



Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

MASWCD MINUTES Conference Call March 10, 2021

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Present

Ron Willis, President
Ryan Britt, Past President
Jim Carlson, Area I
Steve Radcliff, Area II
Scot Shively, Area III
Beverly Dometrorch, Area IV
Mike Haeffner, Area V
Harold Lampe, Area VI
David Hutsell, Area VII
Henry Heinze, Treasurer
Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

Melissa White,
Employees Association
Kurt Beckmann,
DNR SWCP Director
Scott Edwards, NRCS
State Conservationist

Not Present

Kenny Spooler, Area VIII

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

MASWCD minutes from the 12-8-2020 conference call were reviewed and approved. Motion for approval made by Harold Lampe and seconded by Beverly Dometrorch. Motion approved unanimously (7-0).

Henry Heinze stated the balance of the bank account is approximately \$78,000 which is about \$17,000 more than last year at this time. He said we are at 69% for paid dues. He will send the board a list of districts that have paid dues for 2021 so far. There has been very little change in the balance of the bank accounts held in Jeff City for the MDC Incentive funds, etc. MDC is working to get more activity in those incentive funds so hopefully more of those dollars will be spent. Motion for approval of the treasurer report made by Scot Shively, seconded by David Hutsell. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

NRCS Report: Scott Edwards reported that USDA has recently provided new guidance on COVID-19 compliance which no longer includes the phases for offices but the offices will be staffed at no more than 25% capacity. Missouri had just over 35 offices that had been in phase 2 which allowed landowners (one at a time) into the foyer and allowed up to 10 employees to be working in the office. Now all offices will operate at the 25% capacity guideline with no customers allowed into the building. He stated they have provided headquarters a copy of the plan on how Missouri was moving through the phases in hopes they will allow some return to that plan. The mask mandate is agency wide and requires masks the entire time employees are in the office unless they are in a closed office alone. Travel is limited to mission critical. They are working with DNR and the DC in the offices that have district audits scheduled to try to allow auditors access to the office and still stay within the 25% capacity requirement. NRCS employees are

included in those eligible for COVID vaccines beginning March 15. There is a new program within EQIP that will function like CSP but does not have to include the whole farm. Scott also stated they have just filled some key vacancies and have added 25 technical positions that the vacancy announcements should be available for in the next couple of weeks.

DNR Report: Kurt Boeckmann said the cost-share is currently at \$39 million obligated and pending. They are discussing whether to have another supplemental or not. The District Operations committee will meet next week virtually to discuss the district election rules. They will not discuss anything else, still hoping to have an in-person meeting later for other discussions. The next Commission meeting is April 9 and will be virtual. They are hoping for an in-person meeting for June. Recently there was a webinar on the new landowner authorization form and the new pest management check sheet. There was a good attendance for the webinar, the information will also be posted to the SWCD intranet. There are some audits scheduled and they realize it is difficult with the current office situations, but NRCS is working to help allow auditors access to the office when necessary. Harold Lampe asked if the comments submitted by districts on the election process would be reviewed by the District Operations committee. He also asked if the recommendations from the committee would be sent out to the districts prior to the Commission meeting where they will be discussed. Kurt Boeckmann indicated yes the comments submitted by districts will be included in the items reviewed by the committee. He also stated he will check into the possibility of sending out the committee recommendations prior to the Commission meeting. There will be time during the Commission meeting for comments from the public on what is being proposed. Kurt Boeckmann stated there has been no date set for the Practices Committee to meet yet, still hoping for an in-person meeting for them.

Employees Association: Melissa White reported their board will meet sometime yet in March, probably by Web-ex. They are still getting their awards presented. She said she is not really hearing a lot from districts right now. She did ask about the plan for a state-wide conference call to discuss the need for continued use of districts entering conservation plans and maps into Conservation Desktop. This has not been scheduled yet.

