

## MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met May 4, 2009, at the Lincoln Plaza Office Building, 4545 North Lincoln, Room 269, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The meeting was called to order at 9:35 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 April 30, 2009, 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  
Virginia Kidd, Vice Chair  
Matt Gard, Secretary  
Mike Rooker, Member  
George Stunkard, Member

Others in attendance were:

Mike Thralls, Executive Director  
Steve Coffman, Financial Management and Human Resources Director  
Tammy Sawatzky, Conservation Programs Deputy Director  
Shanon Phillips, 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  
Janet Stewart, General Counsel  
Brooks Trammell, Water Quality Programs Monitoring Coordinator  
Greg Kloxin, Water Quality Programs Senior Technical Writer  
Regina Switzer, Assistant Attorney General  
Larry Caldwell, Natural Resources Conservation Service Water Resource Specialist  
Clay Pope, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director  
Bryan Smith, eCapitol.net  
Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary

### MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2009, 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. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker 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 Mr. Gard 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.

## **EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION**

Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary, was recognized for 30 years of service to the state.

## **AGREEMENTS**

Mr. Thralls presented amended agreements for approval as listed in Exhibit #3. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the agreements as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **OUT OF STATE TRAVEL REQUESTS**

Mr. Thralls presented travel requests for approval as listed in Exhibit #4. He recommended ratification of item (a) and approval of (b) through (e). A motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to ratify approval of request (a). Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve requests (b) through (e) as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **NACD LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE**

The National Association of Conservation Districts Legislative Conference will be held on July 19-21, 2009 in Washington, D.C. Members did not express an interest to attend due to the cost. A motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to approve one staff member to attend. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **DISTRICT DIRECTOR ELECTIONS, POSITION #2**

To meet requirements for Conservation District Director Elections for Position #2, a motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Gard to authorize the Executive Director to certify eligibility of candidates filing a Notification and Declaration of Candidacy for District Director, Position #2 during the filing period from May 1-14, 2009 and to approve polling places in conservation districts that will be holding elections for District Director, Position #2 on June 2, 2009. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **COST-SHARE REQUEST BY JACKSON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Tammy Sawatzky, Conservation Programs Division, requested to add as a component of Brush Management, Chemical Brush Control-all other chemicals at a cost share rate of \$35/acre for Jackson County Conservation District for Program Year 10. A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the request as stated. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Mr. Stunkard appreciated Mr. Thralls attending the 54<sup>th</sup> Wagoner County Soil Stewardship Breakfast. It was well attended by over 140 people.

Mr. Rooker attended the Lt. Governor's Turkey Hunt in Okemah and an RC&D meeting at the State Capitol.

Mr. Gard participated in 4H Day at the Capitol, an Eggs and Issues meeting with Rep. Sanders, and the Oklahoma Farm Show.

Mr. Lowrance stated the National Watershed Coalition meeting will be held on May 17-20 in Wichita, Kansas and encouraged members to attend.

## **OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF**

*Administration:* Mr. Thralls stated that the following teacher events have been scheduled for outstanding educators: May 7 - East Woods County - Mr. Gard will attend; May 21 - Hughes County - Ms. Kidd will attend; May 26 - Cleveland County - Mr. Rooker will attend. The Oklahoma County event is being finalized and Mr. Rooker will attend if his schedule allows.

The National Land and Range Judging Contest begins on May 5 with the contest, luncheon and banquet scheduled for May 7.

Mr. Thralls stated that the Commission is looking at an 8.75 percent budget cut for FY2010 amounting to \$800,000. He reported that HB 1489 would increase the allowance from 20% to 50% the Commission could use for administration. He also reported that SB 238, the Commission's bond issue, was signed by the Governor and the sale of bonds should begin in June or July.

*District Services Division:* Lisa Knauf, Director, said she will be meeting with the NRCS to discuss a new contributions agreement. She will also be meeting with Assistants for Field Operations for their quarterly meeting. Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, is attending the Washita County Conservation District board meeting today to discuss the possibility of consolidation with Mountain View and Kiowa County Conservation Districts.

Ms. Knauf stated that after two years the wrongful termination suit against the Tulsa County Conservation District has been settled for an undisclosed amount.

