

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met Monday, October 1, 2012, at the Agriculture Building Board Room located at 2800 N. Lincoln in Oklahoma City, 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 September 26, 2012, at the front entrance of the building.

ROLL CALL

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

Dan Lowrance, Chair
Jim Grego, Vice Chair
Karl Jett, Secretary
Mike Rooker, Area 2 Member
George Stunkard, Area 3 Member

Others in attendance were:

Mike Thralls, Executive Director
Ben Pollard, Assistant Director
Sheryl Gibson, Financial Management and Human Resources Assistant Director
Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director
Shanon Phillips, Water Quality Program Director
Mike Kastl, Abandoned Mine Land Program Director
Mike Sharp, Office of Geographic Information and Technical Services Director
Lisa Knauf Owen, District Services Director
Mark Harrison, Information Representative
Shellie Willoughby, Awards and Recognition Committee Chair
Ron Hilliard, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist
Blayne Arthur, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Associate
Commissioner
Christie Southern, eCapitol Reporter
Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Jett to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2012, Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

DISTRICT DIRECTOR RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Mike Thralls, Executive Director, stated that no recommendations for appointment were received this month.

CLAIMS/FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Sheryl Gibson, Financial Management and Human Resources Assistant Director, presented the claims and financial statement as listed in Exhibit #2. Mr. Jett questioned a \$25,000 claim to the Texas County Conservation District and was informed this was a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for a no-till drill. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the claims and financial statement. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

RECOGNITION OF EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, was recognized for being named Employee of the Quarter during the recent full staff meeting.

PRESENTATION OF AGREEMENTS

Mr. Pollard presented agreements for approval as listed in Exhibit #3. He recommended ratification of these agreements as they were previously approved by Chairman Lowrance through the ratification process. Mr. Pollard stated that the final amount for agreement (f) is \$260,000. A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to ratify the agreements as presented. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

OUT OF STATE TRAVEL REQUESTS

Mr. Thralls presented travel requests for approval as listed in Exhibit #4. A motion was made by Mr. Jett and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the requests as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

FY2014 BUDGET REQUEST

Mr. Thralls presented the Commission's FY2014 budget request for new money priorities as listed in Exhibit #5. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the request for new money as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

DECLARATION OF AML EMERGENCY 201 W. BIRCH - WILBURTON PROJECT

Mike Kastl, AML Program Director, stated that an emergency was declared on a project in Wilburton, Oklahoma as listed in Exhibit #6. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Jett to ratify approval of the emergency as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

COST-SHARE PROGRAM - PROGRAM YEAR 14 SPECIAL REQUESTS

Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director, recommended approval of the following special requests for Cost-share Program - Program Year 14:

- All conservation districts to add Clip & Cut 10-30% and Clip & Cut >30% as components to the Brush Management practice.
- Woods County Conservation District to add Submergible Pumps as a component of Pumping Plant (533).

A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the requests as presented. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

ATTENDANCE AT THE FOLLOWING CONFERENCES

Members discussed attendance at the following conferences. Mr. Stunkard would like to attend the Nonpoint Source Conference. Messrs. Stunkard, Lowrance and Rooker asked to be registered for the Governor's Water Conference.

- 20th National Nonpoint Source Monitoring Workshop, October 14-17, 2012 at the Doubletree Hilton at Warren Place, Tulsa, Oklahoma.
- 3rd Annual Oklahoma Governor's Water Conference, November 13-14, 2012 at the Tulsa Marriott Southern Hills, Tulsa, Oklahoma

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Thralls presented the following amended agreement for approval as it was brought to his attention on September 29, 2012:

Oklahoma State University to further the development of a wetlands monitoring and assessment program in Oklahoma; to lead organization of the Oklahoma Wetlands Working Group; coordinate other state and federal agencies; Amendment 1 to extend the contract to September 30, 2012.

A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to approve the agreement. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. Rooker attended the Wildlife Expo held at the Lazy E Arena in Guthrie.

Mr. Grego reported on the Latimer County Conservation District new office open house.

Mr. Stunkard attended the Illinois River stabilization tour and commended the Water Quality Program staff.

Mr. Lowrance reported on attending the Commission's full staff meeting at Crowder Lake and seeing a demonstration of equipment used for watershed maintenance.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF

Administration - Executive Director: Mr. Thralls stated that NRCS State Soil Scientist Greg Scott demonstrated the rainfall simulator at the Agriculture Building recently for Agriculture and Commission employees. The demonstration will be at all OACD area meetings. Mr. Scott also demonstrated the digital soil survey.

Mr. Thralls reported on a successful full staff meeting held at Crowder Lake and congratulated Mr. Pollard on being named Employee of the Quarter. He stated that the State Charitable Campaign kick-off was held with speakers and a pie auction that raised over \$600 and thanked Ms. Tweed for heading the campaign. He thanked the Conservation Programs Division for their work with the staff meeting and the equipment demonstration. The equipment, 10 fully equipped loaders, was purchased for \$1.4 million. Three are assigned to the watershed technicians, six with watershed aides and one at-large.

Mr. Thralls attended the Pittsburg County Conservation District open house for their new building.

