

Minutes
TEXAS STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD
January 24, 1997

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board met on January 24, 1997 at 11:00 a.m. in its Hearings Room at 311 North Fifth Street, Temple, Texas.

Board members present were:

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

Board members absent were:

Clarence F. "Dick" Schendel, Chairman

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
Clyde J. Gottschalk, Information/Education Director
Leonard Pietzsch, Jr., Chief Accountant
Bo Spoons, Director of Programs
Beade Northcut, Engineer
Sam Unberhagen, Program Specialist
Randy Jones, Human Resources Director
Cheremie Viator, Director of Programs
Lois J. Cain, Administrative Technician
Richard Egg, Planner
Jacqueline Harrison, Secretary

Others present were:

John Burt, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Tomas Dominguez, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Memo Benavides, Association of Texas Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Acting Chairman Harvey Davis called the meeting to order, welcomed those present and informed everyone that Chairman Dick Schendel was ill and not able to attend the meeting.

On motion of Gene Sollock, seconded by Paul Robertson, the minutes from the November 20, 1996 meeting were approved as mailed.

Harvey Davis invited Memo Benavides, president, Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts to report on activities of the State Association. Mr. Benavides reported the Board of Directors had met on January 23rd and reviewed NACD resolutions that will be discussed at the national NACD meeting in Kansas City, Missouri on February 1-5, 1997. He said all Association directors would be attending and will support the current NACD administration. He discussed the Association endowment fund and said there is still a ways to go. He also advised the "Special Committee of 100" of the State Association will be meeting in Austin at the Airport Hilton on March 24-25, 1997.

Mr. Davis introduced and welcomed John Burt, new State Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. He replaced Wes Oneth who retired on January 3, 1997 to go to work for NACD on the grants to districts program.

Mr. Burt said he was excited about coming to Texas and intends to work closely with the State Board and State Association. He discussed a Civil Rights Listening Conference he attended in Brownsville and said it was positive and more will be heard from it. He advised the locally led initiative across the state has been

completed and the information is being compiled and would be used to develop a follow up strategy. He also updated the Board on the work of the State Technical Committee. He advised the Board that on December 30, 1996 Wes Oneth signed an agreement with the Texas Historical Commission. Mr. Burt said the agreement respects the private sector and as soon as the State Historic Preservation Officer signs the agreement training will be held. He also advised that Tom Hebert, Deputy Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service will be in Texas the last week of February.

Gene Sollock informed Mr. Burt there is a lot of concern in the East Texas forest areas because they feel they do not have enough representation on the State Technical Committee. Mr. Burt said he would look into this and make sure there is balanced representation.

Mel Davis presented district director appointments for consideration. On motion of Gene Sollock, seconded by Paul Robertson the following district director appointments were approved including Ronny Alexander, Hockley County SWCD #129 pending receipt of original resignation letter of the person he is replacing and of Jay Beakley and Glenn Pierce of Stonewall County SWCD #167 pending receipt of original paperwork for both appointments:

R. Tracey Griffiths, Cochran SWCD #149
Tommy Morris, Mitchell SWCD #207
Kenda Furman, Trans-Pecos SWCD #231
Clifton M. Caldwell, II, North Concho River SWCD #252
Emma Lue Mohle, Caldwell-Travis SWCD #304
Roy Yaeger, III, Monte Mucho SWCD #331
Doris B. Albright, Colorado SWCD #333
Lawrence C. Shimek, Colorado SWCD #333
Joe A. Stratta, Robertson County SWCD #451

Mel Davis presented a petition for division and reorganization from the Nueces-Jim Wells-Kleberg-Kenedy Soil and Water Conservation District #311 to divide their district into three new districts. On motion of Paul Robertson, seconded by Buddy Clark, the staff was authorized to proceed and hold public hearings to see if there is a need for the division.

Mel Davis advised the Board of a letter of request from the Harris Soil and Water Conservation District #442 to change their name from Harris SWCD to Harris County SWCD #442. It was discovered after the State Board meeting agenda had been posted in the Texas Register that the Harris SWCD had not officially made this request in their local district meeting so action on this request could not be legally acted on at the State Board meeting.

Bill Neiser discussed the 1998-1999 Legislative Appropriation Request and said the first hearing before the Senate Finance Committee went well. The hearing before the House Agriculture and Livestock Committee has been set for Monday, February 10th.

Bill Neiser discussed the four-month expenditure report ending December 31, 1996 and informed the Board expenditures were normal for this point in the year.

Mr. Neiser provided a checklist on financial statements and audits and said the majority of reports are in, corrected and reviewed. We are ahead of where we normally are at this time each year.

Bob Buckley gave a status report on the Current Performance Measure Audit and updated the Board on meetings with the State Auditor's Office, Speaker's Office and with State Representatives Dianne Delisi and Henry Cuellar.

Bill Neiser reviewed the Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 1996 pointing out significant items of special interest.

Mr. Neiser then discussed the fiscal year 1995 Management Control Audit and said we are currently addressing each of the findings listed in the report to get them corrected.

James Moore discussed a Cooperative Brush Management Proposal developed jointly by Texas A & M University Agriculture Program, NRCS and the State Board. He said there is beginning to be a considerable interest shown in this proposal, and that the Governor has expressed interest in using prison labor to implement brush control.

