



## Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

# MASWCD MINUTES Regular Meeting USDA Service Center Jefferson City, Missouri February 10, 2015

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## Present

Kenny Lovelace, President  
Bruce Biermann, Area I  
David Morris, Area II Alternate  
Ryan Britt, Area III  
Beverly Dometrorch, Area IV  
George Engelbach, Area V  
Ben Gorden, Area VI  
Dan Greeson, Area VII  
Mike Kelley, Area VIII  
Henry Heinze, Treasurer  
Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

J. R. Flores, NRCS State Conservationist  
Bill Wilson, DNR Soil & Water Program  
Sandy Stratman, Employees Assn. Pres.  
David Hale, Area VI Alternate  
Lisa Potter, MDC

## Not Present

Steve Radcliff, Past President

President Kenny Lovelace welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Introductions were made around the room. Quorum established by roll call. No revisions to the agenda.

The minutes from the 12-9-2014 meeting were approved as printed and presented. Motion for approval made by George Engelbach, Mike Kelley seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

A treasurer report was given by Henry Heinze. He stated the 2 CD's were just renewed. He also distributed a list of counties that have paid their dues categorized by Area. Mike Kelley made a motion to approve the report, Bruce Biermann seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

**MDC Report:** Lisa Potter is the new MDC representative that will be attending the MASWCD meetings. She reported that to date they have allocated just under \$1 million for the CREP program through the agreement with MASWCD. This has resulted in over 6,000 acres being enrolled in CRP. There is a request for \$500,000 for these funds in the FY-16 budget. Lisa reported there are several bills introduced in the Legislative Session that affect MDC's funding. She stated that MDC is participating in 2 of the RCPP projects, one for glade and woodland restoration and one for karst habitat. There are

proposed changes in the firearms and archery hunting policies. There is currently an open comment period on these proposed changes. Comments can be submitted online at [mdc.mo.gov/node/28079](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/28079). In response to a question from George Engelbach, she responded that some Fisheries staff would be attending the watershed conference this coming weekend at the Lake. She also stated that the proposals for the equipment grants through MDC have been ranked but no selections made yet.

**NRCS Report:** J.R. Flores stated he attended the NACD meeting in New Orleans. He stated the new FOSA boundaries will take effect February 22. Those current DC's not selected to be a new FOSA DC will become Lead Resource Conservationists and will be working FOSA wide. Some FOSA's had 6-7 applicants. He stated there has been no discussion on office closings at this time. There are currently 99 service centers in the 114 counties. He said they are currently piloting the new Client Gateway which is a new tool that producers can use to access their information online. He stated compliance work will pick up some with the federal crop insurance rules. Some can be done through aerial photography. Nationally they select 5% for checks. Compliance allows 2 times T soil loss, and it is up to FSA to take action on out of compliance issues. There were a total of 6 RCPP projects in Missouri (one of the top 2 or 3 states in the number of proposals submitted). The offices have been extremely busy making payments and signing up producers for new projects. There were 410 NRCS employees in Missouri when he started, that is now down to 320. He has put in a request to hire 8 new positions in addition to the new joint positions with DNR. He still has not received his yearly budget yet.

**Commission Report:** Bill Wilson reported that they are looking at other mapping options since CMT is ending in June. He stated there are so many firewalls on both federal and state computer systems it makes it difficult to share any programming. He stated Colleen Meredith is attending a budget hearing today. He distributed copies of the January newsletter. The Commission meeting is tomorrow. They will be briefing the Commission on the cost-share supplemental allocations, the FY14 grant expenditures and Plan for the Future committee reports. The resolution from the MASWCD 2014 business meeting will also be discussed. He distributed a draft letter in response to the resolution which concerned the cost of the health insurance plan for district employees. George Engelbach and Ryan Britt both serve on the Plan for the Future Committee that discussed the health insurance and said they discussed several options and have asked for pricing on some other options. The committee recommendations will be reported to the Commission tomorrow. Bill Wilson also stated that the Citizens Committee for the sales tax renewal is being formed and will start holding meetings soon.

**Employee Association Report:** Sandy Stratman thanked the Board for their support on her attendance at the NACD meeting in New Orleans. She reported there are currently 266 employees on staff and of those 231 are members of the Employees Association along with 120 associate members. Their next meeting is February 25 at the Lewis and Clark building and their training will be a report from the Program Delivery & Operations Committee. They will be holding an election of officers at their upcoming meeting. There is currently a vacancy in Area 3. The scholarship nominations will be given to judges for selection of the winner. She stated that she felt the reception at the Conference this year in the Trade Show area helped keep people in the Trade Show talking to vendors.

**Old Business:** Peggy Lemons gave a report on the 2015 National Envirothon to be held in Springfield, MO July 27 through August 2. The tests are written and have been reviewed, the funding is almost in place and they are in the process of recruiting volunteers for all the

volunteer positions to help put on the event. So far 55 teams have submitted an intent to participate which is great news considering there was no competition last summer. She did indicate that the majority of the MASWCD Board is being considered for preliminary judges. Sandy Stratman is in charge of volunteers and will be coordinating that with the Board.

A copy of the MASWCD travel policy was distributed. This policy has not been updated since 2003. The Board decided the policy needed to be reviewed and updated. Kenny asked David Morris, Beverly Dometrorch, Mike Kelley and Ben Gorden to work on this. It was suggested that a new Area Director packet would be a good idea that included the duties of the Area Director, what expenses are covered, etc.

