCC meeting will be August 16 in Manhattan.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:09 a.m.



Andrew Lyon
Executive Director