Clyde Gottschalk reported on activities of the Information/Education Department and discussed the District Director Workshop recently held in Temple (January 7-8, 1997) which had only 15 people in attendance (because of inclement weather) and the second day could not be conducted because an ice storm had knocked out electricity to the building. The workshop will be re-scheduled and invitations will be extended to those who couldn't attend the original meeting, those who didn't get to complete the second day of the workshop and other district directors. Mr. Gottschalk discussed the Nonpoint Source Conferences recently held in Canyon and Lubbock with 129 people registered in Canyon and 175

registered in Lubbock. He hopes to hold similar conferences in the Rio Grande Valley and Rice Belt. He also updated the Board on the annual Soil Stewardship Leadership program with FFA; the State Wildlife Clinic and also said there were already plans for several teacher and boy scout workshops this summer.

A copy of SB 1 was provided the Board and James Moore discussed. Mel Davis discussed the Texas Wetland Conservation Plan. He said the State Board has been involved in the process and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department proposed to submit to the Legislature a House Concurrent Resolution and wants to use the TSSWCB name as working on the plan. The Board was advised this is a voluntary program. Staff recommended that the Board authorize the use of the agency's name as supporting the plan. Gene Sollock moved to concur with staff recommendation as long as it is a voluntary program. Paul Robertson seconded and motion carried.

James Moore advised the Board the Coastal Management Program was officially approved by NOAA and EPA on January 10, 1997.

Mr. Moore gave the Board an update on Section 319 activities. He said the agency was in the process of conducting workshops for people interested in seeking 319 funding. A schedule of seven workshops was provided the Board.

Mr. Moore then provided the Board with a status report on the SB 503 program. He said 295 plans have been certified so far this fiscal year as of January 23, 1997 and a total of 1,859 since the program began. He discussed the cost-share report by districts and the annual status review report. Mr. Moore said

19% of the Water Quality Management Plans will be reviewed and 54 have been done as of the board meeting date. Of those reviewed only four required follow up reviews. A complaint activity report was discussed. Two complaints were currently under investigation at the beginning of this activity report and two new complaints had been received. Two complaints had been investigated - one was valid and one was invalid. The valid one had been resolved by a WQMP. Two complaints were currently under investigation. Mr. Moore advised the Board that TNRCC will not be investigating any dairies that fall under the SB 503 program.

Allocation of SB 503 Statewide Cost Share Funding was discussed by James Moore. There were six requests. One request was complaint driven from the Upper Elm-Red SWCD #524. Gene Sollock moved to fund the complaint driven request and add the other five to the list to be considered at a later date. Buddy Clark seconded and the motion carried.

James Moore gave an update on the USDA North Bosque River Project. He said Tarleton State University's Institute for Applied Research was receiving funding through the USDA. The first watershed to be addressed had been selected which is the Goose Branch Watershed, which has eight dairies and 5,834 dairy cows.

The Board then reviewed criteria for eligibility in cost-share programs administered by the agency. Bob Buckley discussed the need for Board action on a policy addressing State Board employee participation in cost-share programs.

After discussion and on motion of Paul Robertson, seconded by Buddy Clark, the following policy was adopted by the Board.

“It is the policy of the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board that persons employed by the State Board or Board members shall not be eligible to receive cost-share funds through any program administered by the State Soil and Water Conservation Board.”

Randy Jones provided a Human Resources update and introduced two new employees, Jacqueline Harrison, new secretary and Richard Egg, the new Planner. He advised a new engineer, Chris Anzaldua, had been hired for the Harlingen office and will be schooled by retired engineer Jack Garner. He also provided an Affirmative Action Staffing report.

State Board member elections will be held on May 6, 1997 for State Areas I, III, and V. Information was provided on locations and times for each election.

They are as follows:

Area I - Plainview Country Club
Plainview, Texas
6:00 p.m.

Area III - Yoakum Community Center
Yoakum, Texas
5:00 p.m.

Area V - Tarleton State University
Student Development Center, Room 219
Stephenville, Texas
6:00 p.m.

Bob Buckley discussed a request from the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts concerning a resolution passed at the Annual Statewide Meeting of Soil and Water Conservation District Directors held in Fort Worth. This resolution was requesting the State Board to amend its rule stating that any district receiving \$20,000 or more in state funds in a fiscal year is required to have an audit rather than being allowed to submit a financial statement and raise the threshold to \$35,000. Mr. Buckley indicated that the matter should be discussed with the State Auditors Office before any changes are considered since the original threshold was set after consultation with them.

Bob Buckley discussed the national NACD meeting to be held in Kansas City, Missouri on February 1-5, 1997 and briefly discussed the agenda. He advised the Board he would be attending a meeting of the NASCA members on Sunday afternoon and invited the Board members to attend. Resolutions to be considered at the meeting were provided each Board member along with their hotel confirmations.

NACD dues for 1997 were discussed. On motion of Paul Robertson, seconded by Gene Sollock, the 1997 NACD dues in the amount of \$550 were authorized to be paid.

Establishment of a local bank account for making travel advances under the State's Travel Advance Program was discussed by Bill Neiser. He explained that some employees, for one reason or another, do not have an American Express credit card and that extended travel requirements can at times place a burden on

the employee until they can claim their travel reimbursement. To be able to assist these employees Mr. Neiser requested the Board to authorize the Executive Director to set up a bank account at a local bank to be used only for expensive trips. Mr. Buckley said advances would be made by checks with the Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director, Conservation Programs signatures. On motion of Gene Sollock, seconded by Paul Robertson, the staff was authorized to establish this local bank account with the Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director, Conservation Programs authorized to co-sign any checks.

Bill Neiser provided each Board member a travel report.

The next regular State Board meeting is scheduled for March 19, 1997.

Clarence J. Schudel
Chairman

Lois J. Cain
Secretary

3-12-97
Date

I certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Board meeting held on January 24, 1997.

3-12-97
Date

Robert H. Buckley
Executive Director