

Minutes
TEXAS STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD
May 16, 1996

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board met on May 16, 1996, at 8:00 a.m. in Board Room Five in the Best Western Inn at Scott and White, 2625 South 31st Street, Temple, Texas.

Board members present were:

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

Staff members present were:

Robert G. "Bob" Buckley, Executive Director
James M. Moore, Assistant Executive Director
William C. "Bill" Neiser, Assistant Executive Director
Mel Davis, Assistant Executive Director
Beade Northcut, Engineer
Randy Jones, Human Resources Director
Cherié King, Director of Programs
Bo Spoons, Director of Programs
Sam Unberhagen, Program Specialist
Clyde J. Gottschalk, Information/Education Director
Lois J. Cain, Administrative Technician
Steven Jones, Regional Manager
Stephen Deiss, Regional Manager
John O'Connor, Regional Manager
Charley Rodgers, Regional Manager
Andy Garza, Regional Manager
Rex Isom, Program Specialist
Robert Gruner, Program Specialist
Johnny Oswald, Program Specialist
Joe Freeman, Program Specialist
Adrian Perez, Program Specialist
Roy Freeman, Program Specialist
David Powell, Program Specialist
Joel Clark, Program Specialist
Dub Crumley, Program Specialist
Don Brandenberger, Program Specialist

Others present were:

Wes Oneth, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Tomas Dominguez, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Dr. Clarence Richardson, Agricultural Research Service
Sam Feagley, Texas Agricultural Extension Service
Sonny Kretzschmar, HDR Engineering

Chairman Clark called the meeting to order and welcomed those present. He introduced Gene Sollock and welcomed him as the newly elected Board member from State Area IV. Those present were asked to introduce themselves and give their titles. Mr. Sollock responded and said he is ready to work and learn.

Minutes from the March 26, 1996, Board meeting were discussed and the Board was advised of two corrections made since they had received them in the mail. On motion of Dick Schendel, seconded by Paul Robertson, the minutes were approved as corrected. Motion carried.

Mel Davis presented district director appointments for consideration. He advised the Board all appointments appeared to be in order. On motion of Harvey Davis, seconded by Dick Schendel, the following appointments were approved as presented:

Mikeal Barnes, Tule Creek SWCD #110
Olen D. "Bo" Tucker, Coastal Plains SWCD #317
J. D. McGill, Copano Bay SWCD #329
Darrel W. Brown, Anderson-Houston SWCD #421
Paul F. Allen, Red River County SWCD #423
Barbara A. Winfree, Lower Sabine-Neches SWCD #446

Bill Neiser provided an eight-month expenditure report and discussed each appropriation item and current balance status. He reported that expenditures are on track with the operating budget.

Bill Neiser presented a proposed Subchapter H Technical Assistance allocation for each state area which totaled \$57,505.00. He discussed the purpose

and history of Subchapter H Technical Assistance. On motion of Paul Robertson, seconded by Dick Schendel, the allocations as proposed per area were approved.

Area totals are as follows:

Area I	- \$16,120.00
Area II	- \$11,935.00
Area III	- \$13,795.00
Area IV	- \$ 5,115.00
Area V	- \$10,540.00

The Board and field representatives then discussed the needs of each district in their area. On motion of Harvey Davis, seconded by Paul Robertson, the Board adopted allocations as attached. Motion carried. (Copy attached.)

Bill Neiser discussed the draft Agency Strategic Plan for the 1997-2001 period. The Board was asked to review the draft and advise the staff of any changes they desire. Mr. Buckley said there will be a need to have a Board meeting in early June to adopt the Agency Strategic Plan since it is due in Austin by June 15, 1996.

The 1998-1999 Biennium Appropriation Request was discussed by Mr. Neiser. He said instructions have been received and the request is due August 15, 1996. A list of additional program needs was discussed for inclusion in the Budget Request. Bob Buckley discussed the need to have the employee cap raised from 61 to 65 positions. After a lengthy discussion the Board instructed the staff to develop information on all additional items paying particular attention to funding options for the S.B. 503 program and present it at the June Board meeting. Other items being considered are additional Technical Assistance, additional Conservation Assistance (matching funds), Brush Control, Flood Control Structure Maintenance, and raising Employee Cap.

Bob Buckley updated the Board on an NRCS Grants to Districts Task Force meeting he had attended in early May. The allocation process for disbursement of

federal funds would be a partnership with as much flexibility as possible. The total proposed request is for \$100,000,000 to be used nation-wide. Another task force meeting will be held in three weeks and Mr. Buckley advised the Board he would provide them a copy of draft language as soon as he gets one for their review and comment. He said this needs to be recommended to the Secretary of Agriculture by July 1, 1996.

