



Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

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MASWCD MINUTES Regular Meeting Capitol Plaza Hotel Jefferson City, Missouri March 5, 2012

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Present

Steve Radcliff, President
Bruce Biermann, Area I
Tom Lambert, Area II
Kenny Lovelace, Area III
Beverly Dometrorch, Area IV
George Engelbach, Area V (12:30 pm)
Ben Gorden, Area VI
Dan Greeson, Area VII
Mike Kelley, Area VIII (12:45 pm)
David Dix, Treasurer
Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

J. R. Flores, NRCS
Clint Dalbom, MDC
Colleen Meredith, DNR Soil & Water
Bill Wilson, DNR Soil & Water
Sandy Hutchison, Employees Assn. Pres.
David Morris, Area II Alternate (Livingston)
David Hale, Area IV Alternate (Polk)
Keith Stevens, Polk SWCD

Not Present

Fred Feldmann, Past President

President Steve Radcliff welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m. Introductions were made around the room. Quorum established by roll call. No revisions to the agenda.

The minutes from the November 27, 2011 meeting were approved as printed and presented. Motion for approval made by Beverly Dometrorch, Tom Lambert seconded. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

A treasurer report was given by David Dix. There was a report for calendar year 2011 and 2012 to date. He stated that the bank account is approximately \$8,000 less than last year at this same time, but that we also made about that much less on the Training Conference this past year. He stated that 88 districts have paid dues in full for this year and 3 paid partial dues; he read the names of those who have not paid. Bruce Biermann motioned to approve the treasurer report. Kenny Lovelace seconded. Motion carried unanimously (6-0). The CREP administrative funds are still in a bank account in Jefferson City

and that balance is approximately \$79,000. There was discussion on how to contact the districts that have not paid dues and it was decided David Dix would call them. This call may be followed up with a letter to the Chairman if David thinks it would help.

MDC Report: Clint Dalbom reported there are 50 more elk going through quarantine in Kentucky before being moved into Missouri. He stated the elk currently in Missouri have not strayed from their area and are doing quite well. Feral hogs are still a big concern for MDC. They have developed a new plan on controlling the feral hogs. They plan to promote killing the hogs, but not promoting it to be a hunting sport. Chronic wasting is still a concern. 630 deer are currently being tested. There has been no documentation about chronic wasting transferring from deer to cattle. He also stated they are gearing up for turkey season.

NRCS Report: J. R. Flores stated the NRCS employees are very busy writing contracts right now. The funds have to be obligated by April 1 and he wants to make sure they don't lose any funding. Missouri received \$30 million in EWP funds for the flood damage in southeast Missouri. There may be some funding coming for the northwest part of the state due to flooding also. There are 3 new positions in Missouri as a result of a joint effort by NRCS with Pheasants Forever and Quail Unlimited. J. R. discussed the letter just received this week about developing a plan for the Field Office of the Future. The letter was from Chief White and NACD President Gene Schmidt. It is requesting a plan be developed and submitted back to NRCS by September 1. J. R. stated he will be in touch with the Associations on this and he foresees having some facilitated sessions for discussion. When asked J.R. replied there is no connection between the Field Office of the Future letter and the FSA office closing that are currently occurring. During discussion on the new Farm Bill it was stated that if a new one is not approved by June there probably will not be one this year.

Commission Report: Kathryn Braden was not able to attend, Colleen Meredith gave the Commission report. She stated the Commission recently sent out another supplemental cost-share allocation. That puts about \$31 million out there. There were 95 districts that got some funding in the supplemental allocations. Districts have questioned if they did not request any supplemental funding and got some anyway, will they be penalized for not achieving 80% claimed. Colleen stated that they look at the needs assessment for the funding for the next year, not necessarily the past funding claimed. The state audit is now complete. She stated they received a "good" rating. Some of the issues cited were district board meeting minutes, sunshine law and oversight of expenditures of the districts. The next Commission meeting will be March 21 with a tour on March 20 in St. Francois County. Colleen stated that when she accepted the position of Director of the SWCP program, the Commission asked her to come up with a plan for the future, which pretty much goes right along with the NRCS letter. She plans to get all the partners involved as well. When questioned about district employees pay increases since none have been received for the past 8 years, she stated that the Governor has mentioned he wants a 2% increase for state employees and if that happens she was sure that the Commission would look at a similar increase for district employees. When asked about re-instating matching grants she responded that the problem with them was that local funds were required to use them and some districts have no local funds. She agreed that they did help some districts have funding for info-ed expenses. She also stated that they are talking about re-vamping the info-ed funding to better distribute the funds where they are needed. It was

