

TEXAS STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD
Board Meeting Minutes
October 29, 2020 at 9:00a.m.

VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETING

Due to Governor Greg Abbott's March 13, 2020 proclamation of a state of disaster affecting all counties in Texas due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the Governor's March 16, 2020 suspension of certain provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, this meeting will be held by video conference call, as authorized under Texas Government Code section 551.127.

Members of the public will have access and a means to participate in this meeting, by two-way communication, by visiting https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_7KAFMzpqQwe1jeC6cgV6OA

An electronic copy of the agenda is now available at <https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/about/state-board-meetings>. A recording of the meeting will be available on the webpage after the meeting.

For public participants, please use the "Raise Hand" feature in Zoom to indicate that you wish to speak during the meeting. You may also email comments@tsswcb.texas.gov in advance of the meeting if you would like to provide public comment. When the Board reaches the public comment item, the Chair will recognize you by name and give you an opportunity to speak.

The Board will meet at the above-stated time to consider and take appropriate action on the items listed below.

Board Members present:

Barry Mahler, Chairman
Marty H. Graham, Vice Chairman
Scott Buckles, Member
José Dodier, Jr., Member
David Basinger, Member
Tina Y. Buford, Member
Carl Ray Polk, Jr., Member

Staff Members present:

Rex Isom, Executive Director
Kenny Zajicek, Chief Operations and Fiscal Officer
Johnny Oswald, Program Administrator and Invasive Species Coordinator
Bob Gruner, 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
Glenn Baker, Program Supervisor
Todd Oneth, Program Supervisor
Lawrence Brown, Jr., Program Supervisor
Ricardo Chapa, Program Supervisor
Judy Albus, Program Supervisor
Mark Cochran, Program Supervisor

John Foster, Policy Advisor and Intergovernmental Affairs
T. J. Helton, Program Administrator
Mitch Conine, Nonpoint Source Project Manager
Jana Lloyd, Nonpoint Source Project Manager
Wesley Gibson, Nonpoint Source Project Manager
Liza Parker, Policy Analyst and Legislative Liaison
Mel Davis, Policy Advisor and Special Projects Coordinator
Rusty Ray, Public Affairs Specialist
Molly Christensen, Public Affairs Specialist
Lee Munz, Program Administrator and Regional Office Coordinator
Steve Bednarz, Program Administrator and Engineer
Allen Nash, Engineer
Tony Resendez, Flood Control Specialist
Dawn Heitman, Human Resources Coordinator
Clay Wright, Information Resources Manager and Information Security Officer
Brian Koch, Regional Watershed Coordinator
Marilyn Koelder, Administrative Assistant
Mark Shackelford, Engineering Technician
Pam Blanton, Administrative Assistant
SuLin Olvera, Administrative Assistant
Mikel Thomas, Natural Resources Specialist
Jimmy McCurry, Natural Resources Specialist
Jeremy Welch, Natural Resources Specialist
Vicki Davis, Accounting Specialist
Karen Preece, Accountant

General Counsel:

Assistant Attorney General Melissa Juarez, Office of the Attorney General

Others Present:

Monday Rufus, Internal Auditor
Kristy Oates, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Tamara Daniel, Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Rick Schilling, Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Jim Drake, Environmental Protection Agency
Edward Anderson, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center
Upper Clear Fork Soil and Water Conservation District
Grady Gibson
Leah Bennett
Casey Buechler
Mike Petter
James Pope

Chairman Mahler commented that he is impressed with the Virtual Annual State Meeting. Mr. Mahler commented on Ms. Buford's presentation, years of Director service awards, and thanked the District Directors.

AGENDA ITEM 1: Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Mahler called the meeting to order at 9:01 and called roll of the Board Members. All members present.

AGENDA ITEM 2: Excuse Any Absent Board Members

All members present.

AGENDA ITEM 3: Public Comment
There were no comments at this time.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Comments from Federal, State and Local Governmental Entities

There were no comments at this time.

AGENDA ITEM 5: Overview and Update on the Programs and Activities of the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resource Conservation Service

Ms. Kristy Oates, Natural Resources Conservation Service, addressed the Board. Ms. Oates thanked the Board and stated that she is honored to serve as the Texas State Conservationist. Ms. Oates gave Fiscal Year 2020 totals of contracts and programs, and deadlines for Fiscal Year 2021 programs. Ms. Oates also presented updates on the Flood Control Structures, Emergency Watershed Protection Program, Flood Plain Easement pilot project, and staffing issues. Ms. Oates stated that Darren Richardson will be retiring. Ms. Oates thanked the Board for the videos from our Annual State Meeting of District Directors.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Overview and Update on the Programs and Activities of the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Mr. Rick Schilling, Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts, addressed the Board. Mr. Schilling congratulated the State Board on the Virtual Annual State Meeting of District Directors, and thanked the Mr. Isom, Ms. Christensen, and State Board staff for their part. Mr. Rickey James received President's Award. There were three resolutions approved. Mr. Rick Schilling was re-elected as President, and Mr. Kent Batman was re-elected as Vice-President. Mr. Schilling stated that some districts are opening for business and beginning to hold events.

