



## Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

# MASWCD MINUTES Conference Call June 23, 2020

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## Present

Ryan Britt, President  
Kenny Lovelace, Past President  
Ron Willis, Area I  
David Morris, Area II  
Beverly Dometrorch, Area IV  
Mike Haeffner, Area V  
Harold Lampe, Area VI Alternate  
David Hutsell, Area VII  
Kenny Spooler, Area VIII  
Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

Scott Edwards, NRCS  
State Conservationist  
Brad McCord, NRCS  
Jim Boschert, DNR SWCP  
Melissa White,  
Employees Association  
Andrea McKeown, Randolph SWCD

## Not Present

Scot Shively, Area III  
Kathryn Braden, Area VI  
Henry Heinze

President Ryan Britt welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Quorum established and the agenda was approved.

Ryan discussed with the Board the issue of holding Area Meetings this year due to the restrictions and concerns of COVID-19. Beverly Dometrorch made a motion to not have Area Meetings this year and handle the Area Director elections by email or mail in ballot. Ron Willis seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously (7-0) -- voice vote (Ron Willis – yes, David Morris – yes, Beverly Dometrorch – yes, Mike Haeffner – yes, Harold Lampe – yes, David Hutsell – yes, Kenny Spooler – yes). The deadline set for the ballots to be submitted by is Training Conference.

The Board then discussed the Training Conference for this year. Tan-Tar-A has provided the guidelines for COVID-19 at the current time which would require some modifications to the current Training Conference agenda. They decided to wait until August for the final decision to see where things stand at that time on restrictions, etc.

Colleen Meredith retired from DNR in April. It was not known at the Training Conference last year when her retirement was planned for. Ron Willis made a motion to present her with a plaque and gift card the same as we did for J.R. Flores at the conference this past year. Beverly Dometrorch seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously (7-0) – voice vote (Ron Willis – yes, David Morris – yes, Beverly Dometrorch – yes, Mike Haeffner – yes, Harold Lampe – yes, David Hutsell – yes, Kenny Spooler – yes).

The Board then discussed what type of recognition or contribution they wanted to do for Karen Brinkman. A college fund has been set up for her children. Brad McCord stated that NRCS is looking into the possibility of a scholarship in her name. Harold Lampe made a motion to send \$250 to the college fund. Beverly Dometrorch seconded. Motion carried unanimously (7-0) – voice vote (Ron Willis – yes, David Morris – yes, Beverly Dometrorch – yes, Mike Haeffner – yes, Harold Lampe – yes, David Hutsell – yes, Kenny Spooler – yes).

Brad McCord introduced Scott Edwards, the new NRCS State Conservationist for Missouri. He provided some background information. He is from Louisiana and Texas and has been with the agency for 27 years. He stated NRCS is moving through the process of reopening the offices. All but 7 in Missouri are moving into Phase 1. In Phase 2 the employees can start seeing customers by appointment but the offices are still locked to the general public. He stated NRCS had hired several entry level positions, however several of those positions were filled by district employees. NRCS will try to provide assistance to those offices while they go through the process of replacing their district employees. He stated the work of the agency right now is trying to get the programs through the process of sign-ups, rankings, and processing whatever payments are ready. Beverly Dometrorch asked if the budget, due to the current economy, would affect the programs in Missouri. Mr. Edwards stated that since the programs are part of the Farm Bill they should be okay. The State Technical Committee will meet tomorrow by conference call. It is more of an update on where we are right now.

Jim Boschert stated that DNR is currently interviewing for Colleen's position but not sure when it will be filled. Jake Wilson will fill the vacancy of Judy Stinson. He stated they are wrapping up the cost-share, tomorrow is the cut-off day for them to get the payments processed. It looks like there will be a little over \$35.6 million claimed this year in cost-share. The Commission held a conference call earlier today and they made a decision to allow landowners up to 1 year after a grazing system payment to get their grazing school attendance done. If they do not get to school by that time, all of the funds will have to be paid back. He said there are currently approximately 30 district vacancies. They are holding off on filling them due to COVID-19 issues and potential budget issues. There are 4 vacancies in the Program Office with 3 of them on hold. When asked about the elections for board supervisors, he stated they were hoping to be able to get the District Operations Committee together for a meeting to discuss the election process. Melissa White asked about computer access to programs away from the office. Jim Boschert stated that the IT staff is very aware of the issue. The next Commission meeting will be at the State Fair on August 19.

Melissa White said she is trying to set a date for an in-person meeting for the District Employees Association in late July.

There being no further business a motion for adjournment was made by David Morris, seconded by Ron Willis. Motion carried unanimously (7-0). The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m. The next meeting for the MASWCD Board will be August 18, place and format to be decided.

Respectfully submitted,

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Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

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Ryan Britt, President