

Minutes
TEXAS STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD
September 11, 1996

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board met on September 11, 1996 in its Hearings Room at 311 North Fifth Street, Temple, Texas.

Board members present were:

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

Staff members present were:

Robert G. "Bob" Buckley, Executive Director
William C. "Bill" Neiser, Assistant Executive Director
James M. Moore, Assistant Executive Director
Mel Davis, Assistant Executive Director
Leonard Pietzsch, Chief Accountant
Cheremie Viator, Director of Programs
Bo Spoons, Director of Programs
Beade Northcut, Engineer
Clyde J. Gottschalk, Information/Education Director
Lois J. Cain, Administrative Technician
Randy Jones, Human Resources Director
Mahendra Mohite, Engineer
Maria Pinto, Hydrologist

Others present were:

Guillermo "Memo" Benavides, Association of Texas SWCDs
Dr. Clarence Richardson, Agriculture Research Service
Tracy Gonzales, Attorney General's Office
Wes Oneth, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Dr. Bill Dugas, Texas Agricultural Extension Service

Chairman Schendel called the meeting to order and welcomed those present.

Minutes from July 17th and August 5th board meetings were considered. Paul Robertson requested a change in the July 17th minutes. On motion of Harvey Davis,

seconded by Gene Sollock, minutes from July 17th, with requested change, and August 5th board meetings were approved as mailed.

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

Marty H. Graham, Upper Nueces-Frio SWCD #238
W. R. Johnson, Upper Nueces-Frio SWCD #238
Raymond (Ray) Teinert, Midland SWCD #244

Subdivision boundary change for Navarro Soil and Water Conservation District #514 was discussed by Mel Davis. He advised changes only effected zones 3 and 4 because of the construction of a reservoir and the relocation of Highway 287. Gene Sollock moved to accept new Highway 287 as the boundary line noting the description of the district is the same as before only the area was changed because of the relocation of Highway 287. Harvey Davis seconded the motion and motion carried.

Mel Davis then discussed the Annual Statewide Meeting of Soil and Water Conservation District Directors to be held in Fort Worth on September 16-18, 1996 at the Radisson Plaza Hotel. He advised the Board members which staff members were assigned to assist them at activities throughout the meeting. An estimate of revenues and expenses was also provided for the Board's review.

Dick Schendel introduced Tracy Gonzales from the Attorney General's Office in Austin assigned to work with the State Board and invited her to attend the Annual Statewide Meeting in Fort Worth to see the functions of the Board and soil and water conservation districts.

Wes Oneth reported on the State Technical meeting held recently with 28 of the 43 members attending. The members were asked to take the information compiled by

NRCS and select EQIP geographic priority areas which were: No. 1 priority, Southern High Plains area, No. 2 priority, Edwards Aquifer region, No. 3 priority, Gulf Coast region, No. 4 priority, Central Texas area, No. 5 priority, Northeast Texas area, No. 6 priority, Rio Grande Valley area, No. 7 priority, Blackland region, and No. 8 priority West Texas area. He said the information had to be in Washington, D.C. by September 15, 1996 and it was not known how many areas would be approved at the national level. It was reported that Speaker of the House Pete Laney had asked to be on the State Technical Committee and will be invited to attend the next meeting scheduled for November 7th. Mr. Oneth advised the Board that districts will be taking the lead at the local level on the Farm Bill.

Dr. Bill Dugas informed the Board of administrative leadership changes in the TAMU System saying he was now resident director at Blackland and that Dr. Allan Jones is working at Texas A&M full time. He invited the Board and staff to attend a barbecue honoring Dr. Jones on September 28th.

Memo Benavides advised the Board the State Association has been working on a Strategic Plan and draft copies would be available at the Annual Meeting in Fort Worth. He indicated that the purpose of the Strategic Plan would be to promote intentions of the State Association and to use in requesting grants from foundations. He said the plan would be a good tool to look at the Association and improve upon what is currently being done. Mr. Benavides discussed a Farm Bill meeting he had attended in Hebbronville and said there seems to be some confusion at the local level since program rules are not published.

Dick Schendel advised he had attended the Farm Bill session in Cuero and said it was a good session and he had picked up a lot of information and had some

questions answered that concerned him. He feels that after districts become more informed of this program it will be a real opportunity for them to be out in the forefront.

Harvey Davis and Dick Schendel then reported on their attendance at the NACD National Leadership Conference held recently in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. They both felt it could have been improved upon. Both appreciated being allowed by the Board to attend this meeting. Mr. Davis said it is an opportunity to learn what other people are doing and where they are going.

Mel Davis advised the Board the Conservation Awards packets have been mailed to districts. He then asked Clyde Gottschalk to provide the information requested by the Board concerning estimated cost to do sound tracks and slide presentations for area award programs for each region. Mr. Gottschalk said several field staff had asked if they could continue to do it locally. After discussion the Board felt it should be left up to each area's field staff and to advise the field staff of the resource Clyde Gottschalk had discussed and if they wished to use this source they could do so.

