

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met May 1, 2006, in the Agriculture Building Board Room, 2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chair Rick Jeans. He stated this was a regularly scheduled meeting in accordance with the Open Meeting Law, Title 25, Sections 301 and following as amended. The agenda for this meeting was posted April 27, 2006, at the front entrance of the building.

ROLL CALL

Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary, took roll call and the following members were in attendance:

Rick Jeans, Chair
George Stunkard, Vice Chair
Virginia Kidd, Member
J.T. Winters Jr., Member

Members absent:

Dan Lowrance, Secretary

Others in attendance were:

Mike Thralls, Executive Director
Ben Pollard, Assistant Director
Steve Coffman, Financial Management and Human Resources Director
Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director
Dan Butler, Water Quality Program Director
Mike Kastl, Abandoned Mine Land Program Director
Mike Sharp, Information Technology Director
Lisa Knauf, District Services Director
Mark Harrison, Information Representative
Karla Beatty, Education Coordinator
Eldon Merklin, Cost-share Program Coordinator
Dennis Boney, Watershed Technician
Johnny Pelley, Watershed Technician
George Moore, Watershed Technician
Gene Spurlock, AML Inspector
Jana Chicoine, Administrative Officer
Jim Leach, Water Quality Cost-share and Finance Director
Shellie Willoughby, GIS Specialist
Stacey Day, Water Quality Technical Writer
Sheryl Easton, Grants Management Specialist
Joann Stevenson, Assistant Attorney General
Clay Pope, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director
Darrel Dominick, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist

Larry Edmison, Sierra Club
Brian Ervin, GIT
Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Winters led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

INTRODUCTION OF AWARDS AND RECOGNITION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mike Thralls, Executive Director, recognized members of the Commission's Awards and Recognition Committee: Shellie Willoughby, Sheryl Easton, George Moore, and Stacey Day. Members not present were Cheryl Cheadle and Monty Ramming. The Committee is hosting several activities this week in conjunction with National Public Service Week including a full staff meeting and luncheon today. Committee members left the meeting after introductions.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2006, Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Jeans, Stunkard, Kidd, and Winters. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

DISTRICT DIRECTOR APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Thralls presented recommendations for appointment of conservation district directors as listed in Exhibit #1. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve district director appointments listed as 1st Recommendation with terms to expire as indicated. Those voting aye were: Jeans, Stunkard, Kidd, and Winters. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

CLAIMS/FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Steve Coffman, Financial Management and Human Resources Director, presented the claims and financial statement as listed in Exhibit #2. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Winters and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the claims and financial statement. Those voting aye were: Jeans, Stunkard, Kidd, and Winters. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION TO OTTAWA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

A motion was made by Mr. Winters and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve an additional allocation to the Ottawa County Conservation District for support of the 2006 Envirothon Team from Wyandotte High School. Those voting aye were: Jeans, Stunkard, Kidd, and Winters. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

PRESENTATION OF COMMISSION AGREEMENTS

Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, presented agreements as listed in Exhibit #3 and recommended approval. A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to approve the following amended agreements. Those voting aye were: Jeans, Stunkard, Kidd, and Winters. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

1. Department of Central Services - State Leasing re: FY07 office space at the Will Rogers Building (Suites 224 & 226)

2. BMP Inc. to transport poultry litter off site and away from the Illinois River watershed project; amended to allow litter to move not just in Oklahoma but across the Arkansas/Oklahoma border in either direction.
3. BMP Inc. to transport poultry litter off site and away from the Spavinaw Creek watershed project; amended to allow litter to move not just in Oklahoma but across the Arkansas/Oklahoma border in either direction.

A motion was made by Mr. Winters and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to approve the following new agreement. Those voting aye were: Jeans, Stunkard, Kidd, and Winters. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

4. Garfield County Conservation District to coordinate efforts of state and federal natural resources agencies involved in wetland restoration in Drummond Flats; educate landowners of functions and values of wetlands.

