



## Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

# MASWCD MINUTES Regular Meeting USDA Service Center Jefferson City, Missouri May 8, 2012

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## Present

Steve Radcliff, President  
Tom Lambert, Area II  
Kenny Lovelace, Area III  
Beverly Dometrorch, Area IV  
George Engelbach, Area V  
Ben Gorden, Area VI  
Dan Greeson, Area VII  
Mike Kelley, Area VIII  
David Dix, Treasurer  
Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

Karen Brinkman, NRCS Area Cons.  
Kathryn Braden, Soil & Water Commission  
Colleen Meredith, DNR Soil & Water  
Bill Wilson, DNR Soil & Water  
Sandy Hutchison, Employees Assn. Pres.  
David Morris, Area II Alternate  
Richard Hoelscher, Area V Alternate  
Kelly Smith, Missouri Farm Bureau

## Not Present

Fred Feldmann, Past President  
Bruce Biermann, Area I

President Steve Radcliff 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 March 5, 2012 meeting were approved as printed and presented. Motion for approval made by Tom Lambert, Mike Kelley seconded. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

A treasurer report was given by David Dix. He stated he had called most of the districts that had not paid dues for this year and 9 districts have paid dues since the March meeting. There are now 97 districts that have paid dues in full for this year and 3 paid partial dues and 14 that have not paid; he read the names of those who have not paid. Beverly Dometrorch motioned to approve the treasurer report and file for audit. Kenny Lovelace seconded. Motion carried unanimously (7-0). The most recent bank statements from the accounts in Jeff City were included for review as well. Mike Kelley motioned to approve the Jeff City accounts report, Tom Lambert seconded. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

**MDC Report:** Clint Dalbom was not able to attend the meeting today.

**NRCS Report:** J. R. Flores had a conflict so Karen Brinkman, Area Conservationist for Area 2 from Palmyra attended for him. She stated that the Secretary has just announced 3 watersheds for Missouri for a new Water Quality Initiative. These watersheds are in Barton & Dade Counties, Knox and Lewis Counties, and Grundy and Sullivan Counties. The initiative should provide approximately \$700,000 for these watersheds from EQIP funds. There will most likely be specific practices to address the resource concerns in these watersheds. Karen Brinkman also stated that NRCS is working to develop the field Office of the Future plan. They plan to evaluate and come up with a game plan for the future should the budget change and require changes in the state. Beverly Dometrorch stated she has heard from Districts in her area that they feel the field staff should remain and cuts made at higher levels. Karen Brinkman stated the first sub-committee meeting is May 22. There will also be an on-line survey to gather input. She stated NRCS is not closing any offices in Missouri other than the Dexter MLRA office. It was announced nationally for MLRA offices to close, and FSA is closing some offices in the state, but NRCS is not closing any other than the Dexter office.

**Commission Report:** Colleen Meredith stated that May 25 will be the last day contracts can be submitted in MOSWIMS for this fiscal year. June 15 will be the last day contracts can be paid in MOSWIMS for this fiscal year. June 1 the program will be shut down to add the FY-13 cost-share funds to allow for the roll-over into FY-13. The recent memo on comp time was discussed. Colleen Meredith stated that they had several districts for the ability to offer the hour-for-hour comp time for exempt employees which prompted the memo to be sent and that category of comp time added. They are getting ready to start program reviews. The practices that will be reviewed include terraces, waterways and fencing. These are practices where the District has received approval to complete these practices without first submitting the contract to the Program Office for review. She stated they are looking at the aspects of the practices for meeting Commission policy, not technical issues. The Commission meeting is set for tomorrow, May 9. Part of the agenda will include a session on program review which will include partner agencies and the Commission giving input on to help improve the program. Colleen also stated that the 2005 plan was included in the Commission packets to help with the discussion for the plan for the future. She stated that they will probably propose a steering committee for the new plan and that the new plan needs to include an implementation schedule.

Steve Radcliff stated on his way to the meeting he had seen a lot of sprayed fescue fields that will be going into row crop, can districts refuse assistance to landowners who are mis-using or being greedy? Mike Kelley said he is seeing a lot of timber removed for crops. Colleen Meredith said there is no Commission policy on this yet, but Districts can set their own policy on these types of issues. Beverly Dometrorch asked about land coming out of CRP, Colleen stated there is some policy o CRP land for cost-share. Karen Brinkman said NRCS is trying to work with landowners to leave some grass. Colleen stated the Commission may want to look at what practices they want to stress for resource protection.

