

Minutes
TEXAS STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD
June 16, 1994

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board met on June 16, 1994 at 8:00 a.m. in its Conference Room at 311 North Fifth Street, Temple, Texas.

Board members present were:

Paul Robertson, Chairman
Charles D. "Buddy" Clark, Vice Chairman
C. F. "Dick" Schendel, Member
Albert Evans, Member
Harvey Davis, Member

Staff members present were:

Robert G. Buckley, Executive Director
James M. Moore, Assistant Executive Director
William C. Neiser, Assistant Executive Director
Mel Davis, Assistant Executive Director
Leonard Pietzsch, Jr., Chief Accountant
Randy Jones, Human Resources Director
Clyde J. Gottschalk, Information/Education Director
Beade Northcut, Engineer
Cherie King, Director of Programs
Suzanne Cardwell, Planner
Lois Cain, Administrative Technician

Others present were:

Wes Oneth, Soil Conservation Service
Dr. Clarence Richardson, Agriculture Research Service
Dr. Allan Jones, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station

Chairman Robertson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

On motion of Buddy Clark, seconded by Harvey Davis, the minutes of the May 18, 1994, board meeting were approved as mailed. Motion carried.

Mel Davis presented district director appointments for consideration and advised the Board the appointments appeared to be in order. On motion of Albert Evans, seconded by Dick Schendel,

the following district director appointments were approved:

Charles K. Black, Upper Clear Fork SWCD #165
John G. Phillips, III, Waters Davis SWCD #318
Robert M. Shoemate, Jackson SWCD #336
Paula Sue Dugat, Lower Neches SWCD #437
Warren T. Hodges, Kaufman-Van Zandt SWCD #505
Blake Evans, Dalworth SWCD #519
Simon "Buster" Cannon, Dalworth SWCD #519

Mel Davis reported on the special election held June 1, 1994 in Zones 2, 3 and 5 of Mustang Soil and Water Conservation District #242. He gave the background of why the election was called and said 16 qualified voters were present. The following people were elected:

Zone 2 - Myrl D. Mitchell
Zone 3 - C. M. "Mike" Black
Zone 5 - Joe Mullins

Wes Oneth expressed appreciation to the Board and Buddy Clark for the way the election was conducted.

Clyde Gottschalk updated the Board on the activities of the Information/Education Department. He said good results were being seen on the initial news story on S.B. 503. He also said draft news articles are being prepared for districts' use on the cost share program; scheduling to do press work on 319 projects; reported on teacher workshops; working on statewide 4-H conservation education program; and advised that a number of new videos for the library have been ordered. Mr. Gottschalk advised he would be representing and talking about the State Board to teachers from around the state at an Ag Literacy Resource Fair at Tarleton State University sponsored by the Texas Farm Bureau.

Bill Neiser provided the Board an expenditure report for the

nine-month period ending May 31, 1994. He reported that expenditures were going according to budgeted schedule. He also discussed projected appropriation balances for fiscal year 1994 and discussed equipment needs for the headquarters and regional offices. Bob Buckley advised the Board that the staff has been exploring the possibility of purchasing 2 pickups for each regional office for a total of 10 vehicles. He said funds would be available this fiscal year and requested the Board's input and guidance. Dick Schendel moved to authorize the purchase of the vehicles. Albert Evans seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of four to one with Buddy Clark voting no.

Bill Neiser discussed the fiscal year 1995 operating budget and provided the Board a letter from John Keel of the Legislative Budget Office advising of possible additional appropriation reductions. Staff's comments on the proposed reductions have been prepared and forwarded to the Legislative Budget Office. Mr. Buckley informed the Board that the Legislative Budget Office has assigned Pat Valls-Trelles as the State Board's budget examiner and she would soon be visiting the headquarters office and possibly a regional office to learn our programs.

The 1996-1997 biennium budget request was then discussed by Bill Neiser. He said instructions have been received and the staff was beginning to prepare the request and asked for the Board's input regarding the strict guidelines on total requested appropriations for the biennium.

Mr. Neiser then provided information on fiscal year 1994 state

grant funds. He discussed a report on matching funds and provided a list of soil and water conservation districts whose matching funds were reduced as of May 15, 1994. He said 3rd quarter technical assistance reports are due June 30, 1994 and that most districts have requested their additional 20 per cent technical assistance funds.

A letter from Mustang Soil and Water Conservation District #242 was presented to the Board requesting a waiver of the matching fund program rules to reinstate the \$2,133.33 in matching funds allocation reduced on May 15th. Mustang SWCD #242 has had only two board members since April 14, 1994 and could not legally conduct business until a special election for three director positions was held on June 1, 1994. On motion of Dick Schendel, seconded by Albert Evans the Board allowed the waiver to be granted and to reinstate the allocation that had been reduced in the amount of \$2,133.33. Motion carried.

Mel Davis told the Board of suggestions offered by the Annual State Meeting Planning Committee which consisted of Paul Robertson, Harvey Davis, Donald Swann, Janel Franklin, Bob Buckley and Mel Davis. Memo Benavides was unable to attend. The Hyatt Regency will be the headquarters hotel and all functions except the "Get Acquainted" reception will be held there. The reception is being planned for Palmer Auditorium which is nearby. A list of suggested speakers was discussed. It was suggested the registration fee of \$25.00 plus \$5.00 for spouse remain the same again this year. Cherie King presented a list of district directors that will be

receiving service awards at the annual meeting for their length of service.

Bob Buckley discussed USDA reorganization and said the House committee mark-up was being held in Washington, D.C. today and hopes to have the outcome before the board meeting is over. He said Congressman Charles Stenholm is supporting a separate agency for Natural Resources Conservation Service to replace the Soil Conservation Service.

Wes Oneth reported for Soil Conservation Service and discussed the Forest Project Land Survey. He said 64 counties were targeted to participate and he has received 36 letters from districts advising SCS they did not want to participate. Mr. Oneth advised the Board that letters had been sent to Bob Buckley, Paul Robertson, Harvey Davis, John Earl Smith, Rooter Brite and Mike Holt to attend a meeting in Stamford on July 6 to meet with chairman of soil and water conservation district boards from Taylor, Jones, Haskell and Fisher Counties to discuss ways to improve and intensify practices they get out on the land. He also advised the Board that on July 1st SCS would award 7 contracts estimated at \$3.4 million to be used for watershed construction. Mr. Oneth then discussed the public forums to be conducted by SCS to receive input on the new NRCS. There will be five locations in Texas with 2 sessions each. They are as follows:

August 2, 1994 - Stephenville
August 4, 1994 - Kenedy
August 9, 1994 - Plainview
August 11, 1994 - San Angelo
August 16, 1994 - Nacogdoches

Dr. Allan Jones expressed appreciation to the State Board staff that participated in Texas A & M Ag Summits and also for the cooperation of State Board staff with the Extension Service on 319 projects.

Dr. Clarence Richardson advised the Board that the "buyout" was not offered to people in the ARS. He also expressed appreciation for the way the State Board and staff works with his agency. He discussed the ARS budget on a national level and said 19 locations have been identified to be closed but five locations have recently been removed from the list which included Brownwood, the only Texas location.

Cherie King discussed the conservation awards program and provided an preliminary financial report on the regional awards banquets. She said information is still being gathered to draft the proposed addition of another category for water quality on the conservation awards entry form.

Randy Jones gave a recruiting update and introduced Suzanne Cardwell who was recently hired as Planner. He said since September 1, 1993, 26 new hires have been added to the state headquarters and regional offices completing the first phase. The next phase will be opening two additional regional offices in South Texas and the Coastal Region in fiscal year 1995.

James Moore updated the Board on implementation of S. B. 503. He indicated four meetings had been held for SCS personnel and district directors in Plainview, Quitman, Sulphur Springs and Stephenville to answer questions about S.B. 503 and coordinate

implementation activities. He provided the Board with materials that had been discussed at the meetings. Mr. Moore indicated letters were being received from districts requesting the cost share funds and all remaining letters are expected in the near future. Mr. Buckley expressed appreciation to Wes Oneth and the SCS staff for their support of the S.B. 503 program. Mr. Buckley indicated that on May 31st he and Mr. Moore had briefed the Speaker's staff and Governor's staff on the progress of S.B. 503 and said they were pleased with the progress up to this date. Mr. Moore said there were already twenty water quality management plans in the field being looked at now and have had inquiries from producers who have read the news articles that have appeared in several publications. Mr. Moore asked for the Board's guidance on the review process for plan certification. After much discussion Albert Evans moved to leave the decision up to the district to set priority practices for cost share assistance with a ceiling of up to \$10,000 per cost share recipient per year for the biennium ending August 31, 1995. Harvey Davis seconded and motion carried. The certification process for water quality management plans was then discussed. Dick Schendel made the motion that the Executive Director establish procedures and appoint necessary staff to provide for certification of Water Quality Management Plans under TAC Title 31 Section 523.3 on behalf of the Board, and in accordance with criteria established by the Board, and assure that provisions are made for Board review of any plans determined to need specific action by the Board. Albert Evans seconded the

motion and motion carried.

James Moore gave a status report on the Nonpoint Source Management Program. He said two projects were approved under Sec. 319, Clean Water Act, for fiscal year 1992; one project on Lake Fork Creek for fiscal year 1993 and tentative approval for fiscal year 1994 projects have been given by EPA. As of June 15, 1994, Mr. Moore said 11 proposals had been received for consideration under the fiscal year 1995 Sec. 319 grant program.

James Moore discussed the status of the state's coastal management program being developed by the Coastal Coordination Council and indicated the comment period on the rules will probably be extended 60 days with plans to adopt the rules in September. A letter was provided the Board from the General Land Office accepting Dick Schendel as an ex-officio member of the Coastal Coordinating Council. Their next meeting will be June 28, 1994.

Mr. Moore provided a letter to the Board from U.S. Senator Phil Gramm concerning recent developments on S. 1114, a bill to reauthorize the Clean Water Act. Mr. Moore also discussed a piece of legislation which was discussed by Ron Jones at the last board meeting in which the State Board and State Association voiced some objections about wording. He said he saw no problem in getting the language changed as the Board had requested and will have a report for the Board at the next meeting.

Each Board member was provided a travel and per diem expense report for the 9-month period ending May 31, 1994. It was noted that reservations have been made for the State Board members for

the South Central NACD meeting to be held in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma for July 10-12, 1994.

The next regular Board meeting will be held July 20, 1994 in the State Board Conference Room in Temple, Texas.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Paul E. Robertson
Chairman

Lois J. Cain
Secretary

7-20-94
Date

I certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Board meeting held on June 16, 1994.

7-20-94
Date

Robert P. Burdley
Executive Director