

## MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met October 5, 2009, at the Agriculture Building Board Room located at 2800 N. Lincoln in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chairman Matt Gard. He stated this was a regularly scheduled meeting in accordance with the Open Meeting Law, Title 25, Sections 301 and following as amended. The agenda for this meeting was posted October 1, 2009, at the front entrance of the building.

### ROLL CALL

Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary, took roll call and the following members were in attendance:

Matt Gard, Chair  
Mike Rooker, Vice Chair  
George Stunkard, Secretary  
Virginia Kidd, Member

### Members Absent:

Dan Lowrance, Member

### Others in attendance were:

Mike Thralls, Executive Director  
Ben Pollard, Assistant Director  
Steve Coffman, Financial Management and Human Resources Director  
Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director  
Greg Kloxin, Water Quality Program Assistant Director  
Mike Kastl, Abandoned Mine Land Program Director  
Mike Sharp, Information Technology Director  
Lisa Knauf, District Services Director  
Mark Harrison, Information Representative  
Dennis Boney, Watershed Technician  
Johnny Pelley, Watershed Technician  
Candace Cunningham, Awards and Recognition Committee  
Cheryl Cheadle, Blue Thumb Program Coordinator  
Jean Lemmon, Blue Thumb Quality Assurance Officer  
Jeanette Nance, Governor's Office  
Ron Hilliard, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist  
Francie Tolle, Farm Service Agency State Executive Director  
Clay Pope, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director  
Bryan Smith, eCapitol  
Mike Wofford, Public  
Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary

Following roll call, a moment of silence was held in remembrance of former district directors Jess Lam - Garvin, and Sam Messenger - Harmon County, and former Governor Henry Bellmon.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Ms. Kidd led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the minutes of the September 1, 2009, Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

Mike Thralls, Executive Director, presented recommendations for appointment of conservation district directors as listed in Exhibit #1. A motion was made by Mr. Rooker and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to approve district director appointments listed with terms to expire as indicated. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

**CLAIMS/FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Steve Coffman, Financial Management and Human Resources Director, presented the claims and financial statement as listed in Exhibit #2. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the claims and financial statement. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

**RECOGNITION OF EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER**

Jean Lemmon, Blue Thumb Quality Assurance Officer, was recognized as Employee of the Quarter.

**RESOLUTION APPROVING/AUTHORIZING APPLICATION TO THE OWRB FOR ARRA GREEN PROJECT FUNDS FOR A GREEN ROOF DEMONSTRATION AT THE NATIONAL WEATHER CENTER, NORMAN, OKLAHOMA**

Mr. Thralls presented a formal resolution for approval authorizing an application to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board for American Reinvestment and Recovery Act Green Project Funds in the total aggregate principal amount of \$86,500.00 to work with the University of Oklahoma for a Green Roof Demonstration at the National Weather Center in Norman, Oklahoma as listed in Exhibit #3. A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the resolution as listed. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

**PRESENTATION OF AGREEMENTS**

Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, presented agreements for approval as listed in Exhibit #4. He recommended ratification of agreements (a) through (c) which were previously approved by Chair Gard. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to ratify the agreements as presented. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Mr. Pollard recommended approval of new agreements listed as (d) and (e). A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the new agreements as listed. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Mr. Pollard recommended approval of the amended agreement listed as (f). A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the amended agreement as listed. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

### **OUT OF STATE TRAVEL REQUESTS**

Mr. Thralls presented travel requests for approval as listed in Exhibit #5. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the requests as listed. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

### **GOVERNOR'S WATER CONFERENCE**

The Governor's Water Conference will be held on November 3-4, 2009 at the Sheraton-Reed Conference Center in Midwest City, Oklahoma. Messrs. Rooker and Gard will attend, Ms. Kidd will not attend, and Mr. Stunkard is undecided. Staff will contact Mr. Lowrance.

### **CO-SPONSOR THE OACD 2009 AREA MEETINGS**

A motion was made by Mr. Rooker and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to co-sponsor the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts 2009 Area Meetings as listed below. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

- a. Area 1. October 29 - Dewey County Fairgrounds, Taloga. Host: Dewey County Conservation District.
- b. Area 2. November 17 - Shawnee Expo. Host: Shawnee Conservation District.
- c. Area 3. November 10 - Faith Freewill Baptist Church, Bartlesville. Host: Caney Valley Conservation District.
- d. Area 4. November 5 - Great Plains Coliseum, Lawton. Hosts: Comanche County and Tillman County Conservation Districts.
- e. Area 5. November 19 - Mary H Herron Community Conference Center, Idabel. Host: Little River Conservation District

### **FRANCIE TOLLE, STATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FARM SERVICE AGENCY**

Mr. Gard introduced Francie Tolle, the new State Executive Director of the Oklahoma Farm Service Agency. Ms. Tolle provided members with a copy of the FY08 annual report which is an overview of programs. She reported on the Conservation Reserve Program listening session held in Oklahoma City. Ms. Tolle discussed the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program stating that 140 acres are enrolled. She stated that 1300 acres have been pending for about a year and would like to work with Commission staff to improve participation in this program. Ms. Tolle stated that the Sugar Creek/Cobb Creek project is moving forward.