A motion was made by Mr. Winters and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to ratify approval of the following amended agreement. Those voting aye were: Jeans, Stunkard, Kidd, and Winters. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

5. Tulsa County Conservation District, Amendment #1; amended scope of agreement to provide office space and reduce amount.

OUT OF STATE TRAVEL REQUESTS

A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to approve out of state travel requests as listed in Exhibit #4. Those voting aye were: Jeans, Stunkard, Kidd, and Winters. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

BOB PRIESS, PAYNE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Bob Priess, Payne County Conservation District Director, appeared before the Commission to propose a new 319 project for Payne County including grazing management and no-till. He stated that the Stillwater Creek project will end this fall and the district would like to work on another project. The Commission will take the request under advisement and will discuss this request with the water quality division.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Ms. Kidd, Mr. Winters and Mr. Jeans attended the Governor's Conference on Agriculture and Economic Growth and all agreed it was an excellent conference.

Ms. Kidd commended AML Division Director Mike Kastl for his work with the Club Lake project stating that the project looks good and is nearing completion.

Mr. Stunkard stated that the Wagoner County Conservation District will be hosting the 51st

Annual Soil Stewardship Breakfast on Friday, May 5 and invited all attendees to attend. NRCS Chief Bruce Knight is the scheduled speaker.

Mr. Winters attended the East Woods County Soil Stewardship Breakfast and the Blaine County Ag Expo hosted by the Blaine County, Cimarron Valley, and Central North Canadian River Conservation Districts.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF

Mike Thralls, Executive Director, stated that the legislative session is in its final four weeks. The Senate has passed a general appropriations bill with an increase of general revenue funds to the Commission in the amount of \$570,000; however, there is no provision for REAP funds. The House general appropriation bill has no new revenue. The legislative impasse is due to teacher pay increases and tax cuts and no action will be taken until these issues have been agreed upon.

Mr. Thralls stated that the Commission continues to provide information to the Attorney General's office concerning the poultry lawsuit litigation.

Mr. Thralls stated that this is a big week for conservation with the National Land and Range Judging Contest and NRCS Chief Bruce Knight's visit to Oklahoma for the Wagoner County Stewardship Breakfast.

Lisa Knauf, District Services Director, reported on attending board meetings at Garvin and Oklahoma County Conservation Districts. She assisted Oklahoma County with personnel and payroll issues. Ms. Knauf notified three districts that their April board meetings were invalid due to improper posting of the agendas.

Ms. Knauf has been assisting with the National Land and Range Judging Contest registration database. She reported that staff will be meeting with NRCS staff to discuss loss of the contributions agreement for the coming year and training activities.

Dan Butler, Water Quality Director, updated the Commission on the rain garden contracts that were approved during the April meeting.

Mr. Butler reported on a meeting in Dallas to discuss the FY07 program guidelines which have changed significantly. The EPA water program guidelines have changed as well. The direction of the program is to require proof of success in a shorter time period and 319 money will focus on areas where there is success. Mr. Butler stated that under the new guidelines the Beaty Creek project will no longer be considered a success until Lake Eucha is removed from the 303(d) list.

Mike Kastl, Abandoned Mine Land Director, stated that the Club Lake West-191 project in Haskell County should be completed during the month of May. He reported that the Office of Surface Mining has turned down a request for an emergency project.

Mr. Kastl stated that an AML project in Rogers County was delayed until a determination was made about the presence of an endangered plant species - the prairie orchid.

Steve Coffman, Financial Management and Human Resources Director, stated that his

division has been assisting the State Auditor and Inspector's office with the Commission's 18 month audit. An auditor will attend the June Commission meeting to report its findings.

Mr. Coffman reported that director and district liability insurance is being updated with a new policy beginning on July 1.

Mike Sharp, Information Technology Director, reported that he and Shellie Willoughby attended the 2006 Mid-America GIS Symposium in Kansas City, Missouri.