Ron Willis stated that during the last meeting the board made a decision to hold the Education Seminar every other year. There is no legislation currently that concerns the districts. Kurt Boeckmann said that if they would get a request for a fiscal note on legislation he would let Ron know so plans could be made if it was something that needed to be addressed by MASWCD. Ron stated that NACD has indicated several states are working on healthy soils legislation. Missouri is a little different in that we would not need any funding tied to healthy soils legislation so for us it would be more of a resolution of support instead of a legislative action. Harold Lampe asked about legislative priorities. Ron indicated we had not actually compiled a priority list in the past but that the healthy soils could be a beginning to this list. There was also some discussion on the 30x30 initiative of the Biden administration to protect at least 30 percent of our land, ocean areas and inland waters by 2030. Ryan Britt stated that NACD encourages participation with the soil and water districts and sustainable practices on a voluntary basis.

The topic of Area Meetings was discussed. The issue of how many might attend and if travel restrictions will be lifted by summer was considered. Steve Radcliff made a motion to hold Area Meetings as normally had been held in the past. Harold Lampe seconded. Motion carried unanimously (7-0) with the following voice vote: Jim Carlson – yes, Steve Radcliff – yes, Scot Shively – yes, Beverly Dometorch – yes, Mike Haeffner – yes, Harold Lampe – yes, David Hutsell – yes. Since this is an odd number year, there will be Area Director elections in areas 1-3-5-7. Nominating committees need to be named now since there will be summer meetings to hold the elections. According to the bylaws, votes can be submitted by mail to the nominating committee prior to the election or brought by the board or district staff to the Area Meeting. Award nominations for Educator, Cooperator or the Hugh Hammond Bennett award are due to the Area Directors or to MASWCD by July 1. Areas that wish to present Area Awards will have time for award selection after July 1.

The next item discussed was the Training Conference. The dates contracted for with Tan-Tar-A (Margaretville) are November 28-30, 2021. Steve Radcliff made a motion to go forward with plans for the conference this year. David Hutsell seconded. Motion carried unanimously (7-0) with the following voice: Jim Carlson – yes, Steve Radcliff – yes, Scot Shively – yes, Beverly Dometrorch – yes, Mike Haeffner – yes, Harold Lampe – yes, David Hutsell – yes. It was suggested to have a committee work on the planning of the conference. The committee will consist of Peggy Lemons, Sandy Burd, Andrea McKeown and Harold Lampe.

Ron Willis and Ryan Britt reviewed the NACD Annual Meeting which was held virtually this year in early February. They both stated it was a good meeting but nothing like meeting in person. The Legislative Fly-In will be in a couple of weeks. It will be virtual for this year. The NACD summer meeting is planned for Chicago in person at this time. Next year's NACD Annual Meeting will be held in Orlando in early February 2022.

Area Reports:

Area 1 – Jim Carlson stated it has been windy, the ground is pretty dry but the dozers and a few tractors are running.

Area 2 – Steve Radcliff agreed with the same, dozers are running and starting anhydrous application.

Area 3 – Scot Shively said his area was about the same, windy, not a lot of anhydrous yet, still a little wet in places.

Area 4 – Beverly Dometrorch said drills are in use. She continues to hear issues from districts on the limited office hours and working from home.

Area 5 – Mike Haeffner said dozers and tractors are rolling. Some people are still trying to burn even in the wind.

Area 6 – Harold Lampe said they did not enjoy the northern winter this year. Fertilizer prices have increased significantly. It may be interesting to see what happens with the nutrient management contracts.

Area 7 – David Hutsell said it has also been windy. There is a lot of fertilizer being spread, drills are out in use but still a little on the dry side.

Area 8 – No report.

Other Business: Name badges will be ordered for the new board members as well as business cards printed.

A motion was made by Scot Shively to have the next board meeting in person. Beverly Dometrorch seconded. Motion carried unanimously (7-0). The next meeting for the MASWCD Board will be set for Wednesday, June 23 with the location to be determined.

There being no further business a motion for adjournment was made by David Hutsell, seconded by Scot Shively. Motion carried unanimously (7-0). The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

Ron Willis, President

