

## MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met Thursday, September 4, 2008, at the Deer Creek Conservation District Office, 300 South Broadway in Weatherford, Oklahoma. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chairman Dan Lowrance. 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 at 9:10 a.m. on September 3, 2008, at the front entrance of the Agriculture Building.

### ROLL CALL

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

Dan Lowrance, Chair  
Virginia Kidd, Vice Chair  
Matt Gard, Secretary  
Mike Rooker, Member  
George Stunkard, Member

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  
Shanon Phillips, Water Quality Program Assistant Director  
Jason Ramming, Water Quality Specialist  
Ed Crall, Caddo County Special Project Supervisor  
Monty Ramming, Ft. Cobb Project Coordinator  
George Moore, Watershed Technician  
The Honorable James Covey, State Representative  
Jeanette Nance, Office of the Governor  
Regina Switzer, Assistant Attorney General  
Lanny Miller, Natural Resources Conservation Service Assistant State Conservationist  
Joey Freeland, Natural Resources Conservation Service Project Engineer, Pauls Valley Field Office  
Clemon Bradford, Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Conservationist, Custer County Field Office  
Steve Kelley, Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist, Custer County

Field Office

Christine Harper, Deer Creek Conservation District Manager  
Kristy Hill, Deer Creek Conservation District Education Coordinator  
Bertha Miller, Deer Creek Conservation District Director  
Alveta Taylor, Deer Creek Conservation District Director  
John Flaming, Deer Creek Conservation District Director  
Carol Gaunt, Deer Creek Conservation District Director  
Sue Harper-Brown, Deer Creek Conservation District Associate Director  
John Cox, Chesapeake Energy  
Clay Pope, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director  
Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary

**INTRODUCTION OF THE DEER CREEK CONSERVATION DISTRICT DIRECTORS AND EMPLOYEES**

Carol Gaunt, Director, introduced the following district staff and board: Christine Harper, Manager, Kristy Hill, Education Coordinator; Bertha Miller, Director; Alveta Taylor, Director; John Flaming, Director; and Sue Harper-Brown, Associate Director.

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

A motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2008, Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

Mike Thralls, Executive Director, presented recommendations for appointment of conservation district directors as listed in Exhibit #1. A motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to approve district director appointments listed as First Recommendation in Exhibit #1 with terms to expire as indicated. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. 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 Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the claims and financial statement. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

**PRESENTATION OF COMMISSION AGREEMENTS**

Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, presented agreements for approval as listed in Exhibit #3. He stated that agreements (a) through (g) were amended agreements and he recommended approval. A motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to approve the amended agreements as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Mr. Pollard recommended approval of new agreements listed as (h) through (j). A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the new agreements as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion

carried.

#### **PRESENTATION OF OUT OF STATE TRAVEL REQUESTS**

Mr. Thralls presented out of state travel requests as listed in Exhibit #4. He stated that requests listed as (a) through (c) had gone through the approval process with the Chairman. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to ratify the requests as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Mr. Thralls recommended approval of new requests listed as (d) through (j). A motion was made by Mr. Rooker and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to approve the new requests as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

#### **FY09 JOINT PLANS OF OPERATION**

Lisa Knauf, District Services Director, recommended approval of FY09 Joint Plans of Operation for Okmulgee County, Noble County and Cimarron County Conservation Districts. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the plans. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

#### **CO-SPONSOR THE OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS' 2008 AREA MEETINGS**

A motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to co-sponsor the meetings as follow: Area 1 - October 30 - Cherokee; Area 2 - November 12 - Stillwater; Area 3 - November 13 - Wagoner; Area 4 - November 5 - Weatherford; Area 5 - November 18 - McAlester. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

#### **CO-HOST THE 2009 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AML PROGRAMS ANNUAL MEETING**

A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to co-host the 2009 National Association of AML Programs annual meeting, September 26-30, 2009 in Rogers, Arkansas. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

#### **DISCUSSION OF THE COMMISSION'S FY 2010 BUDGET SUBMISSION**

Mr. Thralls presented the staff's recommendation for the FY2010 budget request as listed in Attachment A. He will ask the Commission to take action on the final request during the October meeting. The budget request consists of renewing the Conservation Infrastructure Revolving Fund for an additional five years, new employees and additional work hours as requested by conservation districts, and increasing district operation funding as well as cost of living increases for employees.

