

Quarterly Program Update



Summer 2016

Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board Dedicates New State Headquarters

On August 4, 2016, the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board held a building dedication ceremony at their new agency headquarters. The 10,200 square foot building is located at 1497 Country View Lane in Temple, Texas. The facility will include office space for 30 employees as well as a hearings room for board meetings and conferences.

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board was established in 1939 and has been headquartered in Temple for 77 years. TSSWCB administers Texas' soil and water conservation law and delivers coordinated natural resource conservation programs to agricultural producers through the State's 216 soil and water conservation districts.

The dedication ceremony included a brief overview of TSSWCB's accomplishments as well as a glimpse into their future and from: TSSWCB Board Members, Chairman Scott Buckles, Vice-Chairman José Dodier Jr., Marty H. Graham, Jerry Nichols, Barry Mahler, Larry D. Jacobs, Joe Ward and Executive Director Rex Isom, Texas Conservation Association Water and Soil (TCAWS) Chairman, Glen Lyon, Mayor of Temple, Danny Dunn and President of the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Rickey James.



“The home of the Texas State Soil Water Conservation Board is dedicated to the Texas’ agricultural producers who are the true conservationists, that work selflessly to ensure the continued viability of our natural resources for the common good,” said Rex Isom, Executive Director of TSSWCB.

John Scales, P.E. provided the architecture and Wornat Georgetown, LLC. was the contractor for the new building.



Program Updates

• BUDGET & ACCOUNTING

DIRECTOR MILEAGE AND PER DIEM

- September 30th is the deadline for submitting Fiscal Year 2016 4th Quarter claims and the return of unused advance funds.
- October 15th advance payments for Fiscal Year 2017 will be made.
- November 1st supplemental payments for Fiscal Year 2016 will be made.

Claims for Director Mileage and Per Diem must be post-marked, emailed, or faxed by submission deadline to be accepted for payment. Emails and faxes will be accepted. Return of unused advance funds must be post-marked by the deadline. Advance payments for Fiscal Year 2017 will not be made if unused advances from Fiscal Year 2016 have not been returned by the deadline.

MATCHING FUNDS

- August 31st is the deadline for submitting Fiscal Year 2016 regular and supplemental claims.
- November 1st supplemental payments for Fiscal Year 2016 will be made.

Regular and supplemental claims must be post-marked, emailed, or faxed by the submission deadline to be accepted for payment. Emails and faxes will be accepted.

CONSERVATION IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE (TA)

- August 31st is the deadline for submitting the Fiscal Year 2016 online Performance Reports. The report is available online on the SWCD Resources Page of the TSSWCB Website. Fiscal Year 2017 payments cannot be made until this report is submitted.
- September 30th is the deadline for submitting Fiscal Year 2016 regular and supplemental claims.
- November 1st supplemental payments for Fiscal Year 2016 will be made. Regular and supplemental claims must be post-marked, emailed, or faxed by the submission deadline to be accepted for payment. Emails and faxes will be accepted.

TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDER (ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE GRANT)

- October 30th is the deadline for submitting claims for the Fiscal Year 2016 NRCS Technical Service Provider (Administrative Assistance Grant). Claims can be made for work performed through September 30, 2016. Emails and faxes will be accepted.

CONSERVATION ACTIVITY PROGRAM (CAP)

- August 31st is the deadline for submitting Fiscal Year 2016 Conservation Activity (CAP) claims using the online web application located on the SWCD Resources Page of the TSSWCB website.
- November 1st supplemental payments for Fiscal Year 2016 will be made.

SWCD INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE

All technology purchases during Fiscal Year 2016 must be reported by August 31, 2016 using the online web application located on the SWCD Resources Page of the TSSWCB website. Return of unused advance funds must be post-marked by August 31, 2016.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

- September 1st is the deadline for submitting the Fiscal Year 2016 Financial Statement/Audit Notification Form.
- October 31st is the deadline for submitting completed Financial Statements.
- December 31st is the deadline for submitting completed Reviews and Audits.

If completed Financial Statements, Reviews, or Audits are not submitted by the respective deadline, all Fiscal Year 2017 payments will be withheld until financial reporting requirements for Fiscal Year 2016 have been met.

• PUBLIC INFORMATION & EDUCATION

2017 SWCD Director Leadership Development Workshop

Dates for the 2017 workshop will be set soon with information to be sent to SWCDs shortly after the Annual State Meeting in Waco. Districts will receive a letter of intent that will help to plan for food and hotel arrangements.

77th Annual Meeting of Texas Soil & Water Conservation District Directors

The 2016 Annual State Meeting for District Directors will be October 17-19, 2016 in Waco. Registration is now open on our website, the deadline for registration is October 7, 2016.



