

OFFICIAL MINUTES
STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD
MARCH 17, 1965

The State Soil Conservation Board met at 7:30 p.m. in its office in the First National Bank Building, Temple, Texas on March 17, 1965.

Board members present: E. W. Wehman, Chairman, J. C. Porter, J. F. Gray, J. S. Sharp, and A. F. Leesch.

Others present: H. D. Davis, Executive Director, S. E. Jones, and J. M. Norton of the Board staff; Gilbert Kretzschmar, President and A. L. Bading, Executive Director, Association of Texas Soil Conservation Districts; C. W. Graham, Deputy Conservationist, Soil Conservation Service.

The minutes of the February 19, 1965, meeting were read and approved.

New applications for assistance under Public Law 566, as amended, on the Upper Cibolo River, Lower Neches, and Lower Sabine River watersheds were considered by the Board. On motion by A. F. Leesch, seconded by J. S. Sharp, the Board disapproved these watersheds pending a field examination to determine their economic feasibility.

Mr. Davis reviewed the status of watersheds which have been approved by the Board as feasible for project development, but which as yet have not been planned. Letters and correspondence from sponsors of watershed applications in which they expressed their continued interest and encouraged the Board to favorably consider their watershed for a planning priority were reported to the Board. The current status of a group of watersheds which did not meet the Board's "Criteria for Determining Planning Priority" was reviewed and discussed at length by the Board, and after due consideration of the needs in each case, these watersheds were dropped from further consideration of a priority at this time.

Mr. Graham reviewed the status of watershed planning in the State. Planning has been completed on Williams Creek, Duck Creek, Escondido Creek, and Castleman Creek and

the plans are in review status. Donahue Creek and Attoyac River Watershed Work Plans are now before the Bureau of the Budget for authorization. Chocolate-Little Chocolate-Lynn's Bayou Work Plan has been returned to Soil Conservation Service, Texas, for further clarification and re-evaluation of benefit justification. This re-evaluation is due to a policy of the Budget Bureau whereby they will not approve a Work Plan for Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention if the primary benefits for justification are based on enhancement of or to the increased production of crops that are considered in surplus supply.

This posed a considerable problem to the State Board since several of the watershed projects which appear to have the highest benefit-cost ratio, benefit the greatest number of people, and give the best protection to the land are those which have a high percent of cropland devoted to the production of crops in surplus supply. This particularly affects those watersheds in which drainage and irrigation are primary features of a plan for project development. It was the opinion of the State Board that this should be brought to the attention of the National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts for further inquiry and appropriate action.

Mr. Graham further reported that the Rush Creek Work Plan was about 71 percent complete and estimated the completion date to be on or about June 1, 1965. Other estimated completion dates were: Choctaw Creek - 7/1/65, Farmer's Creek - 9/1/65, and Running Water Draw - 10/1/65. The Cameron County watersheds, being planned by a consulting Engineering firm under a trust fund agreement, will be completed about January 1, 1966. The Soil Conservation Service anticipates securing \$100,000 in Basin Planning funds for planning in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Mr. Graham explained the additional cost of planning for municipal water supply in several sites in the Choctaw Creek watershed and requested \$12,000 of State Planning Funds to complete the work plan by July 1, 1965.

Mr. Davis reviewed the status of State Funds for watershed planning and reported that \$40,974 was not obligated for this fiscal year.

On motion by J. C. Porter, seconded by J. S. Sharp, the Board approved the allocation of \$12,000 of State Planning Funds to be used by August 31, 1965, for the completion of the Choctaw Creek Work Plan and authorized H. D. Davis to sign a project agreement with the Soil Conservation Service.

Mr. Davis reviewed several letters from sponsors and other interested people in the Sweetwater Creek watershed urging and requesting an immediate planning priority. The correspondence stated that the Red River Authority is presently making a feasibility study for a major reservoir located about 8 miles east of Wheeler, Texas, on Sweetwater Creek. After much discussion and consideration, and since no firm commitments have been made relative to financing the planning of these watersheds between Texas and Oklahoma State Soil Conservation Boards and local sponsoring organizations, the Texas State Soil Conservation Board did not feel that they could grant a planning priority at this time. It was felt that it would be necessary to reconsider the project with the Oklahoma State Soil Conservation Board and sponsors of Oklahoma in an effort to reach a new approach for planning and developing the project.

The Board considered the matter of selecting several watersheds to which planning priorities might be granted for work plan development. Some 22 watersheds in which the sponsors have assured legal and financial ability to carry out their projects were discussed individually. After careful evaluation and consideration, the Board selected six (6) watersheds to be granted planning priorities. On motion by J. C. Porter, seconded by J. Frank Gray, the Board granted a planning priority to Bennett Creek and authorized the use of \$28,974 of State Funds for planning to September 1, 1965, and authorized H. D. Davis to sign a project agreement with the Soil Conservation Service. On motion by A. F. Leesch, seconded by J. C. Porter, the Board approved planning priorities for Pecan Creek, North Cuero, McClellan Creek, Aquilla-Hackberry Creeks, and Ruckers Creek watersheds contingent on the sponsors of the North Cuero watershed providing \$16,000 in planning funds, and the McClellan Creek sponsors providing \$18,000

in Trust Funds, and that all of the watersheds qualify from a legal and financial standpoint.

Mr. Davis reviewed the recent correspondence from Congressmen in answer to our letters, in which they expressed their opposition to the proposed cut in appropriations to the Soil Conservation Service and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Program.

Mr. Davis and Mr. Bading reviewed the status of our legislative proposals. The bills were approved by both the Texas Senate and House Committees. No legislative action has been taken on the resolution to request \$200 per structure from the State to assist local Soil Conservation Districts in acquiring free easements from landowners for floodwater retarding structures.

The Resource Conservation and Development application from the Southeast Texas Area was reported by Davis as being approved by Governor Connally. Others in the making over the State were reported to the Board.

On motion by J. C. Porter, seconded by Frank Gray, the Board approved 2 representatives of the Board attend the National Watershed Congress to be held in Sioux City, Iowa, April 25-28, 1965.

A meeting of the Great Plains State Committee was reported as being scheduled at Tulia, Texas, for June 24-25, 1965.

The Fort Worth Press Award Program scheduled for May 1, 1965, in Fort Worth was discussed. All members plan to attend, and it was decided that a Board Meeting would be scheduled for 3:00 p.m. in the Hotel Texas prior to the Awards Program.

Mr. Davis reported on some of the meetings held with District Supervisors and public school officials in reference to putting the new "Guide for Teaching Conservation in Science and Social Studies in Elementary and Secondary Schools of Texas" into effect. Other meetings are scheduled for the High Plains and Northeast Texas. Along with this, Davis reported on the need for updating our Memorandum of Understanding with the Vocation:

Agriculture Department.

Mr. Davis also reported that Representative Terry Newman of Cuero was interested in setting up a three county conservation program whereby the counties would provide funds in cooperation with Soil Conservation Districts for the promotion and installation of soil and water conservation measures. This is to be discussed further in a meeting with Mr. Newman in the very near future.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:05 p.m.


Chairman

E.W. Wehman


Secretary

Date

May 1, 1965

Dear Sir:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your minutes dated March 17, 1965.

Thanks very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely

