

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met March 8, 2010, in the Governor's Large Conference Room, 2nd Floor State Capitol Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Acting Chair George Stunkard. 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 March 3, 2010, at the front entrance of the building.

ROLL CALL

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

George Stunkard, Acting Chair
Mike Rooker, Vice Chair
Virginia Kidd, Member

Members Absent:

Matt Gard, Chair
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
Shanon Phillips, Water Quality Program Director
Mike Kastl, Abandoned Mine Land Program Director
Mike Sharp, Information Technology Director
Lisa Knauf, District Services Director
Mark Harrison, Information Representative
Janet Stewart, General Counsel
Stacey Day, Awards and Recognition Committee Chair
Wes Shockley, Water Quality
Brooks Tramell, Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator
Kevin Varner, District Services Liaison
Tammy Sawatzky, Conservation Programs Deputy Director
Jeannette Nance, Office of the Governor
Ryan Chaffin, Assistant Attorney General
Gary O'Neill, Natural Resources Conservation Service Assistant State Conservationist
Steve Thompson, Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Associate Commissioner
Clay Pope, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director
Bryan Smith, eCapitol.net
Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary
Trey Lam, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts President

Kim Farber, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Vice President
Dan Herald, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Area 1 Director
Bob Hoffman, Garfield County Conservation District Director
Steve McGlaufflin, Kiowa County Conservation District Director
Jimmy Emmons, Dewey County Conservation District Director
Bill Wilson, Haskell County Conservation District Director
Jay Franklin, Craig County Conservation District Director
Jo Callison, Craig County Conservation District Programs Coordinator
Sandy Allen, Craig County Conservation District Engineering Aide
Scott Cormack, Alfalfa County Conservation District Director
Jay Hague, Alfalfa County Conservation District Director
Verlin Hart, Lincoln County Conservation District Director
O.B. Fouquet, Lincoln County Conservation District Director
Gary Bledsoe, Lincoln County Conservation District Director
Dan Sebert, Lincoln County Conservation District Director

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Rooker led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2010, Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Kidd, 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 Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve district director appointments as listed with terms to expire as indicated. Those voting aye were: Kidd, 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. Rooker and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the claims and financial statement. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

PRESENTATION OF AGREEMENTS

Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, presented agreements for approval as listed in Exhibit #3. He recommended approval of the amended agreement listed as (a). A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the amended agreement listed as (a). Those voting aye were: Kidd, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

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

EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

Wes Shockley, Water Quality Specialist, was recognized for being named Employee of the Quarter.

OUT OF STATE TRAVEL REQUESTS

Mr. Thralls presented travel requests for approval as listed in Exhibit #4. He recommended ratification of the request listed as (a) as it was approved previously by Chairman Gard. A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to ratify approval of the request listed as (a). Those voting aye were: Kidd, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Mr. Thralls recommended approval of the new request listed as (b)-(c). A motion was made by Mr. Rooker and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the request listed as (b)-(c). Those voting aye were: Kidd, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

SPONSORSHIP OF NATIONAL LAND AND RANGE JUDGING CONTEST

A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to co-sponsor the National Land and Range Judging Contest, May 4-6, 2010, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Mr. Thralls was questioned as to the amount of money the Commission provides and stated that this is for staff assistance only. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

ALFALFA COUNTY CD REQUEST FOR SMALL WATERSHED REVOLVING FUNDS

The Alfalfa County Conservation District is requesting up to \$50,000.00 from the Small Watershed Revolving Funds to secure land rights necessary for the construction of the flood-water retarding structure known as Turkey Creek Site 8. A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the request. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

COST SHARE PROGRAM YEAR 12 SPECIAL REQUESTS

Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director, presented Cost-Share Program Year 12 special requests as listed below and recommended approval:

- a. Cimarron County to use Pipelines (516) as a standalone practice
- b. Nowata County to add the following components to Brush Management (314)
 - i. Cutting & Spraying >30% canopy
 - ii. Chemical Brush Control - all other chemicals

A motion was made by Mr. Rooker and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the requests as listed. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

ADOPT AMENDMENTS TO OKLAHOMA AML RECLAMATION PROGRAM RULES

Janet Stewart, General Counsel, presented amendments to the Oklahoma Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program rules cited in Title 155, Chapter 15 of the Oklahoma Administrative Code in compliance with the requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act, 75 O.S. Section 250 et seq. and recommended the amendments be approved. She stated that the amendments bring the state rules in line with the federal rules governing the AML program.

After discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to adopt the amendments as presented. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

ADOPT NEW RULES TO CONTROLLED BURN INDEMNITY FUND

Ms. Stewart presented the newly proposed rules entitled Controlled Burn Indemnity Fund to be cited in Title 155, Chapter 45 of the Oklahoma Administrative Code in compliance with the requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act, 75 O.S. Section 250 et seq. and recommended approval. Ms. Stewart stated that this program will provide landowners compensation for eligible losses incurred from a properly conducted prescribed burn should it spread beyond the control of the burner.

After discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to adopt the newly proposed rules as presented. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

RECOGNITION OF STATE LEGISLATORS RECEIVING OACD AWARDS

Representative Skye McNeil and Senator Mike Johnson were honored during the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) Annual Meeting legislative banquet however they were unable to attend. Clay Pope, OACD Executive Director, presented Representative McNeil with the Big Hugh Award and Senator Johnson with the President's award.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Members reported on attending the OACD State Meeting and agreed it was well attended with good sessions. Ms. Kidd appreciated recognition of her service to the Commission during the banquet. Members thanked the staff for their work with the meeting.

