

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met December 5, 2011, 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 George Stunkard. 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 December 2, 2011, at the front entrance of the building.

ROLL CALL

Lisa Knauf, District Services Directors, took roll call and the following members were in attendance:

George Stunkard, Chair
Dan Lowrance, Vice Chair
Jim Grego, Secretary
Karl Jett, Member
Mike Rooker, 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
Shanon Phillips, Water Quality Program Director
Mike Kastl, Abandoned Mine Land Program Director
Mike Sharp, Information Technology Director
Lisa Knauf Owen, District Services Director
Mark Harrison, Information Representative
Janet Stewart, General Counsel
Johnny Pelley, Watershed Technician
Dennis Boney, Watershed Technician
George Moore, Watershed Technician
Kevin Varner, District Services Liaison
Chad Miller, District Services Technician
Matthew Irby, District Services Technician
Cameron Standing, District Services Technician
Gina Levesque, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Coordinator
Charlotte Stieber, Abandoned Mine Land Program Administrative Officer
Dianne Ireton, Abandoned Mine Land Program Systems Coordinator
Jamey Wood, Natural Resources Conservation Service Assistant State Conservationist
Clay Pope, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director
Steve House, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Area 1 Director
Jason Harvey, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
Rod Wanger, Farm Service Agency
Steve Thompson, American Farmers and Ranchers

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Grego to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2011, 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, presented the recommendation for appointment of conservation district director as listed in Exhibit #1. A motion was made by Mr. Rooker and seconded by Mr. Jett to approve the district director appointment as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. 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. A motion was made by Mr. Jett and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve the claims and financial statement. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

RECOGNITION OF EMPLOYEES

Gina Levesque, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Coordinator, was recognized for five years of service and Dianne Ireton, AML Program Systems Coordinator, was recognized for 25 years of service.

PRESENTATION OF AGREEMENTS

Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, presented agreements for approval as listed in Exhibit #3. He recommended ratification of the new agreement listed as (a) as it was previously approved by Mr. Stunkard. A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Rooker to ratify the new agreement as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Mr. Pollard recommended approval of the new agreement listed as (b). A motion was made by Mr. Rooker and seconded by Mr. Grego to approve the new agreement as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

COST-SHARE REQUEST

Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Division Director, presented a request from the Woodward County Conservation District to add Practice #533, Pumping Plant: Solar Pumps as an approved practice for Cost-share Program Year 13 and he recommended approval. A motion was made by Mr. Jett and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve the request. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

NORTH CANADIAN RIVER 319 PROJECT ADDITION

Shanon Phillips, Water Quality Program Director, is recommending the approval of cattle shade structure/rainwater harvesting device for addition to the North Canadian River 319 Project for

demonstration on two sites, one in Woodward County and one in Dewey County. A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve the request. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Rod Wanger, Farm Service Agency, gave a report on the FSA programs. He stated that \$27 million was allocated for the Conservation Reserve Program and \$90 million for the counter cyclical program. He gave an update on all programs and then discussed drought assistance, livestock feed program, and the livestock assistance program. Mr. Wanger stated that the FSA also received an allocation for emergency haying and grazing on CRP acres.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. Rooker reported on participating in a Christmas parade.

Mr. Grego attended the Farm Bureau convention as well as the OACD Area 5 meeting.

Mr. Jett attended the OACD Area 1 meeting and a drought grazing management seminar in Beaver County with the OSU extension.

Mr. Stunkard attended the OACD Area 3 meeting in Muskogee.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF

Administration - Executive Director: Mr. Thralls stated that the OACD area meetings went well. He stated that the Commission has submitted draft language for consolidation with the Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission to both the House and Senate.

Mr. Thralls reported on IT consolidation stating that staff will be meeting with Alex Pettit, Chief Information Officer in the near future. Mr. Thralls stated that a space request is being submitted proposing the agency including the water quality staff move to the third floor of the agriculture building. Mr. Thralls made a presentation to the Water Plan Joint Committee.

District Services Division: Lisa Knauf Owen, Director, reported that 67% of conservation district audits have been submitted to the Commission. She then introduced the new employees in the Division; three of the four conservation technicians were in attendance - Cameron Standing, Matt Irby and Chad Miller.

Water Quality Program: Shanon Phillips, Director, reported that at the Environmental Protection Agency's request the FY12 319 workplans have been resubmitted to reflect the proposed 24% cut over what was taken in FY10 and FY11 (approximately \$600,000). With proposed retirements and cuts in staffing that have already been made, the program was sustained without additional loss of staff or significant cuts to the monitoring program. However, without special funds taken back from other states, cuts to the base program leave no funding remaining for further priority watershed projects and numerous portions of the program, such as Blue Thumb, are

understaffed and remaining staff are feeling the strain. EPA does anticipate that there will be future special funds projects, at least in FY 12, which they will likely make available for the North Canadian Project.

Ms. Phillips also reported that interviews were scheduled for Wednesday, December 7 to select a firm for the Illinois River Streambank Stabilization ARRA project.

Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program: Mike Kastl, Director, thanked the NRCS for engineering assistance through the approved agreement. He stated there are two AML projects presently under construction with another project starting in Rogers County in December 2011. The Office of Surface Mining has issued Authorization To Proceed on three additional AML sites (Latimer, Sequoyah, and Rogers County).

Financial Management and Human Resources Division: Mr. Coffman reported that staff has begun an audit with Department of Central Services on our state purchase card program. He also stated that the Commission is working closely with the Oklahoma Capitol Improvement Authority during this transition of employees within their agency due to retirements.

Information Technology Division: Mike Sharp, Director, stated that a written report was included in the meeting packet and he yielded to questions.

Conservation Programs Division: Robert Toole, Director, referenced the division written report and yielded to questions. He read a proclamation that had just been received from the City of El Reno commending the East Canadian Conservation District, the Commission and the NRCS for the repair of Lake El Reno, a watershed structure used for municipal water supply

Administration - Assistant Director: Mr. Pollard reported that office space issues continue with the USDA. He provided a consolidation update for boundary realignment for Kiowa County and Washita County Conservation Districts. Mr. Pollard reported that the first FEMA repair contract for Sugar Creek has been completed. The next contract will be let after the first of the year.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Clay Pope, Executive Director, thanked Commission staff for their assistance with the recent Area Meetings. He has been talking with the legislature about issues coming up this spring. Mr. Pope has worked with Congressman Lucas' office on the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill.

Mr. Pope has been working on the leadership program and a micro-grant program for districts. He reported on meeting with the American Farmers and Ranchers to discuss farm and ranch issues. He stated that the Farm Bureau, during the recent state meeting, passed resolutions dealing with conservation policy.

Mr. Pope reported that 50,000 acres are in carbon credits.

USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Jamey Wood, Assistant State Conservationist, stated that funding has passed Congress for NRCS and the budget is forthcoming. He provided a written report which he highlighted.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY

No report was given.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on Monday, January 9, 2012, 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. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Rooker to adjourn. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on January 9, 2012.



CHAIR