

TEXAS STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD
Board Meeting Minutes
March 23, 2017

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board met on March 23, 2017, at 8:08 a.m. at 1497 Country View Lane, Temple, Texas.

Board Members present:

Scott Buckles, Chairman
José Dodier, Jr., Vice-Chairman
Marty H. Graham, Member
Jerry Nichols, Member
Barry Mahler, Member
Joe Ward, Member

Staff Members present:

Rex Isom, Executive Director
Glenn Baker, Program Supervisor
Beverly Krause, Program Supervisor
Todd Oneth, Program Supervisor
Lawrence Brown, Program Supervisor
Ricardo Chapa, Program Supervisor
Johnny Oswald, Program Supervisor
Mark Cochran, Program Supervisor
Bob Gruner, Program Specialist
Jack Foote, Program Specialist
Ben Wilde, Program Specialist
Kendria Ray, Program Specialist
Adrian Perez, Program Specialist
Tony Franklin, Program Specialist
Joel Clark, Program Specialist
Trey Watson, Program Specialist
Don Brandenberger, Program Specialist
Charlie Upchurch, Program Specialist
Melissa Grote, Program Specialist
John Foster, Statewide Programs Officer
T. J. Helton, Nonpoint Source Programs Coordinator
Mitch Conine, Nonpoint Source Project Management Coordinator
Jana Lloyd, Nonpoint Source Project Manager
Wesley Gibson, Nonpoint Source Project Manager
Liza Parker, Nonpoint Source Project Manager
Steve Bednarz, Statewide Programs Engineer
Kenny Zajicek, Chief Fiscal Officer
Mel Davis, Special Projects Coordinator
Aaron Wendt, Special Projects Advisor
Loren Warrick, Information Specialist
Molly Dutton, Information Specialist
Rusty Ray, Public Affairs Specialist
Lee Munz, Flood Control Program and Regional Office Coordinator
Tony Resendez, Flood Control Specialist
Clyde Gottschalk, Program Specialist
Dawn Heitman, Human Resources Specialist

Jimmy McCurry, Natural Resources Specialist
Chris Couch, Natural Resources Specialist
Mikel Thomas, Natural Resources Specialist
Clayton Vanderburg, Natural Resources Specialist
Jeff Cerny, Natural Resources Specialist
Ronnie Ramirez, Planner
Karen Preece, Accountant

Others present:

Tamara Daniel, Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Salvador Salinas, Natural Resource Conservation Service
Kerry Niemann, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Kevin Wagner, Texas Water Resources Institute
Doug Smith, USDA-Agricultural Research Service
Cameron Turner, Texas Water Development Board
Russell Gregorczyk, Certified Public Accountant
Syreeta Alexander, Office of the Attorney General

Chairman Buckles called the meeting to order at 8:08 a.m. and welcomed those present.

AGENDA ITEM 1: Opportunity for Public Comment

AGENDA ITEM 2: Comments from Federal, State and Local Governmental Entities

Mr. Niemann, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, addressed the Board. Mr. Niemann provided updates on proposals, the Drought Project List, the Total Maximum Daily Load Program, the Nonpoint Source Program, our coordinating report, and Water Quality Standards.

Chairman Buckles acknowledged Ms. Alexander, Office of the Attorney General.

Mr. Salinas, Natural Resource Conservation Service, addressed the Board. Mr. Salinas reviewed the handout. Mr. Salinas provided updates on the NRCS proposed budget for fiscal year 2018 with a 21% reduction, currently under-staffed, prescribed grazing, the cost-share rate, wildfires, and the Fever Tick situation.

Mr. Ward congratulated Mr. Salinas on NRCS receiving an Outstanding Partner Award.

Mr. Mahler thanked Mr. Salinas for a very successful 1st Annual Soil Health Short Course held in February.

Dr. Wagner, Texas Water Resources Institute, addressed the Board. Dr. Wagner commented on Dr. Mark Hussey's transition from Vice Chancellor and Dean of the College of Agriculture to faculty, and budget cuts. Dr. Wagner also provided updates on joint projects of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, the Water Quality Management Program, and the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan. Dr. Wagner also presented updates on the Rio Grande Basin, a better use and time for evapotranspiration for irrigation, septic system issues, grazing cattle water use, and irrigation.

Mr. Turner, Texas Water Development Board, addressed the Board. Mr. Turner provided updates on the National Agriculture Day, Texas Water Day, No-Till Conservation Award, legislative bills, budget, and the State Water Implementation Fund of Texas.

Mr. Smith, USDA-Agricultural Research Service, addressed the Board. Mr. Smith commented on a handout flier for their upcoming Field Day on June 1, 2017, and presented a conservation update.