There are 10,200 acres in the Grassland Reserve Program. Ms. Tolle stated that the FSA will issue final Direct and Counter Cyclical payments this month. The Average Crop Revenue Election Program has 12,000 contracts which is one of the highest in the nation. Ms. Tolle gave an update on the following new disaster programs: Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program, Livestock Forage Program, Livestock Indemnity Program and Emergency Livestock Assistance Program.

### **COST SHARE PROGRAM YEAR 11B SPECIAL REQUESTS**

Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director, presented cost-share program year 11B special requests from Adair County Conservation District to add Rural Waste Septic Systems (human waste) and Stephens County Conservation District to add Fencing (382) for cross fencing. He stated that the policy adopted by the Commission for the use of bond money for the Locally Led Cost Share Program was limited to the repair or restoration of conservation practices damaged by flood events in 2007 and 2008. The practices requested for approval do not meet the criteria, therefore, the Commission has no alternative but to deny these requests. A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to deny the requests. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

### **USE OF BOND FUNDS AS MATCH FOR EQIP WORK IN SUGAR CREEK WATERSHED**

Mr. Pollard stated that \$3 million of the bond funds has been designated by the Commission for Caddo County watersheds and would be used as match for repair work on FEMA and a proposed Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. Staff is working with landowners, FEMA and the conservation district as a number of acres of damaged lands extend beyond the current easement. Mr. Pollard recommended that the Commission approve up to \$100,000 from the bond funds as match for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) work in the Sugar Creek Watershed to assist the landowners. A motion was made by Ms. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker approve up to \$100,00 from the bond funds as match for the EQIP work in the Sugar Creek Watershed. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

### **ALLOWABLE UNIT COST INCREASES FOR SOLAR POWERED PUMPING PLANTS**

Mr. Kloxin recommended approval of allowable unit cost increases for solar powered pumping plants necessary to meet Natural Resources Conservation Service specifications from current rate of \$3.06 gal/day to \$9.09 gal/day for the North Canadian River Project. A motion was made by Mr. Rooker and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to approve the increases. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

### **ALLOWABLE UNIT COSTS FOR WATER TAP IN NORTHEASTERN OK PROJECTS**

Mr. Kloxin recommended approval of allowable unit cost increases for pasture water tap in northeastern Oklahoma projects (Eucha/Spavinaw, Illinois River, and Honey Creek) from the Natural Resources Conservation Service current rate of \$440 to reimburse for project-specific cost-share percentage rate of the current cost of \$1000. A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the increases. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

### **COMMISSION'S FY2011 BUDGET REQUEST**

Mr. Thralls presented the Commission's FY2011 budget request as listed in the newly revised Exhibit #6. He is recommending the Commission approve page 1 of the exhibit as the FY11 budget. Mr. Thralls explained that if this was a normal budget year, staff would recommend submitting Page 2 as the request. Pages 3 and 4 represent requests from conservation districts. Mr. Thralls stated that because of contract earnings from rehabilitation projects, he believes there will be no need for furloughs this year. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the request as presented. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **RECOGNITION OF THE CANEY VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Waymon Montgomery, Caney Valley Conservation District Chair, introduced directors Frank Cranor and Kirk Darnell and employees Alyson and Jick Grant. They were recognized for their national achievement in rehabilitating the entire Double Creek Watershed Project. Mr. Gard presented the district with a Conservation Commission commendation and a picture of the Double Creek Watershed. Jeanette Nance, Governor's Liaison, presented the district with a Governor's commendation and Ron Hilliard, NRCS State Conservationist, presented the district with a certificate of appreciation. Mr. Stunkard presented Jick Grant and the district framed pictures of the six rehabilitated watershed sites.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Ms. Kidd and Messrs. Stunkard and Gard attended the Double Creek Watershed rehabilitation celebration and stated it was an excellent event. They expressed appreciation to the Conservation Programs Division for their work with this event.

Ms. Kidd attended the funeral of former Garvin Conservation District director Jess Lam. She also participated in the National Association of Abandoned Mine Lands Programs (NAAML) Annual Meeting in Rogers, Arkansas and complimented AML staff members Dianne Ireton, Charlotte Stieber and Mike Sharp on an excellent job with the conference.

Mr. Stunkard participated in the National Watershed Coalition O&M Workshop and stated it was a good event. He also participated in the Sallisaw Creek groundbreaking ceremony as the first site to be rehabilitated with stimulus funds. Mr. Stunkard attended the NAAML Annual Meeting awards banquet.

Mr. Rooker attended a farm appreciation banquet in Shawnee with 200 participants. He attended a meeting with the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack in El Reno. Mr. Rooker attended the Governor's SeptemberFest.

Mr. Gard also attended the Turkey Creek Watershed celebration.