stated that there is a concern among some district managers/program specialists that they feel discriminated against since they physically can't do the technical work for the technician II job that is being promoted as a replacement when there is turn-over in the program specialist position. Also when questioned, Colleen responded that there was no mention or concern in the state audit about the balance of the sales tax fund.

George Engelbach joined the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Employee Association Report: Sandy Hutchison distributed a report she gave at the last Commission meeting which contained information on the 8 states in the North Central region. The report looked at the number of district employees and other information related to the programs in the various states. She is now the president of the North Central Region District Employees Association. Sandy stated her board is full now with Area Reps now from all areas of the state. The last edition of the MDC magazine included a letter Sandy had written to the editor.

Mike Kelley joined the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

Old Business: The Board reviewed the comments received on evaluations from the Training Conference. They were mostly good comments. There has been a request to include district employees in the necrology report. The Board felt they wanted to continue with the Area Meetings being held on Monday morning of the conference.

The Legislators are still working on the 2 proposals resulting from resolutions passed at the Training Conference. The current Legislator may be dragging his feet and may possibly need to get another one to complete the draft and introduce the legislation.

The Board reviewed the agenda for the Education Seminar. There is a reception tonight instead of the breakfast that has been held the past few years. The number of pre-registered attendees is a little low, but hopefully there will be some attend who did not pre-register.

Those who attended the NACD National Meeting gave a quick review of the meetings and workshops they attended. The legislative auction this year raised over \$50,000 for NACD which was an all-time record high. Beverly Dometorch stated that she worked some on updating the NACD policy book. She also stated that she and Steve are on the NACD education and stewardship committee and she had some soil stewardships – "Soil to Spoon" – materials for everyone to see. Steve Radcliff stated that since NRCS was not able to attend this year due to the location of the meeting, NACD worked with NRCS to provide stipends for additional people to attend. These were for first-time attendees. David Morris received one of the stipends and he stated it was a very educational experience. Bruce Biermann stated the farm bill meeting was well attended. Kenny Lovelace mentioned that a person can learn a lot from other states that attend the conference as well. Missouri was recognized for the district official training program we have. Peggy Lemons and Steve Radcliff reported on the resolution the North Central region had submitted which would require all NACD board members to come from districts that paid their NACD dues in full. The resolution has been presented 3 or 4 times previously over the years and failed again. The main problem is that at least 1/3 of those currently on the board would not be able to stay on the board unless their district started

paying NACD dues. That is a large enough number to sway the discussion and vote on the resolution.

The comments on the new MOU draft were requested to be in by March 1. Katy Holmer is compiling all the comments that have been received and sending them back out to the districts. The committee working on the MOU will meet again to discuss the comments and see where changes need to be made. There is not set date on when the MOU needs to be completed and signed by everyone, however, J.R. stated it would be nice to get it done by the end of the year. The transportation agreement has been revised slightly due to the recent information received concerning the liability coverage for district employees driving the NRCS vehicles. As long as districts have liability coverage that covers "hired and non-owned vehicles" the district employees are covered. All districts that have MOPERM are okay as MOPERM has included that in their coverage. There are a few districts that do not have MOPERM and deciding what they will do to make sure their employees are covered.

When questioned about the written Commission policy that was included in one of the resolutions, Colleen replied that the Commission policy is mostly cost-share and she explained how the updates to the cost-share handbook are handled.

