OFFICE OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

November 7, 2017

12:30 PM

DELTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

LPB CONFERENCE ROOM B

7500 MILLHAVEN ROAD

MONROE, LA

PROCEEDINGS/MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Skains called the regular monthly Commission Meeting to order at 12:30 P.M. Chairman Skains said the invocation and lead in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

The roll was called by Mr. Joey Breaux.

Members and Alternate Members present: Mr. Reggie Skains, Chairman; Dr. Ernest Girouard, Vice Chairman; Mr. Randell Fletcher; Mr. John Compton, Secretary/Treasurer and Mr. Ed Yerger, and Dr. Tara Smith representing LSU AgCenter.

Members absent: Mr. Donavon Taves, LACD President, Dr. Rogers Leonard, LSU AgCenter, and Southern University Agricultural Center Representative

A quorum was present.

Others Present: Mr. Brad Spicer, LDAF-OSWC/Executive Director SSWCC; Mr. Kevin Norton, NRCS State Conservationist USDA-NRCS; Mr. Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC, Mr. Michael Schooler- LDAF-OSWC, Mr. Ross Allison-DeSoto SWCD, Mr. Jeremy Evans-DeSoto SWCD, Ms. Stacy Conley- Saline SWCD, and Mr. Harol Thompson- Dorcheat SWCD

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Skains asked if there were any comments from the public or Commissioners and there were none.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Chairman Skains asked for any comments from the public or Commission members about the September 19, 2017 State Commission minutes and there were none. Chairman Skains called for a motion to approve the September 19, 2017 State Commission Meeting minutes as emailed.

**Motion:**  Mr. Fletcher made a motion to approve the September 19, 2017 State Commission Meeting minutes as emailed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Compton and passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chairman Skains said they would now take up Unfinished Business and asked Mr. Spicer to review the agenda items with the State Commission.

NRCS/OSWC Farm Bill Cooperative Agreement

Mr. Spicer said that this is the first month of the new 2017/2018 Farm Bill agreement. He said they will not be able to access district earnings for September until November 11th when the Farm Bill internet program is unlocked. He said that they plan to watch the funds very closely because there is a significant increase in funds.

LACD Annual Meeting January 10-12, 2018

Mr. Spicer said that LACD chose to hold their annual meeting at the Alexandria Best Western Inn & Suites & Conference Center. He said that this is the same location that they had the 2017 LACD Annual Meeting. He said the association would be saving substantially on hotel guest rooms, meeting rooms, and meal costs. He said the hotel will also include complimentary breakfast for the guests. Mr. Fletcher said that he thought they did a great job last year. Mr. Spicer said the LACD Annual Meeting will have the same structure as last year. He said that the meeting is set to start on Wednesday, January 10 with the PAC meeting at 11:00 a.m., the LACD Business meeting at 1:00 p.m., the Opening Session at 4:00 p.m., and a Social and Cochon De Lait in the evening. He said that he and Mr. Norton had been working on how to structure the Thursday morning session. He said that they have agreed to have a farm bill session with a panel after the break so that the panel members can arrive on Thursday morning. He said that the General Session will include a Department of Environmental Equality (DEQ) presentation on Water Quality Trading: Non-Point to Point Source. He said by late December the Water Quality Work Group will have structured a general outline on how the process will take place and who will have the task of verifying the Best Management Practices. He said that he has been working with Mr. Scott Edwards and numerous others in assisting DEQ with developing guidelines which will become through an official process The Administrative Procedures to implement the trading program.

Mr. Spicer said several years ago the legislature directed Tulane Institute on Water Law & Policy to review Louisiana’s water code. He said that Mr. Mark Davis is going to make a presentation on where they are with their review of the Louisiana water code. He said that we are behind most other states on how we go about managing our water resources. He said that our citizens don’t have much concern about managing our water resources because we have so much water most of the time but on occasions we have more water than we need as recent floods have demonstrated. Mr. Spicer said that over the 40 years that he and others have worked on trying to get the legislatures to pass water management legislation and the only time that it received attention from our elected officials was in 2002 when we had a horrible drought and they passed legislation forming the Louisiana Water Resources Commission.

