77th Annual State Meeting of Soil and Water Conservation District Directors

TEMPLE –The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) and the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts (ATSWCD) is pleased to announce Senator Lois Kolkhorst as the keynote speaker for the 77th Annual Meeting of Texas Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Directors. The Annual Meeting will be held at the Moody Gardens Hotel, Spa & Convention in Galveston on October 23-24, 2017.

This meeting provides SWCD Directors, employees, and conservation partners the opportunity to address issues relevant to the state of Texas' natural resources as well as networking, professional development and training opportunities.

During the two-day event, Senator Kolkhorst, along with 11 additional speakers, will share their expertise on a wide range of topics including Texas Landowner Laws, Pesticide Drift, Fever Tick Issues, Feral Hogs, Conservation Needs Assessment, Texas Eminent Domain Laws, Veterinary Feed Directive, Border Security and much more.

The spouse's Auxiliary will hold a business meeting and offer a tour of the Rainforest Pyramid at Moody Gardens. This will allow participants a rare, up-close and interactive experience with endangered plants such as the Corpse Flower and animals ranging from Giant Amazon River Otters to Saki Monkeys and an array of birds.

On Wednesday, meeting participants are invited to take part in a tour where the President and CEO of Moody Gardens, John Zendt will give participants a behind the scenes look at the water treatment process and facility on grounds at the Moody Garden Hotel. Next, participants will meet with Animal Husbandry Manager, Greg Whittaker to learn about the conservation efforts in which Moody Gardens is involved.

The registration deadline is October 2, 2017. To learn more about the 77th Annual Meeting of Texas SWCD Directors visit https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/annual-meeting-swcd-directors.

Program Updates

• BUDGET & ACCOUNTING

•New claim forms for Fiscal Year 2018 Technical Assistance, Matching Funds, and Director Mileage & Per Diem will be emailed to all districts on September 14th and made available on the TSSWCB website.

•New Technical Service Provider allocations and instructions for submitting claims for 2018 will be distributed at the end of September. Allocated funding will be available from October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018.

District Director Mileage and Per Diem

September 30th is the deadline for submitting FY 2017 4th Quarter claims and the return of unused advance funds.

October 15th advance payments for Fiscal Year 2018 will be made.

November 1st supplemental payments for Fiscal Year 2017 will be made.

Matching Funds

November 1st supplemental payments for Fiscal Year 2017 will be made.

Conservation Implementation Assistance (TA)

September 30th is the deadline for Fiscal Year 2017 regular and supplemental claims.

November 1st supplemental payments for Fiscal Year 2017 will be made.

Conservation Activity Program (CAP)

November 1st supplemental payments for Fiscal Year 2017 will be made.

Financial Statements

October 31st is the deadline for submitting completed Financial Statements.

December 31st is the deadline for submitting completed Reviews and Audits.

Conservation Implementation Assistance (TA)

September 30th is the deadline for Fiscal Year 2017 regular and supplemental claims.

November 1st supplemental payments for Fiscal Year 2017 will be made.

Technical Service Provider (Administrative Assistance Grant)

October 30th is the deadline for submitting claims for the Fiscal Year 2017 NRCS Technical Service Provider. Claims can be made for work performed through September 30, 2017.

• FLOOD CONTROL DAM PROGRAM

The State Board approved $9,519,680.00 for flood control grants for Fiscal Year 2017. Of this amount $2,000,000.00 ($1,900,000.00 O&M, $100,000.00 admin) is available to all sponsors for operation and maintenance (O&M) grants on a first-come-first-serve basis. To date a total of 16 proposals have been received. Thirteen proposals have been approved to complete O&M activities in the amount of $524,913.38, leaving a remaining balance of $1,475,086.62. The remaining Fiscal Year 2018 funds ($7,519,680.00) will be used for structural repair grants, matching funds for federal rehabilitation projects or Emergency Watershed Protection Program repairs, and engineering services. Currently, $84 million is needed to repair 217 flood control program dams in Texas, and $1.8 Billion is needed to upgrade and rehabilitate 454 high hazard dams where downstream urban development has resulted in public safety issues.

• WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRAM

With the enactment of Senate Bill 503 (73rd Regular Session - Sims / Counts) in 1993, the Texas Legislature designated the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) the lead agency in the state for the abatement, management, and prevention of nonpoint source pollution from agricultural or silvicultural sources. Additionally, the Legislature authorized the agency to administer a certified water quality management plan (WQMP) program, complete with a cost-share program to incentivize participation and offset the cost of implementing soil and water land improvement measures, for lands within the state. For FY2017 as of August 31, 185 WQMPs have been certified on 93,597.55 total acres.

• 319 NONPOINT SOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

On August 30, 2017, the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reviewed and accepted the Navasota River Below Lake Limestone Watershed Protection Plan as meeting the agency's guidelines for watershed-based plans. The Navasota River WPP outlines a stratgey to implement managment measures that will reduce nonpoint source pollution within the watershed.

Program Updates

• PUBLIC INFORMATION & EDUCATION

2017 Annual Meeting Survey to Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Pre-Registration opened on August 1, 2017 and will close on October 2, 2017. An overflow hotel room block has been set up at the Best Western - Galveston West Beach, phone number: 409-356-6008.

Wildlife Alliance for Youth (WAY)

The Wildlife Alliance for Youth (WAY) State Committee has set dates for the regional and state wildlife contests. Though locations are yet to be finalized, contest dates for the 2018 academic year are as follows:

- Region 4: November 1, 2017
- Region 3: April 3, 2018
- Region 5: April 9, 2018
- Region 2: April 3, 2018
- Region 1: April 9, 2018
- State Contest: April 24, 2018

Ducks Unlimited became a corporate sponsor at the State Committee's meeting with a 5-year commitment to give a $1,000 scholarship to the State Contest high point individual in both the FFA and 4-H divisions.

Soil Stewardship Public Speaking Contest

The 2018 Soil Stewardship Public Speaking contest packet is nearing completion. Plans call for its release to Texas Ag Science teachers and SWCDs to be around December 1st. The 2018 theme is "Watersheds - Our Water, Our Home," coinciding with NACD's Annual Soil Stewardship theme.

SWCD Leadership Development Workshop

A survey will be sent to all SWCDs asking for attendance information. The survey proved to be a valuable tool in last year's planning because it provided information important to logistics such as planning for room blocks, meals, and site location. Dates for the annual training will be determined shortly following the Annual State Meeting.

• WATER SUPPLY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The TSSWCB requested proposals for water supply enhancement projects seeking funding in FY2018-2019 to conduct brush control under the Water Supply Enhancement Program (WSEP). Proposed projects should focus on watersheds with a demonstrated water conservation need and where brush control has been shown, using a computer model, to be a feasible strategy to enhance surface and/or ground water supplies. A competitive proposal review process will be used so that the most appropriate and effective projects are selected for funding. In January 2017, the State Board adopted a revised State Water Supply Enhancement Plan, which describes the program purpose and goals, the competitive grant process and proposal ranking criteria, how the agency will allocate funding, and priority watersheds across the state for water supply enhancement and brush control. As of the June 1st deadline the WSEP Office received 22 WSEP project proposals for Fiscal Year 2018. They are currently being ranked to determine funding for FY18.

Meet Your Board Member

Tina Y. Buford, *Governor Appointee*

Tina Yturria Buford of Harlingen is the Director of Education for the East Foundation, where she focuses on the development of natural resource education programs for youth. In addition, she works alongside her family at the H. Yturria Land and Cattle Company. She was appointed to the Governor's Commission for Women in 2016. She is president of Texan by Nature, director of the Sand County Foundation, and advisory board member for the Texas Agricultural Land Trust. She previously served as president of both the Texas Wildlife Association and Texas Wildlife Association Foundation. Buford received a Bachelor of Science in Rangeland Ecology and Management from Texas A&M University and a certificate in Ranch Management from Texas Christian University School of Ranch Management. Tina and her husband, Trey, have two sons, Cisco and William.