Beverly Dometrorch asked if the 2% pay increase is approved for state employees will the district employees get a 2% salary increase. What about the district employees who were

grandfathered in at a higher rate than the beginning level salary, will they also get a 2% increase or just the beginning level increased 2%. Beverly also stated she still hears from some districts on their concerns about having to get permission to hire people replacing someone who has left the district and the loss in cost-share funds spent due to the time involved in training the new personnel. She asked what about using interns? Colleen Meredith said she has talked with MU about student interns and they do seem interested. She said she also wants to look at staffing in the Plan for the Future. Beverly asked who trains the new District Managers, Kathryn Braden said the DNR Coordinator should do it. Colleen Meredith said the new Coordinators have not been trained on the old accounting program, there are 3 coordinators handling all the issues with the old accounting program. Kathryn Braden questioned why permission to hire was needed. The funds should be allotted at the beginning of the fiscal year and should remain with that District throughout the year. Colleen stated there is only so much funding for personnel, if Districts can hire any number they want the pay will not be there. This is one way to manage the number of employees and offer better salaries.

The Attorney General's Office is coming out with an opinion on the roles and responsibilities of the Commission, etc., and if the Program Office is not supposed to be doing something then they won't be doing it any more. Beverly Dometorch also questioned about the memos coming mid-year, shouldn't they be effective at the beginning of the fiscal year. Districts are asking why can't they move funds to other categories for both cost-share and district assistance. She also asked about flex or partial payment for cost-share. Colleen stated anything under maintenance should be fixed by the landowner and not partial cost-share.

Colleen Meredith stated Toolkit and CMT are both a big problem, but they have been working on them. The number 1 comment from the employees on items to improve the program was to get rid of the CMT program. Another item on the employees list of suggested improvements was Districts evaluating the DNR Coordinators. She stated that DNR evaluates them since they are DNR employees. She said if a District is having problems with a Coordinator to let her know. Communication was another issue mentioned in the suggested improvements. Beverly Dometorch said a District mentioned their employees had attended a Commission meeting but were asked didn't they have better work to do at home. She said there is a lack of communication with the Commission. Colleen Meredith said the Commission has to abide by the Sunshine Law and cannot have a retreat or any meeting that is not open to the public. Kenny Lovelace said he felt holding Commission meetings in various locations around the state will help allow access to the Commission by Districts. Kathryn Braden said water is getting to be just as important as food, not only quality but quantity. That needs to be a part of the Plan for the Future. Beverly also asked about Matching Grant funds. She said Districts are not getting as much local funds as before.

George Engelbach asked if the term "sodbuster" was removed from the Farm Bill. Karen Brinkman said the true term of "sodbuster" is busting out grassland and planting crops. CRP land is considered cropland so it is not sodbusting but does need to be determined if highly erodible.

**Employee Association Report:** Sandy Hutchison said the Employees Association Board had a meeting last week and all the reps were there except one. They did the program

review exercise. They will be looking at a few by-law changes such as use of e-mail for elections. The Employees Board discussed the Area Meetings and wanted to know about the possibility of joint meetings. It may depend on whether the meeting will be day or evening.

Farm Bureau: Kelly Smith of Farm Bureau attended the meeting. He stated that from looking in the conservation program has 3 legs -- the Employees Association, Program Staff and Supervisors Association. The relationships have improved, need to keep working on communication and trust. There is a need to move forward and do the right things for the right reasons. He stated will there be a Farm Bill this year, probably not. Ag as a whole will probably take a big hit. He stated that May 6 is the deadline for initiative petitions in Missouri. As far as he knew only 4 petitions had submitted signatures which are now being verified. There are 2 or 3 pieces of legislation that deal with changing the petition process. He stated that traditionally Missouri is a conservative state.

**Old Business:** The Board discussed the Education Seminar held in March. The general consensus is the reception at the hotel worked better than the breakfast in the Rotunda. Beverly Dometorch stated she felt there were several Legislators that showed up and she felt like it worked better. George Engelbach agreed. It was suggested that Monday night might not be as many other activities as Tuesday or Wednesday. Dan Greeson thought maybe should concentrate on the Appropriations Committee. Beverly Dometorch motioned to continue with the same set-up as this year. Kenny Lovelace seconded. Motion carried unanimously (7-0). Mike Kelley asked if one day was sufficient. Consensus seemed that yes one day was sufficient. George Engelbach suggested checking with the Double Tree Hotel also, that it had been remodeled.