The committee appointed to work on a budget met earlier today and is gathering information to help them with this process. One of the Directors asked what the cost is of an 800 telephone number and asked if it would help cut costs.

Ben Gorden read a letter he has prepared to submit to the Governor's office on filling the vacancy on the Soil & Water Commission.

The Board reviewed the Training Conference and the evaluations and comments submitted. They also discussed the dates for the conference for 2015. After discussion Beverly Dometrorch made a motion to go back to the dates immediately following Thanksgiving like we had used previously with a second choice of the December 13-16 dates. Ben Gorden seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

**New Business:** The invoice for NACD dues has been received and Henry Heinze asked for guidance on paying it. A motion was made by Bruce Biermann to pay the minimum of \$775. Mike Kelley seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

The dates for the Education Seminar are set for March 17 & 18<sup>th</sup>. The Board will meet at 11:00 a.m. at the Capitol Plaza Hotel with the reception starting at 5:30 p.m. The Policy Committee is interested in meeting at 10:00 prior to the Board meeting. Kenny Lovelace stated he had asked Senator Brian Munzlinger to be one of the speakers for the Seminar.

The 2015 Area Meetings were discussed. Bill Wilson stated the Program Office would like to have a discussion on the Plan for the Future committee recommendations. Since it is a non-election year they would like to do the meetings in one week with 2 meetings each day and have a 2-3 hour meeting for each Area. It was strongly suggested that the meal be a hot meal and not have cold sandwiches. The Board also suggested a central location within each Area as well. The timing for the Area Meetings will be looked at for early or late August.

**AREA Reports:** Area 1 – Bruce Biermann reported his area was actually getting some construction done after harvest until bad weather. They are experiencing labor shortage issues and can't seem to get people interested in applying for the jobs at the wages they are approved to offer.

Area 2 – David Morris reported most of his districts are struggling with the new terrace program. There are some issues with the time it takes to get NRCS to approve designs. There was concern from some districts on the letter they received about the time codes for the district employees' time sheets. They questioned why the rental equipment time has to come from local funds since the rental equipment was mostly purchased with state funds

and are used for conservation practices. He stated one of his counties had submitted a letter to the Governor on a non-cost-share pond damaged by a recent storm event and they feel like they are being pushed into helping him.

Area 3 – Ryan Britt stated his FOSA just finished hiring one of the joint position technicians and the employee will start on February 23. He said they had several applicants. He also stated that there is a person in his county, Randy Asbury a former state Representative, who is going to announce running for Governor. He has worked quite a bit in his county on water quality work. Ryan said the Governor has pushed for beef production to stay in the state of Missouri and that processing plants are needed, but the cattle need to be kept in the state longer to get to the stage of processing. Missouri is #2 again in cow/calf numbers. He said this is still in the conversation status.

Area 4 – Beverly Dometrorch said her district had to sign a MOU before advertising for the joint technician position. They have received one application so far. She is hoping the new DC will take care of some issues in one of her districts.

Area 5 – George Engelbach said the letter his county received on the time codes had 44 hours that were supposed to be local funds. He said he doesn't agree with that. In his area the ponds are still not full, they are not real flush on water. He is concerned about water for the coming year.

Area 6 – Ben Gorden stated everything is great in southwest Missouri. They have the highest cattle prices they have seen for a long time, gas prices are down, the supplemental cost share allocations are helping get work done, and they have had a little rain.

Area 7 – Dan Greeson said his area is probably a little short on water in the south part, but the cattle prices are good.

Area 8 – Mike Kelley said there is a lack of water in his area. There is a long strip of dry area across the south part of the state. Everyone is happy with the higher cattle prices and lower gas prices.

**Correspondence:** None

**Other Business:** George Engelbach said there had not been a meeting of the watershed for his area this year, there was one set but it did not include Jefferson County. This weekend (Friday and Saturday) there is a meeting at the Lake on watershed activity. There have been 14 more watersheds added to the Our Missouri Waters initiative. The funding for the Our Missouri Waters program is covered through multiple programs including 319 funding across DNR to integrate the water programs. The new EPA proposed rule has been sidelined for a while.

Ryan Britt stated he has been asked to sit on a subcommittee under the Development committee to work on improving the flow chart on staffing. He asked the Board to give him any input they had on suggestions for this.

Bruce Biermann reported he had attended the MRRIC meeting in New Orleans. He is presently the alternate for Jack Majeres on the MRRIC committee. All the applicants for the vacant seats were turned down last time because each organization or agency can only endorse one candidate and they all had letters of endorsement from groups that had also

endorsed other candidates or members of the committee. They have all applied again but it may be summer before a decision is made. The Board agreed on a meeting-by-meeting basis on reimbursement of Bruce's expenses to attend these MRRIC meetings. He stated that at the meeting in New Orleans they drafted a letter to submit to the Corps to have the expenses for attending the MRRIC meetings paid by the Corps since MRRIC is a line item in the Corps budget.

Kenny Lovelace reported that at the NACD Meeting there were 25 states recognized for District Official Training, which Missouri has been one of from the beginning of this recognition.

It was emphasized that the employees planning to attend the Education Seminar need to be on annual leave and their expenses as well as the Board members expenses need to be paid from local funds since this is a political meeting.

The next meeting will be at the Education Seminar on March 17 starting at 11:00 a.m. at the Capitol Plaza Hotel.

Motion for adjournment was made by George Engelbach, seconded by Mike Kelley. Motion carried unanimously (8-0). The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

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Kenny Lovelace, President