Mr. Rooker reported on attending a town hall meeting in McLoud regarding the RC&D program.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF

Administration - Executive Director: Mr. Thralls complimented Trey Lam, OACD President and Mr. Pope for a successful state meeting.

Mr. Thralls stated that Chair Matt Gard was recovering from a motorcycle accident.

Mr. Thralls reported that a bill has been passed out of committee that would consolidate the Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission into the Commission and the Department of Tourism. The three agencies have been requested by the legislature to present an outline of how consolidation could occur. This consolidation was not initiated by the Commission. Mr. Thralls was questioned

about the OSRC members and what would happen with them. Mr. Thralls stated that the Commission is proposing that an advisory group is formed. He is not in favor of reshaping the Commission's governing composition. Mr. Thralls also reported that the OSRC receives funding from fees, donations from poultry companies and through agreements with the agencies. The OSRC has 2 full-time rangers that are CLEET certified.

Mr. Thralls stated that agencies can expect a ten percent cut in their FY11 budgets; however, it is important that the Commission receive full funding for the bond payment.

Mr. Thralls stated that closing arguments were made on the poultry lawsuit and the case is now with the judge.

District Services Division: Lisa Knauf, Director, who worked on state meeting preparations reported that attendance was equal to last year and that the Tuesday morning session was better attended.

Ms. Knauf has been working on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agreements stating that work will move into central Oklahoma with these new agreements. She also worked with the NRCS to get three district employees enrolled in the technical boot camp.

Water Quality Program: Shanon Phillips, Director, stated that the carbon program has accepted applications from private verifiers. The program will be leaning less on the NRCS for educational training and relying more on its own staff.

Ms. Phillips provided copies of a handout describing how the Commission is reducing nonpoint source pollution in the state through planning, implementation, education and monitoring. This handout will be delivered to all legislators today.

Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program: Mike Kastl, Director, stated that the FY2008 grant is being closed out. He reported on the Bronson project and the reasons for rejection of the low bidder.

Mr. Kastl stated that work continues on the 402 E. Highway 270 emergency project in Pittsburg County. The Office of Surface Mining is bringing in a down-hole camera to assist.

Financial Management and Human Resources Division: Steve Coffman, Director, reported that districts are preparing for the electronic fund transfer and staff held a session at the state meeting to discuss this change.

Information Technology Division: Mike Sharp, Director, reported that the 16th annual GIS Day at the Capitol is scheduled for March 10 with 29 agencies and vendors participating. He stated that one vendor will be displaying a small remote control aircraft used for aerial photography. This technology could be used by the AML division.

Conservation Programs Division: Robert Toole, Director, stated that work continues on watershed rehabilitation, operation and maintenance, and contracts. Multiple years are being

managed for the cost-share program and there are constant demands of the conservation education arena. Staff is involved with a new project for the rehabilitation assessment project.

Mr. Toole stated that dollars appropriated to conservation are put right back into local economies which has a significant local economic impact.

Mr. Toole reported on attending an NRCS Strategic Action Workshop to discuss the watershed program. Dan Sebert with the National Watershed Coalition thanked the Commission for allowing Mr. Toole to attend. He stated that NRCS State Conservationist Ron Hilliard also attended. Oklahoma has the most active watershed program in the nation and shows other states what is possible working with a partnership.

Administration - Assistant Director: Mr. Pollard commended the OACD Executive Board and Executive Director for the large attendance at Conservation Day at the Capitol. He stated that the Blue Room awards activities will begin at 1:30 p.m. Mr. Pollard also thanked OACD for recognizing Jeannette Nance, Office of the Governor, during the state meeting.

Mr. Pollard stated that March 26 is the dedication date for the Turkey Creek Site 3 watershed.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Clay Pope, Executive Director, reported on the state meeting success and thanked the Commission staff for their work with the meeting. He stated that attendance was close to last year. Mr. Pope thanked the Commission for co-sponsoring the National Land and Range Judging Contest. He will begin work on Stewardship Week and Earth Day activities.

Mr. Pope reported on legislative issues such as the OSRC consolidation, getting support to fund the bond payment, eastern red-cedars, and carbon credits.

USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Gary O'Neill, Assistant State Conservationist, stated a civil rights review will begin in two weeks in Oklahoma. He reported that funding in Oklahoma for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program Organic Initiative is \$1.5 million. Oklahoma plans to implement a state Conservation Innovation Grants State Program but is waiting on national instructions. The Wetlands Reserve Program has always been successful in the state and Oklahoma has received an allocation of \$8 million to enroll new acres.

Mr. O'Neill stated that Oklahoma NRCS is funding placement for students for the summer months.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY

Steve Thompson, Associate Commissioner, reported that Secretary of Agriculture Terry Peach will be attending the Blue Room ceremonies this afternoon. He stated that budget cuts for FY2011 will likely be between 10% and 12% for agencies and they too hope to receive funding for their bond payment. Mr. Thompson advised attendees about a bill being sponsored by Representative Sally Kern that restricts enforcement of federal guidelines.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on April 5, 2010, 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 Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to adjourn. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on April 5, 2010.


CHAIR