New Business: The current contract with Tan-Tar-A covers this year for one more Conference. Tan-Tar-A has presented a new 3-year proposal that covers 2013-2015 conferences. After discussion about other locations that would be able to hold the conference, Bruce Biermann motioned to approve the 3-year contract from Tan-Tar-A. Tom Lambert seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

Peggy Lemons distributed information on Fred Pryor seminars and stated she had been contacted by them about putting on training either at the Training Conference or at smaller meetings around the state for districts on payroll training and possibly human resources or customer relations. Colleen Meredith stated that the audits have been showing several issues with payroll being done by the districts, such as not paying taxes, paying incorrect amounts, and penalties associated with these. She stated that sales tax funds cannot be used to pay these penalties and districts have to pay them from local funds. She stated that the issues do seem to be more prominent where there has been turn-over in the program specialist position. She stated that DNR has been thinking about offering a stipend to districts who want to out-source their payroll. Peggy asked about maybe having program specialist certification for payroll, and this would be a way to offer advancement to program specialists. Colleen thought there may be a concern about the liability of that, but said she would check on it. It was also asked how many districts were being identified in audits as needing help on payroll. The discussion on the Fred Pryor seminars will wait until further information is received on the number of districts needing help.

The 2012 Area Meetings were discussed and how to handle them this year. Colleen Meredith stated that DNR plans to be involved and will help make arrangements. She stated there just cannot be any lobbying, but elections are fine.

AREA Reports: 1 – Bruce Biermann reported they had a mild winter this year which helped. They had trouble getting funding for levee repair after the flooding but it is now getting done. He stated that Atchison County is almost done with their levee repair. He

said it made sense to sort of work down the river on the repairs. He stated that Governor Nixon approved the funding in December but the process is complicated. The cost-share is going real well and they are able to get some work done there as well due to the mild winter.

2 – Tom Lambert reported on the good winter. He stated it is unusual to have contractors working in January. He attended the Extension council area meeting and met with Senator McCaskill's aide. They have a good sign-up for 2012 going. Tom stated he also attended a cover crop meeting in Blue Springs which he thought was a very good meeting.

3 – Kenny Lovelace reported the weather has been good and the supplemental cost-share allocation was helpful.

4 – Beverly Dometrorch reported her districts have all been busy. She is going to the Lafayette and Morgan open houses this month. The Howard SWCD open house is tomorrow. She stated their poster contest will be opened up to high school grades next year in Howard SWCD.

5 – George Engelbach reported his area is dry, and able to work about anywhere you want to on the ground. His county does not have a Tech II any more, was hired by NRCS so their program specialist took the Tech II test and passed. Their annual meeting will be March 24 and it is an election year. He said he is concerned about how dry it is going to be this summer.

6 – Ben Gorden reported the same kind of winter. The additional cost-share funds have helped and people are getting the work done. He thanked the Program Office for their help with a problem his county had with a couple of landowners. Ben also reported a little on their student internship program they are starting. They plan to pay tuition (3 hours credit) and a stipend. They may also try an internship for the poster contest work. He stated his county had been receiving a small amount of funding from their County Commission. But after reporting to the Commission on the amount of money the SWCD has brought into the county, they lost the funding from the County Commission.

7 – Dan Greeson reported everything around the state seems positive. His area has had some rain but they do have a burn notice. He said he is still not getting a lot of feedback from the southern counties in his area.

8 – Mike Kelley reported it has been a nice winter, the grass is greening and they have had just enough rain so far. He said in his job he travels a lot and has noticed it is dry everywhere in other states. He said that as soon as the water went down in the southeast part that was flooded, the landowners got in there to clear and a lot of the ground will be farmed this year.

Correspondence: George Engelbach distributed a flyer from Farm Bureau on proposed legislation to change the initiative petition process.

Other Business: The DNR audit was discussed again. Colleen Meredith was asked how much the audits for the districts cost and how the auditors are hired. She stated that the audits are bid out by the Office of Administration. It was asked if it would be legal for a

district to get an audit done locally and be reimbursed by DNR for the audit cost. Colleen said she would do some checking on this. It may be that a yearly financial review could be done locally but quite likely a local auditor would not be prepared to do a procedural audit similar to what is contracted for by the Office of Administration.

The date for the next regular meeting will be Tuesday, May 8 at 1:00 p.m., the day before the Commission meeting in May. The meeting will be at the Cole County USDA office in Jefferson City. Motion for adjournment made by Beverly Dometrorch, Dan Greeson seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0). The meeting was adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

Steve Radcliff, President