James Moore reported on the S.B. 503 program. He said 421 water quality management plans have been certified this year making a total of 1,389 WQM plans statewide over the last three years. He advised that \$1,277,576.40 cost-share funds have been obligated for fiscal year 1996 leaving a total of \$682,418.30 to be obligated statewide. He also discussed the complaint activity and said six complaints have been received since the last Board meeting and two complaints were under investigation at the beginning of this activity report. Four complaints have been investigated and four are currently under investigation. Mr. Moore next reported on annual status reviews for Fiscal Year 1994 certified water quality management plans. There were three plans needing follow-up visits and he explained each situation and indicated their status.

Mr. Moore reported on a call from Congressman Ralph Hall's office requesting a copy of an individual's water quality management plan. Lawful procedures for dealing with such requests were discussed and recommended to the Board. The procedures involved requiring that the individual making a request for a management plan submit the request in writing so that an Attorney General's Opinion could be requested to comply with the Open Records Act. The Board concurred with the staff's proposed procedure.

James Moore discussed a status report on fiscal year 1996 cost-share funds by area as of May 15, 1996. He reported that eight districts had released funds totaling \$57,051.33 and twenty-nine districts had requested additional funds. Mr. Moore then presented a list of requests for statewide funding for fiscal year 1996. He said two plans were complaint driven and all plans had been certified. There was a total of \$90,897.90 available in statewide funding. Staff proposed moving the released funds to add to the available statewide funds and fund all the requests for statewide funds. On motion of Paul Robertson, seconded by Dick Schendel, the Board voted to accept staff recommendation. Motion carried. Mr. Moore then provided a report on complaint driven WQMP cost-share FY 1996 projection as of May 1, 1996 for the Board's information.

Wes Oneth gave the NRCS report and discussed five changes made in the revised proposed draft policy on the FOCS computer program. He said 33 new student trainees had been hired and 12 full time employees were hired mostly in technical positions. He advised that Site 10 on Salado Creek Watershed in San Antonio was dedicated the previous week and discussed the roller compacted concrete spillway which is the first one of its kind to be built under PL 566 in the nation. He provided copies of the Regional Strategic Plan; discussed the Farm Bill Forum held in Abilene on April 24th; said the soil survey has been published for Grimes County; 25 districts responded to their budget survey; discussed the National Appraisal attended by Bob Buckley, Buddy Clark, Memo Benavides and B. G. Welch and said it was a profitable day. He also discussed CRP haying and grazing issues and early release of CRP lands. Mr. Oneth discussed EQIP and said final rules have not been written. He believes wind erosion will be treated equally with water erosion.

Dr. Clarence Richardson discussed work by the ARS to utilize biological means for the control of salt cedar. He also said the Under Secretary of Agriculture responsible for ARS resigned and they probably won't have a replacement appointed until after the elections.

Sam Feagley from the Extension Service in College Station reported to the Board on projects they are currently working on and outlined his responsibilities. He asked the Board to contact him if he could be of help in any way.

James Moore discussed designation of SB 503 program areas. He had a letter from Foard County Soil and Water Conservation District requesting Paradise Creek and Beaver Creek Watersheds be added to SB 503 designated areas. The Board was advised these watersheds are not on the priority watershed list. He also provided a letter from the Bosque Soil and Water Conservation District requesting to be included in the designated area of the Bosque River Watershed. On motion of Harvey Davis, seconded by Dick Schendel the Board directed staff move forward with the process to evaluate inclusion of the Bosque Soil and Water Conservation District into the designated area of Bosque River Watershed and to determine the need to include Paradise and Beaver Creeks on the priority watershed list. Motion carried.

Bo Spoons discussed the Section 319 status report for fiscal year 1997 and said 13 proposals have been received. He indicated that State Board staff will review each proposal with input from districts, regional offices and field staff and will recommend to EPA the ones determined to be fundable. He also provided a list of fiscal year 1996 projects that have been contracted to date. There were no questions.

James Moore gave a report on the activities relative to the North Bosque River Water Quality Assessment being conducted by TNRCC. This is a two year water quality assessment which will include monitoring stations along the Bosque River. Finally, he reported that on May 6th TNRCC held a press conference announcing the opening of a field office in Stephenville which will house four inspectors to deal with water quality problems.

Dick Schendel reported on activities of the Texas Coastal Management Program. On May 15th the General Land Office, Central Power and Light and TNRCC held a ground breaking for a facility to duplicate wave action and shore erosion which will help in the cleaning of oil spills. The next Coastal Coordination Council meeting to be held on July 26, 1996 will be in Corpus Christi instead of Austin. He also said there had been four workshops held from South Padre Island to Beaumont to help with preparation for grants to be used in the Coastal Zone program. Mr. Moore provided the Board a copy of a letter prepared for Bob Buckley's signature requesting Coastal Coordination Council certification that State Board rules regarding nonpoint source pollution (31 TAC 530) are consistent with the goals and policies of the Texas Coastal Management Program. There was no objection to the letter. (Copy attached)

James Moore updated the Board on activities of the Galveston Bay Conference. He said the conference had been in existence for about a year and was responsible for implementing the Galveston Bay Plan. A Water and Sediment Quality Subcommittee has been formed and the TSSWCB will be represented by Mr. Moore on this subcommittee.

Bob Buckley reported on the Gulf of Mexico Program and on a meeting he recently attended in Mississippi. He said EPA is interested in getting states to take part in this program.

Memo Benavides, President of the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts could not attend the Board meeting, but provided a written report on his activities.

Randy Jones provided a Manpower Report and an up to date organizational chart. He said he was currently recruiting for a Director of Programs for the Temple office and a secretary for the Harlingen regional office.

Mel Davis discussed and provided information on the 1996 Conservation Awards Program. He asked if there were any changes the Board desired to make in any of the categories. It was the consensus of the Board to leave it as it is. Buddy Clark asked what staff had done to increase the number of entries for the awards program. Mr. Buckley said staff was still discussing the situation and a report would be provided at the July Board meeting. He asked for comments from the State Board on the awards program because it would be discussed at the Staff Conference on the following day.

Information on the South Central Region NACD meeting to be held in Lafayette, Louisiana on July 27-30, 1996 was provided. The Board was advised reservations have been made for them at the Lafayette Hilton Towers.

The Board was provided a draft position for their consideration on the Texas Coalition for the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI). Due to efforts of coalition members the GLCI was written into the 1996 Farm Bill as a new program to provide voluntary technical assistance to owners and operators of grazing lands

through local soil and water conservation districts. The Board indicated they would review the draft position and get back with staff if they have any comments.

On the USDA implementation of FOCS, Wes Oneth said they will be able to make GIS maps at the local field office with the new computers.

Bob Buckley discussed briefly the 1996 Farm Bill and said we will just have to wait and see what is signed into law.

Mel Davis discussed the draft Revision of Basic and Supplemental Memorandum of Understanding with USDA. A copy of the mutual agreement between USDA and the State has been faxed to the Governor's office but we have not heard as to whether the Governor would like to sign the agreements for Texas.

Mel Davis and Tomas Dominguez have been assigned as co-chairs on a committee to come up with draft language for a Cooperative Working Agreement between the USDA-NRCS, the State Board and individual districts.

Clyde Gottschalk advised the Board he had met with the FFA Advisor of the Texas Education Agency. On July 11th the state winner of the FFA essay contest will receive a plaque at the State FFA meeting. He said the program is going well. In other Public Information/Education activities he said he will meet with the editor of the **Farmer Stockman** magazine to do SB 503 articles; discussed training modules which will augment district director training workshops; have published a number of Section 319 press releases; planning a second symposium in Lubbock in June; said the State Wildlife Clinic is moving along quite well; program entitled "What's the Difference" will soon be available on video; Boy Scout workshops have begun; and SB 503 Reference Guides are currently being updated.

Mel Davis discussed the 1996 Annual Meeting of Soil and Water Conservation District Directors to be held September 16-18, 1996 in Fort Worth. The committee appointed at the March 27th Board meeting has not yet been able to meet. He also provided information on hotels, a map of Fort Worth and a layout of the convention center. A print out on directors who are eligible for service awards was also provided. Bob Buckley discussed the certificates that are presented as service awards and said staff has discussed framing the certificates. The Board discussed and would like to see it done. On motion of Harvey Davis, seconded by Dick Schendel, the Board voted to frame certificates at a cost not to exceed \$10.00 per certificate. Motion carried.

Board member travel reports were provided by Bill Neiser. He advised Mr. Sollock of the travel policy of Board members and said any out of state travel had to have Board approval before the traveling is done and that there is a blanket approval in effect for Board members to travel out of state for the national and regional NACD meetings.

Election of officers for the State Board were then conducted by Chairman Clark. He asked for nominations for Chairman. On motion of Paul Robertson, seconded by Harvey Davis, Dick Schendel was elected to serve as chairman. Nominations were then open for vice chairman. On motion of Paul Robertson, seconded by Dick Schendel, Harvey Davis was elected to serve as vice chairman. Dick Schendel responded saying he appreciates the honor and trust given to him and will do his best. He then expressed appreciation to Buddy Clark for the job he has done the past year while serving as chairman. Other Board members also expressed their appreciation for his outstanding service.

The Board then set June 7, 1996 as a special meeting to begin at 10:00 a.m. with meeting site to be provided at a later date.

Bob Buckley then expressed his appreciation to Buddy Clark for his hard work, support and cooperation during his year as chairman.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Clarence J. Schendel
Chairman

Lois J. Cain
Secretary

7-17-96
Date

I certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Board meeting held on May 16, 1996.

7-17-96
Date

Robert S. Buckley
Executive Director