#### **PRESENTATION TO THE DEER CREEK CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Clay Pope, Oklahoma Association of Conservation District's Executive Director, and John Cox, Chesapeake Energy, presented a sign to the Deer Creek Conservation District for being named the Outstanding Conservation District.

Mr. Lowrance then recognized Representative James Covey and expressed appreciation for his support of conservation issues during his tenure in the House of Representatives. A

Commendation was presented to Representative Covey.

Mr. Thralls then made a presentation to Bertha Miller.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Ms. Kidd reported on attending a meeting at Lake Wister with PVIA, the Corps of Engineers and Commission staff to discuss water quality issues at the lake

Mr. Stunkard reported that the legislative event co-sponsored by the Wagoner County and Tulsa County Conservation Districts was successful with seven legislators in attendance. He expressed appreciation to Commission staff for their work with the meeting.

Mr. Rooker attended the Cross Timbers RC&D meeting and the National Association of Conservation Districts South Central Meeting. He reported that Pottawatomie County voters approved a \$.01 sales tax with 3/4 of that one cent going to the Shawnee Conservation District and 1/4 going to the Konawa Conservation District.

Mr. Gard attended the carbon sequestration meeting at Geary and reported on a good turnout. He attended a top producers meeting where NRCS spoke on the health of soils and no-till scenarios.

Mr. Lowrance also attended the carbon sequestration meeting in Geary and expressed appreciation to Debi Carnott, Central North Canadian River Conservation District manager, on her work with the event as well as Clay Pope and Sarah Love with OACD.

## **OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF**

*Administration:* Mike Thralls, Executive Director, reported on attending three interim studies dealing with water issues including water quality monitoring and development below flood control dams.

He reported that Dan Butler was recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for his lifetime achievements in water quality. This is only the second time this award has been given.

Mr. Thralls commended Mr. Stunkard and the Wagoner County and Tulsa County Conservation Districts for hosting the recent legislative event.

Mr. Thralls reported on rehabilitation activities stating there are a large number of high hazard dams and each site costs over \$1 million dollars.

Mr. Thralls attended the South Central Regional Meeting and stated that Rick Jeans was

elected as chair of the board.

The quarterly staff meeting will be held on September 24 in the Noble County area and he invited all members to attend.

*District Services Division:* Lisa Knauf, Director, attended the OACD board retreat and had good discussions concerning the budget request. Conservation districts have been operating on a \$3000 to \$4000 operating budget and staff is recommending that this be raised this year. She described the new 10-minute guide which deals with the economics of conservation and how districts can determine the economic impact in their district.

At the request of a district board, she spent 2 days in the district office doing a full office review of operations, filing, minutes, and finances and will provide a report to the district.

*Water Quality Program:* Dan Butler, Director, stated that the joint carbon program with the OACD is running at full speed. Staff receives calls daily for information on verification and aggregation.

Mr. Butler recognized Ed Crall for his work with the Caddo County FEMA project and expressed appreciation.

*Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program:* Mike Kastl, Director, reported on projects as listed in the written report. He thanked the Commission for co-sponsoring the National AML conference. Mr. Kastl reported that the Inspector's Workshop is scheduled the first week in October.

*Financial Management and Human Resources Division:* Steve Coffman, Director, stated most of his time has been spent working on the budget request. He reported that Phase 2 of the CORE system, the state's accounting system, will be rolled out this month. Mr. Coffman reported that Sheryl Gibson, Grants Accountant, completed the State Certified Public Managers Program and a graduation ceremony is scheduled for this afternoon at the State Capitol.

*Information Technology Division:* Mike Sharp, Director, reported that the Commission now has wireless internet available within its offices at the Agriculture Building, including the boardroom. He reported on the new digital ortho maps available for download. Mr. Sharp stated that the Commission may have a partner for "leaf off" photography in the near future.

*Conservation Programs Division:* Robert Toole, Director, stated that staff processed a large number of cost-share claims this month and was pleased to put conservation on the ground and tax dollars back in the local community.

Mr. Toole reported that the Wildlife Expo will be held in September and he encouraged members to attend this event. He stated that staff has begun planning for a Project Webfoot/WET workshop which is a joint project with Project WET and Ducks Unlimited.

