



Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

MASWCD MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Carnegie Room
Capitol Plaza Hotel
Jefferson City, Missouri
March 17, 2015

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Present

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

Brad McCord, NRCS
Colleen Meredith DNR SWCP Director
Bill Wilson, DNR Soil & Water Program
Sandy Stratman, Employees Assn. Pres.
David Hale, Area VI Alternate
Lisa Potter, MDC
Richard Hoelscher, St. Louis SWCD

Not Present

Henry Heinze, Treasurer

President Kenny Lovelace welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Introductions were made around the room. Quorum established by roll call. No revisions to the agenda.

Kenny Lovelace introduced Luella Gregory of the Missouri Farmers Care program to talk about who they are and what they do. She stated they have an education program for 3rd grade students where they go into the class room once a week for 10 weeks to teach the students about agriculture and farming. They meet with teachers each summer to get input for the program and develop hands-on activities that align with the state standards. Soil and water is a part of what they teach. There are 13 educators across the state. One is full time the others are part time. This is their second year working on a state-wide level. Their funding is a collaborative effort but their biggest supporters are the check-off groups. There is an opportunity for district employees to work along with these educators in areas like the poster contest. This might be a good topic for a workshop at the Training Conference.

The minutes from the 2-10-2015 meeting were approved as printed and presented. Motion for approval made by Bruce Biermann, George Engelbach seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

A treasurer report was presented for Henry Heinze. Ryan Britt stated he has started working on the budget, has gathered quite a lot of information but has not had time to go through all of it yet.

MDC Report: Lisa Potter reported that the Conservation Equipment program grants have been awarded and they are in the process of contacting those selected to receive a grant. She stated there was \$80,000 available in funding and they received over \$200,000 in requests. She asked if any of the Board had heard of issues with landowners concerns on the cost of the rental equipment. Some of the directors explained that the counties normally charge more for out-of-county use and have minimums, which means smaller acreages pay more. There have been 11 new CWD cases, the first case south of the Missouri River was identified in Cole County and is also the first case outside the 6-county containment zone. She said there is still no evidence of this crossing to other species. She said the Commission is proposing changes for the deer season – dates, lessening of regulations in conservation areas, and archery changes. The regulations for this year are out now. This is the 30th anniversary for the CRP program and MDC will be having some promotional field days and tours. There is a new program focused in southern Missouri for forestry that is a joint program with NRCS and Forest Service. This is the 4th year for the Discover Nature Girls Camp for girls ages 11-15. It will be July 21-23 and is limited to 60 girls. Lisa stated that Dave Murphy, former Executive Director for Conservation Federation, was recently named as the 4th Commissioner for the Conservation Commission.

NRCS Report: Brad McCord attended for J. R. He stated that RCPP which was a new program in the 2014 Farm Bill is now starting implementation. There are a total of 6 projects in Missouri that were approved. Two of the projects were in conservation priority areas, two were state funded and two were nationally funded. One project is with a soil and water district in Jackson County. The next State Technical Committee Meeting will be June 30. He said they are continually looking for opportunities to fund soil health workshops. There is a new support tool for cover crop economics decisions. Brad stated that for the most part the FOSA re-alignment is going well. They finally got a budget for the current year, it is pretty tight but J. R. is optimistic. He is still moving forward with trying to hire a limited number of new technical positions. Avian influenza was found in Jasper and Moniteau Counties. NRCS has suspended visits with these operations until March 30.

Commission Report: Colleen Meredith reported that the next Soil & Water Commission meeting will be April 8 and will include a tour of the Soil Health Lab at University of Missouri in Columbia. The Commission has approved funding to help support the soil health lab for 2 years and they feel after that the lab will be supported by its services. There are only 3 soil health labs in the country, one at Cornell University, one in California and this one at MU. She stated that the supplemental cost-share allocations are continuing through April 2 and the Commission will re-evaluate at their April 8th meeting. The disaster declaration funding is now up to about \$90,000. \$500,000 was allocated for this disaster declaration. She said that if landowners have already fixed their damage and still have receipts they can get funding to cover their expenses for the repair. Jeff Lance from Andrew County was appointed a new Soil and Water Commissioner. Last year the Soil and Water Program Office provided 3 meetings for Women as Landowners, this year they are planning to set up 5 meetings. The cover crop support tool will be put on the SWCD Intranet. They plan to put together some webinars on the Plan for the Future committees that Boards can watch at their meetings. They want to bring the final information out at the Area Meetings. Colleen stated she attended the watershed meeting recently at the lake. Kenny Lovelace and George Engelbach also attended this meeting and were able to help explain the farming

view point. The 319 program is now in the Soil and Water program because they are both voluntary. She said that the 319 funds are federal funds for watersheds, not tied in with the soil and water money because the state funds cannot be combined with federal funds. When asked about advertising for the intern program, is it required, she stated that it is different than hiring staff and districts don't have to pay for newspaper ads. Beverly Dometrorch stated some of her districts have concerns on the rules of the cover crop practice and how long is the pilot. Colleen stated that the practice is in the comment period until May 1 and quite likely will be included in the list of practices next fiscal year. Beverly also stated some of the districts are having problems with the new design program for terraces. David Morris commented on the Commission decision to not pursue collection of the small maintenance amount due. David stated it should be that the landowner is not eligible for any additional cost share until that amount is paid. Colleen stated they are trying to get the component data base on the SWCD Intranet to make it easier for districts to enter the information.