AGENDA ITEM 3: Comments from the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Ms. Daniel, Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts, addressed the Board. Ms. Daniel commented on the Washington D.C. Fly-In. She presented an update on the Rio Grande Carrizo Cane Eradication Program and the Farm Bill.

Chairman Buckles thanked Ms. Daniel on behalf of the Association for their work in Washington D.C.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Consider Approval of Minutes from Previous State Board Meetings

Ms. Preece previously emailed a copy of the minutes to Board Members for their review.

Chairman Buckles called for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 18-19, 2017 Board Meetings. Mr. Mahler moved for the approval of the minutes as presented. Mr. Dodier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 5: Consider Approval of Soil and Water Conservation District Director Appointments

Ms. Preece presented district director appointments for the Board's consideration and verified they were in order and met all qualifications.

Mr. Ward moved for the approval of the following appointments as presented. Mr. Mahler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chad Beaver, Upper Colorado #115, Subdivision 4, Replace Max Jones
Matthew Patterson, Cochran #149, Subdivision 3, Replace Stacey Dunn
Nathaniel Ensz, Toyah-Limpia #209, Subdivision 1, Replace Larry McBee
Lambert Jendrzey, Karnes County #343, Subdivision 4, Replace Patrick Keller
David L. Pierce, Hays County #351, Subdivision 3, Replace Jan Thompson
Greg Burks, Piney Woods #429, Subdivision 5, Replace Grady J. Fountain
Jerry Thornton, Coastal #432, Subdivision 2, Replace Glen Koelemay
John Rhame, Trinity Bay #434, Subdivision 3, Replace Gary Weaver
Larry Richey, Wood #444, Subdivision 2, Replace Bill Roloff
Lester Daigle, Lower Sabine Neches #446, Subdivision 1, Replace Kim Frank
Robert Harris, Rusk #447, Subdivision 2, Replace Worth Whitehead
Louis Lee Baty, Wichita Brazos #544, Subdivision 5, Replace Louis Baty

AGENDA ITEM 6: Consider Approval of Internal Audit of Conservation Outreach Program

Mr. Gregorczyk reviewed the agenda information.

Mr. Mahler moved for the approval of the audit as presented. Mr. Graham seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 7: Fiscal Report

Mr. Zajicek reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 8: External Funds

Mr. Foster reviewed the agenda information. Mr. Foster commented on developing an agreement with USDA-NRCS on flood control structures, application for second grant for the Monarch Butterfly Habitat in Texas Program from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and funds for the Rio Grande Carrizo Cane Eradication Program.

AGENDA ITEM 9: Legislative Update

Mr. Foster reviewed the agenda information. Mr. Foster commented on the budget process of the General Appropriations Act, funding for the Rio Grande Carrizo Cane Eradication Program, and reductions.

AGENDA ITEM 10: Flood Control Programs Status Report

Mr. Munz and Mr. Bednarz reviewed the agenda information. Mr. Bednarz commented on the draining of flood control structures, and high bids on the Emergency Watershed Protection Program which results in elimination of federal funds before project completion. Mr. Bednarz stated easements are at 100 year flood plain and that around 2009 NRCS changed their policy and raised flood levels; this will cost millions of dollars to raise elevations in rehabilitation. He also stated that dams built with today's processes are so much better than those that were built 50-60 years ago, therefore auxiliary spillways are insufficient and need to be upgraded so as not to breach. This will mean that a rehabilitation project estimating from \$2 million will increase to around \$4 million. If it is a federally funded project, we must select the most economical choice. This will probably decommission some dams because they will not be able to justify the high cost of rehabilitation to all flood control structures. There are currently 453 dams that need rehabilitation.

AGENDA ITEM 11: Water Quality Management Plan Program Status Report

Mr. Munz reviewed the agenda information. Mr. Munz introduced regional offices Natural Resources Specialists and Planner.

AGENDA ITEM 12: Consider Approval of Requests for Additional Cost-Share Incentive Funding for Water Quality Management Plans in Accordance with 31 TAC §523.6(f)(2) Relating to Criteria for Waivers

Mr. Munz stated that there is no information to present at this time.

AGENDA ITEM 13: Consider Water Quality Management Plan Cost-Share Requests from the Allocation for Statewide Use

Mr. Munz stated that there is no information to present at this time.

AGENDA ITEM 14: Consider Adoption of Amendment of 31 TAC, Chapter 523, §523.6(e)(2), Agricultural and Silvicultural Water Quality Management for Publication in the *Texas Register* for 30 Day Public Review and Comment

Mr. Munz stated that there is no information to present at this time.

AGENDA ITEM 15: Poultry Water Quality Management Plan Program Status Report

Mr. Cochran reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 16: Texas Nonpoint Source Management Program Status Report

Mr. Conine reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 17: Water Supply Enhancement Program Status Report

Ms. Grote reviewed the agenda information.