Program Updates

• PUBLIC INFORMATION & EDUCATION CONTINUED

Wildlife Alliance for Youth (WAY) Contest

At the annual meeting of the Wildlife Alliance for Youth's state steering committee, contest dates were established for the 2016-2017 school year. The state contest will be held in Region 1 on April 25, 2017. Site locations for contests are yet to be determined. The regional contest dates are:

- Region 1—April 11, 2017
- Region 2—April 11, 2017
- Region 3—April 10, 2017
- Region 4—November 2, 2016
- Region 5—April 10, 2017

State Soil Stewardship Public Speaking Contest

Twenty contestants from the 10 FFA areas in Texas, competed for top honors at the state contest held in conjunction with the 88th Annual Texas FFA State Convention held in Dallas this July. Winning first place was Lydia Crow from the Madisonville FFA chapter and received a \$3,000 scholarship. Austin Clay, from the Sandra Day O'Connor chapter won 2nd place, receiving a \$2,000 scholarship. Hannah Lloyd of the Bullard FFA chapter placed third and received a \$1,000 scholarship.

• WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRAM

On August 4, 2016 the Board approved \$1,950,000 for cost-share incentive funding for Fiscal Year 2017. The Board set aside 5% of the total budget (\$97,500) for reimbursing SWCDs for their administrative costs in administering the program at the local level. Administrative payments will be calculated on cost-share payments made to applicants rather than on amounts obligated by SWCDs. A statewide allocation in the amount of \$100,000 for providing cost-share funds to applicants to address complaints and other unforeseen situations was made, and each administrative area of the state (Areas 1-5) were allocated \$350,000 to be ranked and assigned to approved cost-share contracts under the same criteria as used in the first year of the biennium. Staff of the Board recommended approval of Cost-Share Incentive Priorities for Fiscal Year 2017. These priorities are geographically defined by either watersheds or aquifer recharge zones and known to the staff of the Board. A full list of the priority areas can be accessed at: <https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/en/WQMP/priorityareas>.

• POULTRY WQMP PROGRAM

A new guidance document, jointly developed by TSSWCB and NRCS, for proper burial of poultry mortality from a catastrophic die-off event is now available on the Poultry WQMP Program web page at www.tsswcb.texas.gov/en/poultry titled, "Burial of Catastrophic Mortality from Poultry Operations." This document was developed to assist poultry producers to stay in compliance with state laws and regulations regarding disposal of dead birds in the event they should have catastrophic losses. Burial of routine daily mortality is still not allowed.

• FLOOD CONTROL DAM PROGRAM

At the August 4, 2016 Board meeting the State Board approved \$7,050,000 for flood control grants. Of this amount \$1,000,000 will be available to all sponsors for O&M grants on a first-come-first-serve basis. Staff recommended that sponsors be given the opportunity to submit proposals for work to the TSSWCB for approval starting August 8, but work cannot begin until September 1, 2016. This will allow sponsors the opportunity to prepare and coordinate with potential contractors prior to the funds being available. Proposals for O&M work would be approved in the order in which they are received. There be a requirement that all work for a single proposal be completed within 90 days of TSSWCB approval, with the option for a sponsor to request a reasonable extension for work that is already underway. Any funds approved from a proposal that are not used for work not underway at the 90-day deadline, will be withdrawn and returned for other sponsors to use under other proposals. A single sponsor (or combinations of sponsors with O&M responsibility for a single dam) will be allowed only one actively approved proposal at a time. A sponsor with an approved proposal be allowed to provide certification from the sponsor and either a representative from the Natural Resources Conservation Service or the TSSWCB when they agree that 75% of the work of a single proposal is completed. A sponsor will then be eligible to submit a subsequent proposal for other work (limited to another \$20,000). Proposals will be limited to \$20,000 for the entirety of O&M proposed, regardless of how many dams are included in the proposal. The Board approved that if a sponsor has O&M work for a single dam that is estimated to exceed \$20,000, it must be approved as a single-dam proposal. This would serve as that sponsor's active proposal, and no other proposals would be approved until the work was completed or the sponsor certifies that 75% of the proposed work is complete. All remaining funds (\$6,050,000) will be used for structural repair grants, as matching funds for federal rehabilitation projects or Emergency Watershed Protection Program repairs, or for engineering, planning, design, or associated technical assistance activities.

Meet Your Board Members

Scott Buckles, *Chairman*

Scott Buckles of Stratford is Chairman of the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board. In 2011, Scott was elected to represent Area I, which encompasses 49 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the panhandle and south plains region of Texas. Prior to being elected to TSSWCB, Buckles served 26 years on the board of directors of the Sherman County SWCD. Scott is the managing partner of Buckles Farms. The family operation has been in business since 1917 and currently produces corn, grain, sorghum, wheat and stocker cattle. He is also the co-owner and operator of a crop and aerial spraying service. When Scott has spare time he builds and operates a 1/8th scale railroad. He is always looking for passengers...even the dogs enjoy the rides. When not at the farm he enjoys the cool mountain air in Red River, New Mexico. Scott and his wife Dana have 3 children, Carson, Haley and Hunter.