The results of the District survey were reviewed. There were 75 surveys returned. Steve Radcliff will be discussing these with the Commission at their meeting tomorrow.

Copies of the latest version of the MOU were distributed. The committee looked at all the comments, suggestions and concerns that were submitted and were able to incorporate the majority of them into the latest revision. There are still a few places that may be determined by the information received from the Attorney General's office on the roles and responsibilities of the Commission, DNR, etc.

The 2012 Training Conference theme and banquet entertainment were discussed. A couple of theme suggestions were distributed. Tom Lambert made a motion to use the "From the Ground Up" theme. Kenny Lovelace seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously (7-0). It was suggested to check on the price of color logo on the items being printed with the theme logo as the logo shows much better in color. Steve Radcliff also showed the Board the design for the quilt block being sent in for the NACD auxiliary quilt that will be raffled at the NACD National Meeting next January in San Antonio. The theme for the quilt is state commodities. The banquet entertainment was discussed. Information on a comedian with an agricultural background was reviewed. The Board decided this might be a nice change. Mike Kelley made a motion to contract with this comedian, Jay Hendren at a cost of \$1950.00. Ben Gorden seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

**New Business:** The 2012 Area Meetings were discussed. With the bylaw change a couple of years ago, every Area will have an election this year for Area Director. It needs to be determined whether each Area wants a day or night meeting. These meetings will be scheduled after the State Fair and prior to Labor Day which will make them the last two weeks of August. The DNR Program Staff will help with the location and meal for each of the meetings. Areas 3, 4 and 6 may want night meetings and Area 8 may look at Poplar Bluff for the location. This will all be decided in the next few weeks. Information on the Area Director election process was given to each of the Area Directors.

The NACD Legislative Meeting will be held in Washington, DC from July 14 – 18. Steve Radcliff, Kenny Lovelace and Beverly Dometrorch will attend. With the dates for the Canon Envirothon being close to the same time in July, Peggy Lemons will be attending that instead of the Legislative Meeting. A motion was made by Beverly Dometrorch to approve the expense for registration and travel for Peggy to attend the Canon Envirothon. Mike Kelley seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously (7-0). Missouri Envirothon will be covering the expense for the rental car for the days during the Canon Envirothon, and the Cole County SWCD will be approving the time on District salary for the days that cross over the District work schedule.

**AREA Reports:** 1 – Bruce Biermann was unable to attend due to being in the field. He did indicate his area would probably want a day Area Meeting in St. Joseph, maybe at the Remington Nature Center.

2 – Tom Lambert reported his area was making good progress on field work until it started raining. A county that adjoins his was having a difficult getting a check from a cooperator for drill damage, but finally did get the check.

3 – Kenny Lovelace reported things are moving along pretty good in his area. Some spots got small hail but they have had good weather. He said the further south you get in the area it seems to be wetter.

4 – Beverly Dometrorch reported her area has started getting some rain. Cost-share is getting spent. Some of the districts in her area have reported some close election votes and have had to come up with ways to resolve a tie vote.

5 – George Engelbach reported his county had their Annual Meeting in March and Colleen Meredith attended. They have their Annual Meeting jointly with Extension. Most of the corn is planted. It is wet on top right now but dry deeper, not a lot of sub moisture. His area has missed the major hail storms.

6 – Ben Gorden stated his area is probably 3 weeks earlier than normal in their field work. Some hay is getting put up. Started getting some rain. He stated the intern process in his county has had 2 or 3 good applicants. He would like to have one for each semester. Their District will pay the student's tuition cost for the semester. They are working with Missouri State University now and looking at Bolivar too. He stated he was pleased to see that input from the Districts was asked for. He said that makes them feel part of the process instead of a dictatorial situation.

7 – Dan Greeson stated his counties are mostly cattle and pasture. They are about 3 weeks ahead of schedule. He said the fields never looked prettier.

8 – Mike Kelley reported it has been dry. Everything is in the ground but it has been windy. He said his District was able to get a new drill in cooperation with MDC where MDC uses the drill 2 months of the year but paid a majority of the cost.

**Correspondence:** Steve Radcliff distributed a thank you card from Steve Huber for the Distinguished Award he received.

**Other Business:** The Commission meeting will be tomorrow, the next one after that will be July 11. The Board discussed holding their next meeting on July 10 in Jefferson City at the Cole County USDA office in Jefferson City.

Motion for adjournment made by Dan Greeson, Beverly Dometrorch seconded. Motion carried unanimously (7-0). The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

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Steve Radcliff, President