



Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

MASWCD MINUTES
Regular Meeting
USDA Service Center
Jefferson City, Missouri
June 13, 2017

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Present

Ryan Britt, President
Kenny Lovelace, Past President
Ron Willis, Area I
David Morris, Area II
Henry Heinze, Area III/Treasurer
Beverly Dometorch, 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
Karen Brinkman, NRCS Partnerships & Initiatives
Colleen Meredith, DNR Soil & Water
Jim Boschert, DNR Soil & Water Program
Brent Vandeloecht, MDC Private Lands
Sandy Stratman, Maries SWCD

Not Present

President Ryan Britt 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 3-7-2017 meeting were reviewed. Name spelling corrections for Leonard Jordan and Carol Comer were identified. Henry Heinze made a motion to approve the minutes with the corrections. Ron Willis seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

Henry Heinze presented a brief treasurer report, and printouts for the accounts in Jefferson City were reviewed. Henry did state that the bank balance is quite a bit more than the same time last year. Beverly Dometorch made a motion to accept the treasurer report and file it for audit. Kathryn Braden seconded. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

MDC Report: Brent Vandeloecht stated that MDC continues to work with MASWCD on the CRP and Monarch incentives. He also stated that their new director, Sarah Parker Pauley, is reviewing their strategic plan. There were no cuts in their budget this year. MDC has \$1.8 million for feral hog issues. They have 26 partnership positions they are working on setting up for people to work

on getting rid of feral hogs. They are wrapping up the fiscal year to spend all the landowner assistance funds. Kathryn Braden asked about the plans for the feral hogs trapping and Brent replied there would be some night hunting and some helicopter use.

NRCS Report: J. R. Flores, State conservationist, distributed maps and information about the Emergency Watershed Protection program and FEMA assistance for the recent flooding in Missouri. Forty-six counties have been approved for public assistance with applications due by July 10. Work must be sponsored by a state agency, city, county or county government. To date they have received requests from 8 sponsors. Flood recovery meetings are being held around the state the latter part of June. He stated the budget for this year is one of the better budgets he has had, but with the nation-wide hiring freeze he cannot hire any additional staff. He said he is working with other agencies for possible coordinated efforts on technical assistance. Approximately \$30 million has been preapproved for EQIP. In FY15 terraces were at the top of the list for EQIP practices, last year cover crops were at the top of the list, fencing second and terraces were third. There are 8 current RCPP projects for FY17. There are 4 RCPP projects currently in the partnership agreement development stage. The CRP enrollment is very near the acreage cap of 24 million acres. Missouri NRCS employees are currently completing status reviews for Highly Erodible Land compliance. These status reviews are being completed according to the new national ephemeral gully erosion policy. There is still a big focus on soil health. NRCS was able to hire soil health specialists in all 4 areas to provide technical support to field offices and producers. The State Technical Committee meeting will be tomorrow morning followed by the Soil & Water Commission meeting. There are currently 27 shared FOSA technical positions in the state and the hope is to continue that. The first agreements expire in 2019. In the last 5 years NRCS in Missouri has gone from 409 to 307 employees. New Area Conservationists have been confirmed – Area 1 is Grover DePriest, Area 2 is Andrea King, and Area 3 is Leslie Michael. Due to the hiring freeze, these were accomplished through lateral reassignments. J. R. also stated he will be attending the Leadership Training in Nebraska next week along with Colleen Meredith and 3 of the MASWCD Board – Ryan Britt, Ron Willis and Kenny Spooler.

Commission Report: Colleen Meredith stated they are working with NRCS on flood recovery. The Commission approved cost-share for landowners that have already repaired their flood damage to conservation practices with documentation. The flood damage cost-share can only be for the components of the practice that were damaged. Fencing will be repaired at 50% cost-share. The commission meeting is tomorrow. They have received a lot of requests for cover crops either started prior to contract approval or not meeting the no-till requirements. She said it appears there is a disconnect on the understanding of the approval process and the tillage requirements. There is additional Supervisor training scheduled in July. This is the same training that was held earlier in the year at the locations that did not have a sufficient number interested in attending to hold the training. These trainings will be at St. Peters and St. Joseph. They have received approximately 1,000 more contracts this year, they have to all be paid by June 28. They estimate spending \$36-37 million of the cost-share appropriation. There is a request to add 30% to the initial allocation being considered at the Commission meeting tomorrow. There may be conservation planner training scheduled for this fall.

LAGERS: Elizabeth Althoff of the LAGERS Retirement Fund gave an overview of the retirement plan and discussed what the procedure would be to get soil and water districts to qualify for membership in their plan. The districts fall just outside their requirements and legislation would be needed to change the wording of the state statute waiving the

requirement of the ability to levy taxes for the soil and water districts. Current district retirement plans are account balance based whereas LAGERS works like the state retirement and teacher retirement plans which is based on a formula of length of time worked, earnings and the benefit levels selected for a payment for life. Each Soil and Water Board would make the decision to participate or not, each board would choose the level of benefits for their employees. The LAGERS retirement provides security and income in retirement and includes cost of living increases yearly up to a 4% maximum. There is a 5 year vesting requirement. The District Board can allow credit for years already worked, but there is a cost for that. Actuaries prepare a cost study unique to each group for their decision on what benefit level they want. MASWCD would be the lead in working with the legislature to get the statute changed. A representative from LAGERS will be at the MASWCD Area Meetings to provide an overview of the program to those attending and get an idea of the amount of support from the districts.