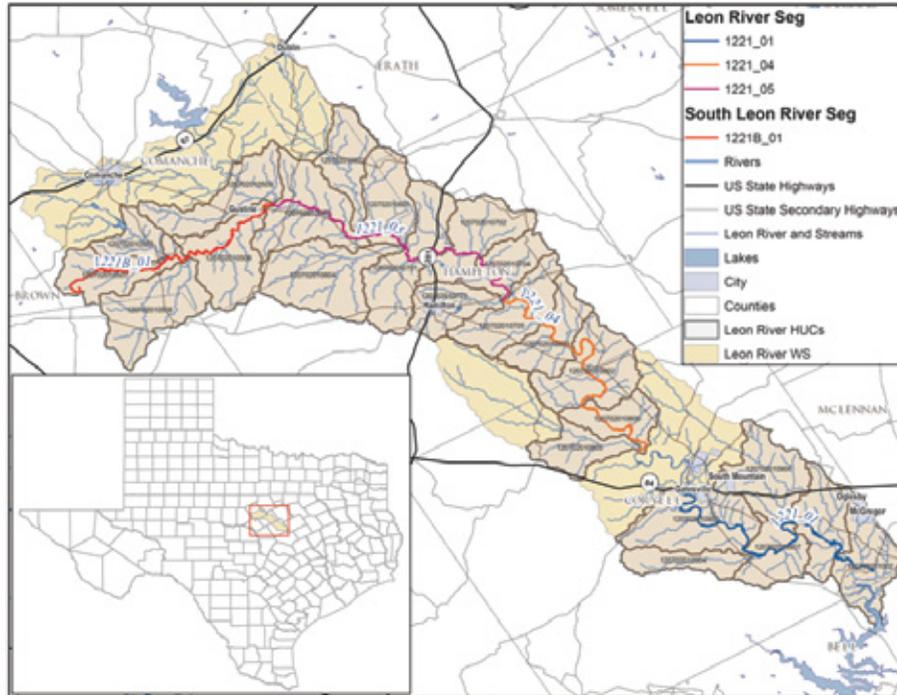


José Dodier, Jr., *Vice-Chairman*

José Dodier Jr. of Zapata is Vice-Chairman of the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board. He was elected to the State Board in May of 2005 representing Area III. Dodier has a distinguished history of service to soil and water conservation. In addition to his work on the State Board, he is Chairman of the Zapata Soil and Water Conservation District Board and has been a member of that board for 25 years. He served as President of the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts from 2000-2003 and Immediate Past-President from 2003-2005. He served on the board of directors of the National Association of Conservation Districts from 1997-2005. Currently, he sits on the Workforce Solutions South Texas Board as well as the Zapata International Bank of Commerce Board. José is a partner in Don José Land & Cattle Company in Zapata County, which is a conservation-driven, cow-calf operation that produces commercial Charbray cattle. José is married to Janeann and they have a daughter, Danielle.



Pictured left to right: Joe Ward, Marty H. Graham, José Dodier, Jr., Scott Buckles, Barry Mahler, Larry D. Jacobs, Jerry Nichols, and Rex Isom, Executive Director



Addressing Agricultural & Residential Bacteria Sources Improves Water Quality in the Leon & South Leon Rivers

High levels of bacteria prompted the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to add the Leon River (in 1996) and South Leon River (in 2006) to the Clean Water Act (CWA) section 303(d) list of impaired waters for not supporting the primary contact recreation use. The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board provided CWA section 319(h) grant funding to develop a watershed protection plan (WPP) to address the bacteria impairments in the Leon River watershed.

The TSSWCB, partnered with the Upper Leon SWCD, Mills County SWCD and the Hamilton-Coryell SWCD, to develop and implement 13 water quality management plans on 4,058 acres in the impaired watersheds. These plans included alternative water sources, prescribed grazing, cross-fencing, grassed waterways, nutrient management and grass planting. In addition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service worked with landowners to implement conservation practices on over 388,600 acres using Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Agricultural Water Enhancement Program funding in the Leon River and over 47,600 acres in the South Leon River watershed. The conservation practices implemented included prescribed grazing, grass and range planting, nutrient management, residue management, conservation cover, water wells, water troughs and ponds.

Stakeholders within the watershed also voluntarily implemented best management practices (BMPs) and conducted public outreach and education events. Through these efforts water quality was improved and the South Leon River (assessment unit [AU] 1221B_01) and three assessment units of the Leon River below Proctor Lake (AU 1221_01, 1221_04, and 1221_05) were removed from the state's list of impaired waters in 2014.

Water quality monitoring continues to track and measure interim progress to implement the Leon River WPP and ensure this restoration effort remains a success.