Clyde Gottschalk discussed the activities of the Information/Education Department and advised of two agriculture symposiums which will be held in Canyon on December 13 at West Texas State University and in Lubbock at Coco Inn on January 16, 1997. These meetings will be centered on Senate Bill 503 and Section 319 will also be discussed. Mr. Gottschalk reported on news articles published regarding State Board programs and Section 319 and said coverage has been excellent this year. He reported on the recent meeting of the Public Information/Education Committee and said they want to expand the state FFA speech contest and to set up scholarships for area and state if approved by the State Association.

Bill Neiser discussed the 12-month budget versus expenditure report. He informed the Board there were still outstanding items that would not be paid until later in the year. At the present time it appears there will be approximately \$100,000 remaining available funds.

Mr. Neiser then discussed the 1998-1999 Legislative Appropriation Request. He said a staff hearing on the request had been held on August 26th by the Legislative Budget Board and Governor's Office staff. Mr. Buckley said they were primarily interested in the exceptional items submitted with the request. He advised them of the difficulty the agency is having with the salary cap provisions.

Mr. Neiser reported on the Bookkeeper Training Workshop held in the Hearings Room of the State Board's office on August 7-8. He said it was a very good session with 28 bookkeepers attending. Gene Sollock reported to the Board a comment made by the bookkeeper of his local district about the helpfulness of the training workshops. She said the training workshops make keeping the books easier and the records are ready for the auditor quicker at year end.

Bob Buckley discussed the implementation of the 1996 Farm Bill. He said EQIP rules are still not out but have been prepared by the USDA and are presently being reviewed. Mr. Buckley discussed a NASCA meeting where the Farm Bill had been discussed and was glad to say Texas is far in advance of what other states are going.

Mel Davis discussed a draft working agreement with USDA and said the change recommended by the Board on August 5th has been agreed to by NRCS. If Board agrees it can be sent to local soil and water conservation districts for their review and consideration. On motion of Harvey Davis, seconded by Gene Sollock the cooperative working agreement will be sent to each local district.

Randy Jones gave a year end employee training update with number of hours and dollars spent on training: 1949 hours and \$386.40.

Mr. Jones then gave a staffing and affirmative action report for Fiscal Year 1996. The agency presently has 59 full time employees and one vacancy.

James Moore discussed Section 319 status report containing project proposals for Fiscal Year 1997 funding approval that has been submitted to EPA. The statewide NPS pollution management project for FY 1997 was on this list. He also discussed the FY 98 Section 319 grant schedule and advised the Board that there were five entities expressing interest so far. He also announced that the field staff and regional managers will be in Temple headquarters on October 23 for a one day Section 319 training session.

Mr. Moore updated the Board on the Texas Coastal Management Program and provided an article from **EnviroNomics** magazine indicating final federal approval of the program should be received in October. Dick Schendel reported on the last Coastal Coordination Council meeting held on August 27 in Corpus Christi. He emphasized the decision of the Council to refer the formation of a small business permitting assistance group to the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission, Department of Commerce and the General Land Office.

Mr. Moore reported on the grant program under the Coastal Management Program and indicated that the San Patricio Soil and Water Conservation District #324 received a grant in the amount of \$17,000 to do coastal erosion work. He provided the Board the proposed schedule for CMP grant cycle #2.

James Moore discussed a series of Drought Relief Seminars which had recently been held across the state. He said in June the agency began receiving requests from

legislators to attend these meetings to explain TSSWCB programs that could provide assistance in dealing with drought conditions.

Mr. Moore reported on Senate Bill 503 activities saying 609 water quality management plans have been certified in FY 96 making a total of 1,576 since the program began in FY 94. He said there have been three complaints received since the last report to the State Board. One complaint was not valid and the other two complaints were currently under investigation. Mr. Moore discussed the annual status review of water quality management plans. He said there is one person out of compliance in the Upper Elm-Red SWCD (James O. Willoughby). It was the consensus of the Board that if he doesn't come into compliance within 21 days, the Board should go ahead and get with the district and proceed to decertify his plan. Mr. Moore said he would let the producer know that if he was not in compliance by the end of 21 days after notification the process to decertify his plan would begin.

Bob Buckley discussed a new smoking policy that was established for the Temple headquarters and regional offices effective September 9, 1996. A committee had been asked to look into possible alternatives for a smoking policy and to make a recommendation to the Executive Director. Dick Schendel asked for minutes to reflect his appreciation for action taken. Buddy Clark commended the work of the committee. Paul Robertson moved to have the Board concur with the policy previously established by the Executive Director which designates all offices under control of the State Soil and Water Conservation Board as smoke free and to adopt such policy as Board policy and to extend the policy to include agency owned vehicles. Gene Sollock seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Bill Neiser reported on Board member travel as of August 31, 1996 and said all Board members were well within their budget and no adjustments were needed to end

the year. Mr. Neiser then advised the Board that FY 97 operating budget included the same number of dollars for Board members' travel and per diem and asked how they wished to split the travel dollars. The consensus of the Board was to divide evenly. On motion of Gene Sollock, seconded by Paul Robertson, the Board adopted travel at \$6,500 and \$1,800 per diem for each Board member.

The next regular Board meeting is November 20, 1996 and the Board was advised there would be five reserved parking spaces in the front of the building for their use.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Clarence F. Schudel
Chairman

Lois J. Cain
Secretary

November 20, 1996
DATE

I certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Board meeting held on September 11, 1996.

November 20, 1996
Date

Robert H. Buckley
Executive Director