Mr. Toole stated that staff participated in two incident command table top exercises in Payne and Noble Counties. He gave a presentation at an interim study on development below watershed

structures. Regarding rehabilitation activities, Mr. Toole reported that 13 water rehabilitation projects have been completed in seven years. 41 high hazard dams have been added to the state inventory bringing the total to 229 high hazard dams.

*Administration:* Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, recognized Sue Harper-Brown, Associate Board Member, for the education she provided to him about the importance of districts to the conservation partnership and the need for grass roots leadership. He reported that Board member Carol Gaunt was a member of the first Conservation Leadership Class and served as President of the OACD.

Mr. Pollard expressed his appreciation to Ed Crall for taking on the Caddo County FEMA project. He stated this is the most complicated project he has been associated with in three decades.

### **OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

Clay Pope, Executive Director, congratulated the Deer Creek Conservation District for being named the outstanding conservation district. He reported on the OACD board retreat where members discussed the strategic plan, fund raising, budget request, and the legislative agenda for next year. Mr. Pope reported on attending the South Central Regional Meeting where Rick Jeans was named Chair. He and Sarah Love gave a presentation on the carbon sequestration program. He is working with Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana to better coordinate efforts.

He then reported on the following

- the need for an equipment revolving fund
- Ribbon cutting ceremony at Geary for the carbon program. The event received lots of media coverage and the REC's are excited about future possibilities.
- A meeting is being planned in Taloga for producers to discuss carbon.
- Met with OG&E regarding carbon credits.
- Several interim studies dealing with water issues and development on watershed structures.
- Western Farmers has agreed to sponsor the youth awards and Chesapeake will be acting on OACD's proposed sponsorships this week.
- the OACD newsletter will be coming out soon.
- Area meetings are being planned.

### **USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**

Lanny Miller, Assistant State Conservationist, provided a written report of activities. He introduced the following NRCS employees: Joey Freeland, Project Engineer, Pauls Valley Field Office; Cleon Bradford, Soil Conservationist, Custer County Field Office; Steve Kelley, District Conservationist, Custer County Field Office.

Mr. Miller expressed appreciation to the Deer Creek Conservation District for its work and on being named outstanding conservation district.

### **USDA-FARM SERVICE AGENCY**

No representative present.

**NEXT MEETING**

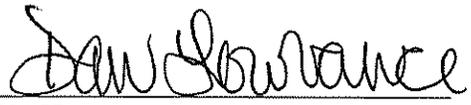
The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on Monday, October 6, 2008, in the Agriculture Building Board Room, 2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma beginning at 9:30 a.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business a motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to adjourn. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

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Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on October 6, 2008.

  
CHAIR

**FY-2010 BUDGET REQUEST OF THE  
OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION DISTRICTS AND THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

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1	Reauthorization of the Transfer of Gross Production Tax		
2	Operations Shortfall		\$1,946,518
	<i>Commission Operations</i>	<i>\$1,088,872</i>	
	<i>Conservation District Operations</i>	<i>\$616,000</i>	
	<i>Employee Benefit Allowance</i>	<i>\$130,846</i>	
	<i>District Services Operations</i>	<i>\$110,800</i>	
3	Employee Compensation		\$2,300,339
	<i>New Employees / Additional Hours - Conservation Districts</i>	<i>\$1,343,402</i>	
	<i>New Employees - Commission</i>	<i>\$234,586</i>	
	<i>10% COLA - District Employees</i>	<i>\$574,490</i>	
	<i>10% COLA - State Employees</i>	<i>\$147,861</i>	
4	Geographic Information Services		<u>\$874,000</u>
		TOTAL:	\$5,120,857
	<b>FY-2009 Base General Revenue Fund Appropriation:</b>		<b>\$9,187,084</b>
	FY-2009 Water REAP Fund Appropriation:		\$2,627,701
	Conservation Bond Program:		\$25,000,000
	Conservation Bond Program Repayment:		<u>\$1,105,878</u>
		TOTAL:	\$37,920,663

\* *The Conservation Commission is scheduled to move to the third floor of the Agriculture Building once the Agriculture Lab Annex is completed. The move and the remodel will require an unknown amount of funding. Secretary of Agriculture Terry Peach and the Department of Central Services are working out the arrangements for the move.*