



Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

MASWCD MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Capitol Plaza Hotel
Jefferson City, Missouri
March 7, 2017

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Present

Ryan Britt, President (10:30 am)
Kenny Lovelace, Past President
Ron Willis, Area I
David Morris, Area II
Henry Heinze, Area III/Treasurer
Beverly Dometrorch, Area IV
Derrick Cope, Area V
Kathryn Braden, Area VI
Dan Greeson, Area VII
Kenny Spooler, Area VIII
Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

J. R. Flores, NRCS State Conservationist
Colleen Meredith, DNR Soil & Water
Bill Wilson, DNR Soil & Water Program
Brent Vandeloecht, MDC Private Lands
Kelly Smith, Farm Bureau (11:00 am)

Not Present

Vice-President Ron Willis welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

Introductions were made around the room. Quorum established by roll call. No revisions to the agenda.

The minutes from the 11-27-2016 meeting were reviewed. Beverly Dometrorch made a motion to approve the minutes. David Morris seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0). David Morris made a motion to approve the 12-6-16 conference call minutes. Kathryn Braden seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

Henry Heinze distributed a report of the dues paid by area so far this year. Treasurer report for the year 2016 was reviewed as well as a report for January 1 to date. 91 districts have paid their 2017 dues. Kathryn Braden made a motion to accept the treasurer report and file it for audit. Beverly Dometrorch seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

MDC Report: Brent Vandeloecht reported that the joint effort on the CRP and Monarch incentive funds was going well. Brent said he is on a Missouri Monarch committee with several organizations involved. Jason Jenkins was recently named the monarch and pollinator coordinator for the committee. He also is working with the Missouri Audubon Society on conservation grazing

developing an incentive for people grazing in a bird-friendly manner. Lisa Potter has been working on the Farm Bill development, the goal is a 40 million acre cap on CRP acres. MDC continues to work on the feral hog issue in Missouri. Over 5,000 feral hogs were trapped last year, most in the southern part of the state. It is illegal to hunt feral hogs on MDC land because it interferes with their trapping efforts. There were 6 new CWD cases reported from the samples collected this past hunting season. MDC is also working on the Palmer Amaranth problem, working with the native seed association. Brent stated it is difficult to distinguish this seed from other pig weed species.

Ryan Britt joined the meeting and Ron Willis turned the meeting over to him.

NRCS Report: J.R. Flores reported the acting chief for NRCS is Leonard Jordan, not sure when a chief will be appointed by the new administration. The budget looks okay so far this year. The hiring freeze has held up the hiring of the 40 new positions planned at the end of 2016 including the Area conservationist in Palmyra. The State Technical Committee met last week. There were over 1000 new CSP sign-ups this past year. Hopefully there will be a new Farm Bill in 2018. He did remind everyone that desired increases are good, but there is only so much funding available and increases in one program will most likely have to cut another program. Missouri recently had an inspection from the Inspector General's office on HEL compliance. They identified some concerns especially identifying ephemeral gully erosion. They suggested a national policy be developed on this. Once a producer has ephemeral erosion identified, he has 1 year to address it before being out of compliance. There is a concern on sufficient staff and time to handle the planning and implementation required for this. If found out of compliance, producers will not be able to participate in any USDA programs. J. R. participated on a conference call with key National Headquarters leadership. Acting Chief Jordan is committed to allowing flexibilities while addressing ephemeral gully erosion. Future discussions will continue. The soil health initiative is still ongoing, will take a little while to show the benefits of it.

Commission Report: Colleen Meredith reported that the Commission had their officer election at their first meeting of the year and Gary Vandiver will continue as Chair of the commission. Ralph Gaw will be Vice-Chair. There is still a vacancy which is the northeast part of the state. She stated several names have been submitted, but it is unknown how fast the new administration will fill this vacancy. The new director of DNR is Carol Comer. She is from Indiana and has a legal background. The next meeting for the Commission is April 20 in Jefferson City at the DNR Lewis & Clark Building. NRCS and the Soil & Water Program have 25 joint technical positions across the state now. In discussion on spending cost-share funds, she did state that the statutes do say that the federal funds should be spent first, however, she said the offices do a good job in managing the balance of the funding for both agencies. There may be another cost-share supplemental allocation in April. District employee retirement has been discussed due to the requirement of Missouri Consolidated Health Care that in order to offer retiree health care coverage the retirement plan of an employer must be a recognized retirement plan by MCHCP. The Program office has talked with MCHCP about this and they say it will be up to the Soil and Water Boards to determine if they feel their retirement plan is a viable retirement plan and fits the description of an acceptable retirement plan by MCHCP. The Program Office has also talked with LAGERS (County retirement system) about the possibility of district employees participating with LAGERS. The issue is the wording of being able to levy taxes as a requirement for LAGERS, however, other organizations have become members of LAGERS through the

legislature adding a waiver of the tax levy requirement into the LAGERS statute for them to participate. This may be a discussion item for Area Meetings this year. The supervisor and employee trainings being offered have experienced some difficulty in getting sufficient people signed up for the training in some of the locations. At least 10 people are needed in order to hold the training session.