Mr. Sharp reported on Tar Creek activities stating that work on the West Commerce project has ramped up considerably and that the Southeast Commerce project is 75% completed. Mr. Sharp stated that on April 18 a sonar unit was lowered into a flooded underground mine on the Howerton project.

Mr. Sharp reported that the Commission's new internet domain name will be changed from "okcc.state.ok.us" to "conservation.ok.gov".

Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director, provided copies of the Program Year 7 report for the Locally led Cost-share Program and he commended Tammy Sawatzky for her work in preparing the report.

Mr. Toole reported that the Wilson-Grey Watershed project has been completed. The Commission allocated \$40,000 for this work at the request of the Bryan Conservation District. Mr. Toole recognized watershed technicians Johnny Pelley, Dennis Boney, and George Moore for their work with this project.

Mr. Toole then recognized Karla Beatty, Education Coordinator, for being named the "Wonders of Wetlands" Facilitator of the Year by Environmental Concern, Inc.

Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, attended the Woodward County Conservation District's annual bankers award program and commended Mr. Winters for his district's work with local banks.

The Commission set up a booth at the recent Southern Plains Farm Show. Soil and Water Stewardship Week is this week and Governor Brad Henry recorded a Public Service Announcement regarding this event. The announcement can be accessed from the Commission's home page. Governor Henry also recorded a PSA for conservation in general and that will be available beginning next week. Mr. Pollard commended Mark Harrison and Clay Pope for their work with the PSAs.

Mr. Pollard stated that the management team participated in training titled "Multi-Generational Workforce." The average age of Commission staff is 46 with the average age of the management team being 53.

Mr. Pollard provided copies of the National Land and Range Judging Contest Program and a list of staff activities in conjunction with National Public Service Week.

Written reports from each division are attached.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Clay Pope, Executive Director, reported on the following upcoming events: National Land and Range Judging Contest, May 2-4; OACD Executive Board Meeting, May 3 at 1:30 p.m., Biltmore Hotel; Directors Day at the Capitol, May 16; District Employees Day at the Capitol, May 11. He also stated that an Open House for ag organizations is scheduled for May 10 at 5:30 p.m. in Oklahoma City and invited all to attend.

Mr. Pope stated that Educator of Year awards from each congressional area will be presented this month and he thanked Ben Pollard and Karla Beatty for their assistance with these awards. He also reported on Public Service Announcements recorded by Governor Brad Henry for Stewardship Week and conservation in general.

On the legislative front, Mr. Pope stated that a special session is likely for the month of June to discuss budget issues. Other issues of importance are controlled burning, bond contingency for cities and towns for conservation work and insurance for district directors.

The Association continues to work with partners such as the Nature Conservancy on Tallgrass Prairie issues, the Farm Bureau, High Plains RC&D and the Nature Conservancy on red cedar control. He also met with the Farmers Union and Secretaries of Agriculture and Energy to discuss biodiesel.

USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Darrel Dominick, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist, reported working on budget issues and how to cut costs over the next year including the possibility of office closures. He is meeting with the Commission and the Association to discuss delivery of conservation programs with fewer offices and employees.

Mr. Dominick stated that Upper Red Rock Site 52 watershed received 6.5" of rain and it overtopped.

Mr. Dominick stated that NRCS Chief Bruce Knight will be in Oklahoma this Thursday and Friday; however, Mr. Dominick will not attend Thursday activities due to a mediation process in northeast Oklahoma. The Oklahoma office has been through a five year review of civil rights complaints. The investigation is complete with no findings of discrimination.

A summary of activities for the NRCS is attached.

USDA-FARM SERVICE AGENCY

No representative present.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on June 5, 2006, in the Agriculture Building Board Room, 2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma beginning at 9:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business a motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms.

Kidd to adjourn. Those voting aye were: Jeans, Stunkard, Kidd, and Winters. Nay votes: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

APPROVAL

Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on June 5, 2006.

CHAIR