Employee Association Report: Sandy Stratman reported for Matt Blansett who was out of town. She state their next meeting will be June 28 and there will be a LAGERS representative there to provide the same type of information to the Employees Association that the MASWCD Board heard today. The dues notice for the Employee Association dues has been sent out recently.

Farm Bureau: Kelly Smith was not able to attend.

Committee Reports: Ryan Britt reported he had appointed committees but needed to have them approved as the By Laws call for. The Strategic Plan Committee members are Kenny Lovelace, Sandy Stratman and Andrea McKeown. The Budget Committee members are Beverly Dometorch and Kenny Spooler. The By Laws Committee members are Ron Willis, Kathryn Braden, Kenny Spooler and Dan Greeson. Dan Greeson made a motion to approve the appointment of the Strategic Plan Committee, Kathryn Braden seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Ron Willis made a motion to approve the Budget Committee, Kathryn Braden seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Beverly Dometorch made a motion to approve the By Laws Committee, Kenny Spooler seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget — Beverly Dometorch reported they are working on developing a budget. They did discuss who should be on the bank accounts and decided on the President, Treasurer and Executive Director

Bylaws — Ron Willis distributed copies of the proposed changes to the By Laws the committee has worked on. Most of the changes are cleaning up language within the By Laws. The election of Area Directors has been addressed including how to handle a tie vote. They have also addressed staggering the Area Director elections so that half of the board is elected each year. Kenny Lovelace made a motion to submit these proposed changes to the districts for approval at the business meeting at the Training Conference. Dan Greeson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Strategic Plan – A list of suggestions for improving attendance at the Training Conference was distributed and discussed. Ron Willis made a motion to accept the Strategic Plan Committee report, Kathryn Braden seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business: Colleen Meredith stated the dates they are looking at for Area Meetings is July 31 through August 3 with 2 meetings each day. The circuit would start in Poplar Bluff and travel west to West Plains followed by Springfield, Sedalia, St. Joseph, Chillicothe, Shelbina and St. Peters. Exact locations have not been finalized and could change slightly but days and time of day probably will not change. With the LAGERS presentation they are looking at a 4-hour meeting which will include a meal, most likely sandwiches.

New Business: A grant through NRCS has been approved to help districts with the cost of Contractor workshops throughout the state. This will also be on the agenda at Area Meetings. The grant will help provide funds to pay for speakers and facility costs, as well as transportation if they want to go to the field as part of the workshop. As the match to the grant funds, MASWCD will provide some funding to help with meal costs. A motion was made by Ron Willis, seconded by Dan Greeson to approve the grant. Motion carried unanimously.

The 2017 Training Conference was discussed. Theme suggestions were reviewed and Kathryn Braden made a motion for the theme and logo of Meeting the Challenge. Beverly Dometorch seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The Board discussed the idea of using barcoded name tags as had been previously mentioned. The cost to do this along with the time to scan everyone's nametag to enter the meal areas may be prohibitive at this time. Ideas for workshops were reviewed as well as suggestions for Opening Session speakers. There was some discussion on moving the Trade Show upstairs for better access and maybe extending the hours of the Trade Show. Beverly asked if there would be a Distinguished Service award this year and Kenny Lovelace suggested an award for past Legislators that had been beneficial to the districts. Kenny made a motion to have a past legislator award, seconded by Dan Greeson. Motion carried unanimously.

AREA Reports: Area 1 – Ron Willis reported it is getting dry. They have had 2 weeks of the best haying (no rain). They are having an issue with Army worms.

Area 2 – David Morris stated about all the cost share funds in his area will be spent. The crops look fair but need rain.

Area 3 – Henry Heinze stated he agreed with what Ron and David had reported, it is dry.

Area 4 – Beverly Dometorch stated she met with aids from Senator Blunt and McCaskill and Congresswoman Hartzler as well as her state representative. About half the districts in her area liked the cover crops but several said landowners did not like the delayed payments. They do need some rain.

Area 5 – Derrick Cope stated it is dry, beans are coming up (tilled ground beans look good).

Area 6 – Kathryn Braden said it is starting to get dry, they have had plenty of rain, quite a bit of flooding.

Area 7 – Dan Greeson stated they have not had quite as much rain as further south, things look pretty good.

Area 8 – Kenny Spooler said they have had plenty of rain, crops look good but everybody got started late. They are currently cutting wheat, the hay is all made.

Correspondence: Ryan Britt presented a request from the state Women in Ag for support for the 2017 conference. Beverly Dometrorch made a motion to send \$250. No second to her motion. Dan Greeson made a motion to send \$500, seconded by Ron Willis. Beverly Dometrorch moved to amend the motion to \$250, Kathryn Braden seconded. The vote on the amendment was 3 in favor and 4 against, it failed. Vote on the original motion was 6 in favor and 1 against, it passed.

Ryan Britt stated he had asked for input earlier on hosting a legislative tour to show the importance of the NRCS technical assistance to the state cost-share program. Kathryn Braden stated that Senator Blunt always has a tour but the focus of the NRCS technical assistance has not specifically been included. She said she would see if that could be included in this year's tour on the need for that funding and how it affects our state cost share program.

Other Business:

The next meeting date will be Tuesday, August 22 at 1:00 pm at the Jefferson City USDA Service Center. Motion for adjournment was made by Henry Heinze, seconded by Ron Willis. Motion carried unanimously (8-0). The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

Ryan Britt, President