Employee Association Report: The Employees Association is holding their Board Meeting at the same time so there is no report today.

Farm Bureau: Kelly Smith reported that Missouri Farm Bureau along with 4 other groups is sponsoring a Woodland meeting on April 4th and 5th at their office in Jefferson City. This is targeted to woodland landowners.

Committee Reports: Budget— Hopefully will have some budget information for the next meeting. Henry Heinze questions the need for a budget since we have been managing within our means, but Ryan Britt indicated we needed to have some idea of what was available for future opportunities or issues that may come up.

Bylaws – Ron Willis stated he is the chair of the Bylaws committee and they have held one conference call so far. They are still gathering ideas and hope to have a draft to present at the next meeting. A lot of the changes will be clarifying the language. They are also looking at the election process and will offer suggestions on change so that the entire board is not up for election at the same time.

Old Business: The evaluations for the Training Conference were reviewed. The Board discussed the meal requirements. Colleen Meredith stated they still feel it is the responsibility of supervisors and employees to attend the meals at the conference and want to continue with the all-inclusive registration fee structure. After discussion a motion was made by Dan Greeson to pursue going to a bar-code name tag and check-in system so attendance at the meals and meetings can be better tracked. Ron Willis seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously (8-0). Potential speakers and banquet entertainment were discussed, speakers from the University of Missouri, Dueling Pianos, or an acapella group from St. Louis. They also discussed moving the trade show up to the hallway or somewhere around the meeting room space. They also discussed the possibility of holding a dance and cash bar one evening.

Those that attended the NACD Meeting in Denver reviewed information from the meeting. Missouri did receive the District Operations Training Award again this year for having an approved training program.

New Business: Ashley McCarty from Missouri Farmers Care presented information on the Leopold Conservation Award program. The estimated total cost to get the award started in Missouri is \$40,000 with the award providing a \$10,000 cash award to the winner and a crystal award. After lengthy discussion a motion was made by Dan Greeson to contribute \$1000 toward the Leopold Conservation Award. Ron Willis seconded the motion. Discussion continued and Kenny Spooler offered an amendment to increase the amount to \$2500. Dan Greeson seconded the amendment. The \$2500 amount will offer more name recognition than the \$1000. The Board vote on the amendment carried unanimously (8-0), The Board vote on the amended motion carried unanimously (8-0).

Ryan Britt reported he had appointed a Strategic Planning Committee to work on developing a plan and give MASWCD some goals. The committee consists of Kenny Lovelace, Sandy Stratman and Andrea McKeown.

Area Meetings for 2017 were discussed. The Board decided the first week of August would be the best time. The district employee retirement will be a discussion item. Colleen Meredith suggested a consumer panel maybe on cost-share sign-up and work commitment list management to see different ways how districts handle it.

The Education Seminar agenda was reviewed and approved.

AREA Reports: Area 1 – Ron Willis stated the area had a lot of wind the previous night.

Area 2 – David Morris said they are getting a lot of conservation work completed this winter with several districts receiving supplemental cost-share allocations.

Area 3 – Henry Heinze stated they are getting quite a bit of work done.

Area 4 – Beverly Dometrorch said her districts have indicated they don't have sufficient technical assistance to get the cost-share money spent. They also have concerns about the short time to spend the cost-share funds with March and possibly April supplemental allocations.

Area 5 – Derrick Cope stated a lot of terraces are getting built but it is dry.

Area 6 – Kathryn Braden said it is dry and they are experiencing some fires.

Area 7 – Dan Greeson said it is dry but they are getting little bits of rain.

Area 8 – Kenny Spooler said there was an F4 tornado last week in the area, did a lot of damage. They are getting a lot of work done with the warmer weather.

Correspondence: Kenny Lovelace reported he had been on the MRRIC conference call and asked if Bruce Biermann could still sit in when he was available if Bruce agreed. He did discuss it with Bruce and he agreed to do the conference calls this year and see what we get out of the committee for the amount of dues it requires.

Other Business: Colleen Meredith stated that the MASWCD resolutions were discussed at the last Commission meeting and have been sent on to the Conservation Practices committee for recommendations.

The next meeting date will be Tuesday, June 13 at the Cole County USDA office starting at 1:00 p.m. Those wanting to meet for lunch can get together at 11:30 am at the Oscar's diner. Motion for adjournment was made by Dan Greeson, seconded by Ron Willis. Motion carried unanimously (8-0). The meeting was adjourned at 2:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

Kenny Lovelace, President