District Services Division: Lisa Knauf Owen, Director, reported on providing training for a new employee in Sequoyah County and working with Muskogee County to fill a vacancy. She and Mr. Thralls met with the State Forester George Geissler to discuss the FireWise Program and conservation districts assisting in promoting that program.

Ms. Owen stated that all districts have submitted audit materials for FY2012 reviews and/or audits.

Water Quality Program: Shanon Phillips, Director, stated that the Illinois River streambank stabilization project tour held in September was very successful and concludes three of the ARRA projects being administered by the water quality program. She stated that less than ten percent of the work is left to be completed on the last project and will be funded with 319 funds.

Ms. Phillips stated that staff is busy preparing for the annual National Nonpoint Source conference scheduled this month. This group pioneered the paired-watershed method used successfully by water quality to show improvement in priority watershed implementation.

Ms. Phillips stated that the end of year review with the Environmental Protection Agency went well. The EPA will be sending out new guidance designed to improve efficiencies of 319 funds which will include revising the nonpoint source management plan. Revisions to that plan will involve the Nonpoint Source Work Group and will require the Governor's approval.

Ms. Phillips reported that the program expects a ten percent cut to the nonpoint source program as a result of sequestration that goes into effect in January and staff has prepared FY2013 and FY2014 plans with the cuts written included.

Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program: Mr. Kastl, Director, stated there is one active site named Bacon AML project in Rogers County. He reported they are ready to set a pre-bid date for the Northeastern Oklahoma State University project in Wagoner County.

Mr. Kastl stated that Dianne Ireton, AML Administrative Officer, received the Stan Barnard Award during the recent National AML Conference. It is unprecedented that 4 staff members from one state have received the award.

Financial Management and Human Resources Division: Ms. Gibson stated that a written report was included in the packet and she yielded for questions

Office of Geographic Information and Technical Services: Mike Sharp, Director, reported on attending the National AML Conference along with 160 attendees. One of the conference highlights was hearing Iowa's Secretary of Agriculture speak and describe how Iowa is not as impacted by the drought as some states. Mr. Sharp noted Iowa has 14 million acres in corn and 9 million acres in soybeans. The group toured an ethanol plant and a limestone mine. He also reported on Ms. Ireton receiving a national award. Mr. Sharp stated that during the business meeting the discussion centered on funding. He stated that should sequestration go in effect the program would see a six to nine percent cut.

Conservation Programs Division: Robert Toole, Director, reported on the success of the recent Wildlife Expo held at the Lazy E Arena and commended Karla Beatty, Education Coordinator, and Robert Gibbs, Rogers County Conservation District Education Coordinator, for putting together the best exhibit at the expo. The expo will not be held next year due to the Department of Wildlife Conservation hosting a regional meeting.

Mr. Toole stated that the final inspection for Sugar Creek Watershed Site L-44 will be held on October 2. He also reported that with recent rains operation and maintenance activities will pick up.

Administration - Assistant Director: Mr. Pollard reported that the Commission's carbon program was recently awarded the Henry Bellmon Sustainability Award by Sustainable Tulsa and that Mr. Thralls was interviewed by Tulsa's Channel 8 about this award and the program.

Mr. Pollard stated that the Commission's webpage is being updated and solicited input from the Commission members.

Mr. Pollard reported that staff continues to work with OETA, OACD, and NRCS on the Dust Bowl film outreach events. The next events will be held in Altus on October 4, in Guymon on November 1, in Stillwater on November 5 with Congressman Frank Lucas and NRCS Chief Dave White in attendance, and in Tulsa on November 12.

Mr. Pollard reported on the privilege of representing the Commission at the funeral of former Area 5 member, E.F. Doc Coker saying the service property honored Mr. Coker's service.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

No representative present.

USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Ron Hilliard, State Conservationist, stated that October 1 is the beginning of the federal FY2013 and they are under a continuing resolution until March 31. Mr. Hilliard stated that NRCS has moved into new field offices in Pauls Valley, McAlester, and Wilburton.

Mr. Hilliard reported that he has been receiving congressional calls regarding the watershed program and staff.

Mr. Hilliard stated that because of the success of the rainfall simulator they will be purchasing a second one for the Woodward area. The simulator will be demonstrated in Altus and Hugo this week.

Mr. Hilliard provided an extensive written report about the NRCS programs.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY

Blayne Arthur, Associate Commissioner, thanked the Commission for bringing the rainfall simulator to Oklahoma City and for providing the soil survey demonstration. The APHIS division will be integrating that information into their work.

Ms. Arthur reported on the progress on delegation from EPA for the department stating that all information has been submitted and was published in the federal register on September 24 for public comments.

The Board of Agriculture held its meeting in southwestern Oklahoma and was enlightened by the stories from farmers and ranchers and the impact the drought has had on their operations.

Ms. Arthur stated that Uganda Parliament members visited Oklahoma recently to look at agriculture. She also stated that the Tulsa State Fair began and that the Made In Oklahoma booth is set up.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday, November 5, 2012 beginning at 2:00 p.m. at the Oklahoma State University Agronomy Farm, Small Grains Building Conference Room, 2902 W. 6th Street, Stillwater, Oklahoma. This will be in conjunction with the Dust Bowl event being held in Stillwater that evening.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business a motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Jett to adjourn. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.

Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on November 5, 2012.


CHAIR