Employee Association Report: Sandy Stratman that at the last District Employees Association meeting they had election of officers and all officers remain the same. The vacancy for Area 3 was filled. There were 17 scholarship applications this year, all areas but one had applications submitted. The training at their recent meeting was on the proposed District Specialist positions. Due to this they will have to look at their awards program since it awards in each of the employee categories now and with this everyone will be in the same category. Their next meeting will be in June. They discussed the 1% pay increase for district staff and it was mentioned that just because the funds were allotted did not mean the raise was automatic; the Boards need to make a motion to approve the pay increase for district staff. They also discussed the shared positions quite a bit.

Committee Reports: Ryan reported the budget committee did not meet since Henry was not here today. He has started on a budget but has not had a chance to go through all of the information yet.

Beverly said the Travel Policy committee did not meet earlier today due to a misunderstanding on the time. They have some idea of what they would like for the travel policy to say. They also would like to add language for new Directors having a mentor. They will put this together and bring to the next meeting.

Old Business: Peggy Lemons gave a report on the 2015 National Envirothon plans. The funding is coming along, about \$4,000 short of covering the projected expenses. The directors gave indications of what volunteer positions they would prefer to work in. Ryan, Steve, David Morris, Ben Gorden and his wife, Dan Greeson and his wife, Bruce Biermann and his wife and Kenny Lovelace all indicated they would be preliminary round judges. The wives are all retired school teachers to help fill the educator requirement for the judging panels. George, Beverly and Mike indicated timer or monitor for the oral presentations would be their preference. Mike's wife and daughter also plan to volunteer.

The 2015 Area Meetings were discussed. The preferred dates are the week of August 24th with 2 meetings per day like last year. The program will consist of a presentation on the Plan for the Future committee recommendations. Each of the directors went over preferred locations for their meeting.

The agenda for the Education Seminar was reviewed. The Board discussed the feasibility of the meeting due to the low attendance numbers. They decided that next year will be an important year to have the meeting due to the sales tax renewal.

New Business: The Training Conference date for 2015 will be November 30 through December 2, back to the days Monday to Wednesday immediately following Thanksgiving. Tan-Tar-A has prepared a contract for 2016 through 2018 for the same time frame ready for signature by the Board. After a lengthy discussion it was decided to poll the districts for the preferred dates for the conference of November or December and maybe August. Steve Radcliff made the motion to poll the districts for this information. George Engelbach seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0). George Engelbach made a motion to go ahead and sign the contract with confirmed dates to be determined by the poll. Dan Greeson seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

The speakers and entertainment for the conference were discussed. The Board wants to do a better job of screening the speakers. Suggestions were made to check for price and availability with information sent to the Board for review.

AREA Reports: Area 1 – Bruce Biermann reported his area finally got some vacancies filled. They had several applicants for their 4-county joint position. He stated his county sent out surveys to their landowners on what the people thought of their service and received a lot of positive comments. He did not get appointed to the MRRIC seat he had applied for, is not sure who did get the appointment.

Area 2 – David Morris reported the weather is just now breaking loose and they are starting to get some work done. He had received some comments on the elections and costs for uncontested elections and questioned why they are required to hold the election when it is uncontested. He said local government does not have to hold an uncontested election.

Area 3 – Ryan Britt stated his district just had their election and they now have a female on the board. His county is hosting one of the joint technician positions. They have had 2 applicants so far for the intern position. He discussed the Governor's beef initiative. He said he had met with DNR to see how to help accomplish the Governor's goal. He was told in order to get this as a priority for EQIP it has to come from the Technical Committee.

Area 4 – Beverly Dometrorch said the ponds in her area are low; so far 3 districts have been able to get some work done. Her district had their annual meeting with 50 plus people attending but there was no election.

Area 5 – George Engelbach said the Jefferson County annual meeting will be this Saturday, no election. The ponds are pretty well full and the grass is starting to get green. They are having issues getting their new printer set up. He asked Colleen to help explain the joint position pilot for St. Charles and Warren Counties. This is an info/ed joint position and DNR is hoping it will help develop a plan for other joint positions and how they can work.

Area 6 – Ben Gorden stated they got a foot of snow since the last meeting but they are starting to build fence now. His county has an election on April 14. They have had 4 applications for the intern position. His technician that had been with the district for 20 years just retired.

Area 7 – Dan Greeson said the grass is greening up, streams are flowing and the calves are coming. His district recently had an election and they now have a retired science teacher on their board. They have a yearly farm fair as an annual meeting where they also have some training sessions. They have had 6 applications for the intern positions.

Area 8 – Mike Kelley said his area got some rain and snow and the ponds finally have some water in them. The fields are getting green. His county has an election coming up.

Correspondence: Kenny read a letter he had received from the US Department of Interior about seeking off-range pastures to care for wild horses.

Other Business:

The next meeting will be a conference call at noon on June 1.

Motion for adjournment was made by Mike Kelley, seconded by Ryan Britt. Motion carried unanimously (8-0). The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

Kenny Lovelace, President