AGENDA ITEM 7: Minutes from September 17, 2020 State Board Meeting

Ms. Preece previously emailed a copy of the minutes to Board Members for their review. Chairman Mahler called for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2020 Board Meeting.

Mr. Dodier moved for the approval of the minutes as presented. Mr. Graham seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 8: Soil and Water Conservation District Director Appointments, including Gene Gully, Sam West, William C. Barfield, Andrew J. Miller, Victor Saenz, Caroline W. Levias, Mark Hilbers:

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

Ms. Buford moved for the approval of the following appointments as presented. Mr. Buckles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Gene Gully, Tom Green #248, Subdivision 3, Replace Lonnie Kellermeier
Sam West, Atascosa County #307, Subdivision 4, Replace Patrick West
William C. Barfield, Monte Mucho #331, Subdivision 3, Replace Robert Fulbright (moving from subdivision 5 to 3)
Andrew J. Miller, Monte Mucho #331, Subdivision 5, Replace William C. Barfield (who moved to subdivision 3)
Victor Saenz, Jim Wells County #355, Subdivision 4, Replace Alberto Martinez
Caroline W. Levias, Jasper-Newton #441, Subdivision 5, Replace Charles Hughes
Mark Hilbers, Archer County #559, Subdivision 5, Replace Ben Buerger

AGENDA ITEM 9: Human Resources Audit

Mr. Rufus reviewed the agenda information.

Board Members discussed background checks.

Mr. Basinger moved for the approval of the audit as presented. Mr. Dodier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 10: Intergovernmental Affairs Status Report

Ms. Parker reviewed the agenda information.

Mr. Isom stated that there will be a virtual Legislative Budget Board Joint Hearing on November 6th.

AGENDA ITEM 11: Conservation Initiatives Status Report

Ms. Parker reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 12: Agency Strategic Plan

Ms. Parker reviewed the agenda information. Ms. Parker commented that we have submitted our biennial update and that a committee has been created for the next one which is due in 2022.

AGENDA ITEM 13: Sunset Advisory Commission Review

Mr. Foster reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 14: Midland Soil and Water Conservation District Boundary Changes

Mr. Foster reviewed that agenda information.

Mr. Basinger moved for the approval of the changes as presented. Mr. Buckles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 15: Flood Control Programs Status Report

Mr. Bednarz reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 16: Water Quality Management Plan Program Status Report

Mr. Munz reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 17: Requests for Additional Cost-Share Incentive Funding for Water Quality Mgmt Plans in Accordance with Title 31 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 523, Agriculture and Silviculture Quality Mgmt, Section 523.6(f)(4), Concerning Criteria for Waivers

Mr. Munz stated that there are no requests to consider at this time.

AGENDA ITEM 18: Water Quality Management Plan Cost-Share Requests from the Allocation for Statewide Use

Mr. Munz stated that there are no requests to consider at this time.

AGENDA ITEM 19: Poultry Water Quality Management Plan Program Status Report

Mr. Cochran reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 20: Texas Nonpoint Source Management Program Status Report

Ms. Lloyd reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 21: Carrizo Cane Eradication Program Status Report

Mr. Oswald reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 22: National Association of Conservation Districts-Technical Assistance Status Report

Mr. Gibson reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 23: Communication Strategy Status Report

Ms. Christensen reviewed the agenda information.

Chairman Mahler thanked Ms. Christensen for her work toward the virtual Annual State Meeting of District Directors. Ms. Christensen thanked Mr. Ray for the work that he input into the making of the award winner videos. Mr. Isom also thanked Ms. Christensen and Mr. Ray.

AGENDA ITEM 24: Conservation Outreach: Rural and Urban Outreach

Mr. Ray reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 25: Human Resources Status Report

Ms. Heitman reviewed the agenda information.

AGENDA ITEM 26: Employee Service Awards

Chairman Mahler read the service award information for the following:

Tony Franklin - 10 years
T.J. Helton - 15 years
Brian Koch - 15 years
Charlie Upchurch - 20 years
Vicki Davis - 40 years

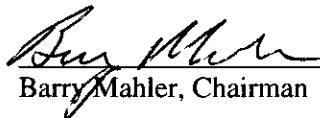
AGENDA ITEM 27: Set Date for Next State Board Meeting

Mr. Buckles moved for the approval of January 21, 2021 using Zoom videoconferencing. Mr. Polk, Jr. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

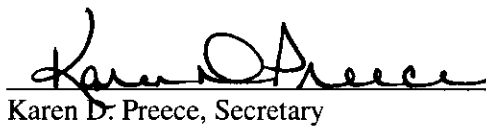
Mr. Dodier thanked Ms. Juarez for covering the meeting.

Mr. Isom thanked everyone who helped with the virtual Annual State Meeting of District Directors and congratulated those directors that received service awards for their years of service.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:16 a.m.


Barry Mahler, Chairman

January 21, 2021
Date


Karen D. Preece, Secretary

January 21, 2021
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 October 29, 2020.


Rex Isom, Executive Director

January 21, 2021
Date