## **OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF**

*Administration - Executive Director:* Mr. Thralls commended the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts and the National Watershed Coalition for their work with the National Association of Conservation Districts to make sure the Small Watershed Program was included in the stimulus funds package.

Mr. Thralls participated in an interim study tour held recently to look at water needs in southwestern Oklahoma. The Speaker of the House and 20 legislators also participated. Stephens County stops included Lakes Humphries and Fuqua. He congratulated the Stephens County

Conservation District for assistance with the tour and the Cotton County Conservation District for assistance with the lunch.

Mr. Thralls stated that the poultry lawsuit is entering its third week of trial. The State has called four witnesses including Shanon Phillips, the Water Quality Program Director.

*District Services Division:* Lisa Knauf, Director, reported on attending the National Association of State Conservation Agencies annual meeting. A listening session was held for the Resource Conservation Act which requires the Natural Resources Conservation Service to gather input on all programs and how they conduct business. She continues to work with conservation districts on audits. Ms. Knauf is also working with staff on ARRA funding and reporting requirements as each grant must be reported on every quarter.

*Water Quality Program:* Greg Kloxin, Assistant Director, recognized the Blue Thumb staff and provided copies of the program's 2010 Calendar. He also recognized the water quality program for its successes that are recognized on a national level. Mr. Kloxin stated that several staff attended the National Monitoring Conference in New Orleans and gave presentations. He also reported on a tour of the Honey Creek Demonstration Farm.

*Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program:* Mike Kastl, Director, thanked Ms. Kidd and Mr. Stunkard for participating in the NAAMLPA Annual Meeting and for their kind words about the AML staff. Mr. Kastl reported on AML emergencies and stated that the Highway 270 project has tripled in cost due to the size of the project.

*Financial Management and Human Resources Division:* Steve Coffman, Director, stated that the budget request will be finalized and submitted to the Office of State Finance. He reported that the agency's Affirmative Action Plan has been completed. Mr. Coffman stated that all GAP reporting has been completed as well.

*Information Technology Division:* Mike Sharp, Director, reported on the NAAMLPA annual meeting and stated that Ms. Ireton and Ms. Stieber worked tirelessly to make this meeting so successful. Several technical papers were presented and tours were held.

*Conservation Programs Division:* Robert Toole, Director, again recognized the Caney Valley Conservation District for their contribution to the Double Creek celebration. He stated that the celebration was used as a training exercise for the Dam Safety ICS Team, which includes NRCS staff as well as Commission staff.

Mr. Toole reported on the National Watershed Coalition O&M Workshop hosted by the Commission and held recently in Oklahoma City. It was attended by participants from 9 states. Sixty-six Oklahoma conservation district representatives were in attendance.

Mr. Toole also reported that federal funding was received for the NRCS and the Commission to perform assessments on 141 watershed dams for the rehabilitation program. This is the first step for districts to qualify for federal rehabilitation funding.

Mr. Toole reported progress on House Bill 1884, which requires the Commission and the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to submit a report by December 25, 2009. HB 1884 directs OCC and OWRB to submit recommendations for addressing development downstream in the breach inundation area of watershed dams.

Mr. Toole provided an update on the Economic Impact Study performed by Dr. Dave Shidler and presented in a report last February. Dr. Shideler is developing fact sheets to assist districts with compiling a report for specifically for their district.

Mr. Toole reported on the Kingfisher flood project stating that the draft plan has been submitted to the flood committee for review. He also reported that the Wildlife Expo was held recently and over 40,000 people attended. He recognized Conservation Programs employees Karla Beatty, Johnny Pelley, Dennis Boney and George Moore for their work with the OCC exhibit.

*Administration - Assistant Director:* Mr. Pollard provided a status report (Attachment a) on ARRA funds received by the Commission. He stated that the Commission is required to do extensive reporting on the receipt and use of these funds.

#### **OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

Clay Pope, Executive Director, reported that the Executive Board concurs with the Commission's FY2011 budget request. The board wants to establish a network with contact information in each conservation district and with the media.

The Area Meetings are scheduled and due to budget concerns each district will need to make the decision to participate.

Mr. Pope stated that the OACD received over \$300,000 from the Department of Commerce to expand the carbon program. This money will help pay salary for Sarah Love Pope and one other employee. The Western Farmers Electric Cooperative is wanting to expand the carbon program to four areas in the state.

Mr. Pope reported on attending the southwest Oklahoma legislative tour and a meeting with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

The OACD is working on its quarterly newsletter and Land Judging funding. Staff will be attending an interim study meeting on October 27 regarding eastern red cedar eradication.

#### **USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**

Ron Hilliard, State Conservationist, reported that a visit from the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to Oklahoma was the highlight of the month. He stated that the Oklahoma office is operating under a continuing resolution through the end of October and that the budget for this year looks good.

Mr. Hilliard attended the Forest and Grow Conference in Wagoner.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on November 2, 2009, in the Agriculture Building Board Room, 2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma beginning at 9:30 a.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business a motion was made by Mr. Rooker and seconded by Ms. Kidd to adjourn. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

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Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on November 2, 2009.

  
CHAIR