Mr. Wendt commented to the Board Members that this would be his last Board Meeting as he has accepted a job and will be moving to Virginia. His last day to work will be March 27th. Mr. Wendt stated that he has enjoyed working with the State Board.

AGENDA ITEM 18: Consider Issuing Fiscal Years 2018-2019 Request for Proposals for Brush Control Projects for the Water Supply Enhancement Program

Mr. Wendt reviewed the agenda information.

Mr. Mahler moved for the approval to publish the notice in the *Texas Register*. Mr. Dodier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Oswald stated that Mr. Wendt will be missed by the staff. Mr. Dodier commended Mr. Wendt for his work on the Rio Grande Carrizo Cane Eradication Program.

Mr. Oswald commended Mr. Salinas, NRCS, for the work being done in Washington D.C.

AGENDA ITEM 19: Rio Grande Carrizo Cane Eradication Program Status Report

Mr. Oswald reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 20: Enhancing and Restoring Monarch Butterfly Habitat in Texas

Ms. Parker reviewed the agenda information. Ms. Parker stated that there are currently over 720 applications, 26 urban gardens, and the TSSWCB is working with National Fish and Wildlife Federation for additional funding.

AGENDA ITEM 21: Conservation Plans to Restore Health of the Gulf Coast

Ms. Parker reviewed the agenda information. Ms. Parker stated that there are currently 38 planning requests.

AGENDA ITEM 22: Conservation Plans for the Lesser Prairie Chicken

Mr. Gibson reviewed the agenda information. Mr. Gibson stated that the wildfires will be a setback for the Lesser Prairie Chicken.

AGENDA ITEM 23: Review Plans for 2017 Annual State Meeting

Ms. Dutton, Ms. Warrick, and Mr. Davis reviewed the agenda information and handouts.

Mr. Graham moved for the approval to increase registration fees to \$175, attending spouse registration to \$150, and both tours to \$30 each. Mr. Mahler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Mahler moved for the approval of the \$37 lunch menu of short ribs and roasted chicken, and the \$42 dinner menu of barbeque brisket, chicken, and sausage. Mr. Nichols seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 24: Adopt New Rule Review Plan

Mr. Davis reviewed the agenda information.

Mr. Mahler moved for the approval to adopt the proposed Rule Review Plan as presented. Mr. Dodier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 25: Consider Readopting, Amending, or Repeal of 31 TAC, Chapter 527, Removal of a District Director (§§527-1-527.7)

Mr. Davis reviewed the agenda information.

Mr. Dodier moved for the approval to publish the rule in the *Texas Register* for a 30 day public review. Mr. Ward seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 26: State Board Member Elections

Mr. Davis reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 27: Texas Conservation Awards Program Area Banquets and Award Winners

Mr. Davis reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 28: National Association of Conservation Districts Status Report

Mr. Davis stated that this item had been covered under agenda item 3 by Ms. Daniel.

AGENDA ITEM 29: National Association of State Conservation Agencies Status Report

Mr. Davis reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 30: Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee Status Report

Mr. Davis reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 31: Interagency Task Force on Economic Growth and Endangered Species Status Report

Mr. Davis reviewed the agenda information.

Mr. Davis commented on the audit that was covered by agenda item 6. Mr. Davis stated that he works with an extremely qualified staff.

AGENDA ITEM 32: Public Information and Education Status Report

Mr. Gottschalk reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 33: Public Relations and Information Status Report

Mr. Ray reviewed the agenda information. Mr. Ray stated that Earth Day Convention will be held April 21-23 in Dallas at the State Fairgrounds.

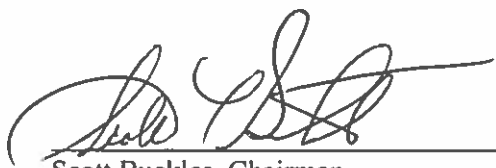
AGENDA ITEM 34: Human Resources Status Report

Ms. Heitman stated that Mr. Fred Squyres' widow called to thank the staff and Board Members for the plant and ornamental cross. Ms. Heitman reviewed the agenda information, thanked the regional office staff for coming to Temple to attend the Board Meeting, and acknowledged Mr. Wendt with good wishes for his future plans.

AGENDA ITEM 35: Set Date for Next State Board Meeting

May 17-18, 2017

Meeting adjourned at 10:18 a.m.



Scott Buckles, Chairman

May 18, 2017
Date



Karen D. Preece, Secretary

May 18, 2017
Date

I certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board meeting held on March 23, 2017.



Rex Isom, Executive Director

May 18, 2017
Date