*Water Quality Program:* Shanon Phillips, Director, welcomed the group to the Lincoln Plaza Office Complex. She provided copies of a press release regarding Blue Thumb volunteers monitoring over 100 streams across the state. She thanked Mark Harrison, Information Officer, for his assistance with the release.

Ms. Phillips reported that staff held a tour of the program's demonstration farm in the Honey Creek Watershed for the Grand Lake Watershed Alliance. Members of the Alliance were impressed with the work of the conservation districts.

Ms. Phillips provided a copy of an article written by Representative Cox regarding the work of the Commission in water quality areas.

Ms. Phillips reported on the Stamper project stating that Mr. Stamper has applied for two grants. One is a \$450,000 Conservation Innovation Grant through the NRCS and the second is for \$1.5 million with the Department of Energy for stimulus funds. To meet the requirements of this grant, the proposal included Phase II which is the energy component to generate electricity.

*Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program:* Mike Kastl, Director, stated that weather has slowed progress on the 61<sup>st</sup> Street North SW project in Wagoner County and the LCUM 5 project in LeFlore County. Mr. Kastl reported on an emergency on Highway 270 in Pittsburg County stating that details were listed in the written report.

*Financial Management and Human Resources Division:* Steve Coffman, Director, has been working with the Office of State Finance and CORE in getting the FY2010 budget module built. He is also working with the Oklahoma Capitol Improvement Authority in setting up departments and budgets for the bond issue. Mr. Coffman reported that Sheryl Gibson welcomed a new baby girl on April 13.

*Information Technology Division:* Mike Sharp, Director, reported that IT staff has finalized relocation to the Lincoln Plaza complex. The servers are scheduled to be moved on Wednesday, weather permitting. Mr. Sharp reported on meeting with a Tulsa landowner to investigate a possible subsidence related to underground coal mining. Staff is reviewing mine maps and other data.

*Conservation Programs Division:* Tammy Sawatzky, Deputy Director, reported on watershed rehabilitation work as follows: construction is progressing on Sallisaw Watershed Sites 15, 16, and 20; the Double 3 site should be finalized in July and is the final site in this watershed to be rehabilitated; and the Little Washita 13 is being decommissioned however weather has slowed the project.

## **OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

Clay Pope, Executive Director, invited members to attend the National Land and Range Judging Contest this week. He stated that the Executive Board will be meeting on May 7 at 1:30 p.m. at the Biltmore Hotel.

Mr. Pope reported on the bond issue bill stating it was signed by the Governor; HB 1489 which passed the Senate and will now go to Conference Committee; and HB 1884, a study for high hazard dams in cooperation with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, was signed by the Governor.

Mr. Pope stated that the OSU economic development study prepared for the OACD and the Commission finds that for every dollar spent there is a \$1.50 return in economic benefit to the community.

Mr. Pope stated that the OACD newsletter will be coming out soon, that the Association is monitoring federal legislation, and that Fire Day at the Capitol is scheduled for May 5. The next Directors Day is scheduled for May 12.

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

Larry Caldwell, Water Resource Specialist, provided a written report. He stated that the Farm Bill program is awaiting final rules to obligate money. The deadline for obligation of these funds is August 15. Mr. Caldwell stated that three Farm Bill/Economic Stimulus outreach meetings remain: May 8 at Woodward, May 13 at Sulphur, and May 15 at Altus.

Mr. Caldwell reported that Oklahoma has submitted 16 projects for the Floodplain Easement Program in the amount of \$6.1 million for 4800 acres. He also reported on the Northeast Oklahoma Healthy Forests Reserve Program and the availability of up to \$2.5 million.

Mr. Caldwell reported that the Oklahoma NRCS received its budget late last week. There is a slight increase in technical assistance funds. Regarding the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, NRCS received \$20.6 million in financial assistance which is down from \$26 million received last year.

Mr. Caldwell provided a map showing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Oklahoma approved watershed rehabilitation projects as of March 19, 2009.

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

No representative present.

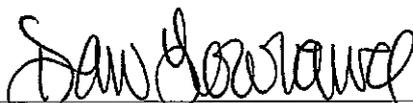
### **NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on June 1, 2009, 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 10:35 a.m.

Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on June 1, 2009.

  
CHAIR