Mr. Spicer said that the new CEO Justin Ehrenwerth with the Water Institute of the Gulf will discuss the work they are doing at the Institute. He said their goal is to have Louisiana be center of knowledge on how you should manage all waters including coastal and inland waters.

Mr. Spicer said that the Master Farmer Luncheon is scheduled for Thursday at 12:00 PM followed with the breakout sessions, and the LACD and Earth Team volunteers Awards dinner will follow the evening social. He said that on Friday we will have the NRCS Employees meeting, the Legislative Committee meeting and the LACD Business Meeting along with other reports. Chairman Skains asked Mr. Norton if he had any comments since he has been involved with developing the program. Mr. Norton said that Mr. Spicer has pretty much covered everything and the only issue would be trying to fit all the topics in on Thursday morning. He said that there will be a lot of good opportunities for attendees to discuss the issues. Mr. Norton said that Mr. Ed Giering requested to do a presentation on the Natchitoches SWCD Feral Hog Project. He said that based on conversations with Mr. Spicer that he recommended making room on the program for his presentation. Mr. Spicer said that we would make room during opening session for Natchitoches SWCD presentation. He said that we are also trying to schedule Congressman Abraham to participate in the Farm Bill panel. He said that he is showing strong interest but his staff has not committed him yet. Chairman Skains said that we have made contact with him but the staff is reluctant schedule him that far out.

2017-2018 Legislative Contact Plan

Mr. Spicer asked Chairman Skains if he has received any feedback on his plan since the last meeting. Chairman Skains said that he has discussed some of the terms that we are developing with Commissioner Strain. He said that he has also contacted some of the committee members. He said that we haven’t setup a meeting to discuss the plan because he wanted it to be in Baton Rouge to make it more convenient for everyone to attend. He said that we will try to pull some things together for the December or January meeting. Chairman Skains said that we have to get organized before the session starts and also be prepared to go to any special legislative sessions. He asked Dr. Girouard if he had any comments. Dr. Girouard said that he cleaned out his office in 2013 when he was LACD president. He said that the Commission had an extensive legislative effort sponsored by LACD. He said that they also had a handout and some presentations on how to contact your legislators and what to focus on when meeting with elected officials. He said that we must move forward and apply the pressure because we cannot suffer any more cuts. He said that we need some direction and the sooner we can get to our legislators in all districts the better chance we have in being successful. He said we must get our local district supervisors to do some work regarding funding our program. Dr. Girouard said that only two districts didn’t submit their grassroots reports. Mr. Spicer said the reports get submitted but most of the districts don’t make an effort to make personal contact and work with their local legislators. Dr. Girouard said he agrees but it is up to the district to make the contact. He said if they don’t make the contact then it will be impossible to succeed in Baton Rouge. Chairman Skains said that we must continue the fight state-wide and that our efforts are not in vain.

SWCD Investment Policy PPMs

Mr. Spicer said that he and Mr. Joey Breaux have had some discussions regarding district investment policy. Mr. Breaux said that an attorney general’s opinion was sent to the districts after it was made public that districts are not supposed to pay an investment firm for CD purchases. He said that districts are supposed to purchase their own CD. He said that while working on this topic with districts it was discovered that there is a statutory requirement that all political subdivisions of the state, have an investment policy. Mr. Breaux said that this PPM can be very brief but it must be consistent with the statutory requirements. He said that he has been working with a couple of department attorneys to prepare the PPM. He said that it will be a brief paragraph and it can be something that will be easy for the districts to follow. He said that LA RS 33: 2955 states that : “All political subdivisions of the state, as that term is defined in Article VI, Section 44 of the Constitution of Louisiana, shall develop and adopt an investment policy that details and clarifies investment objectives and the procedures and constraints necessary to reach those objectives. All such investment policies should:

            (1) Reflect the mandate to manage public funds prudently.

            (2) Place appropriate emphasis on the goals of safety of principal first, liquidity second, and yield third.

            (3) Establish internal controls for any derivatives in use to ensure that the risks inherent in derivatives are adequately managed. For the purposes of this Section, the term "derivative" shall be defined to mean any financial instrument created from or whose value depends on the value of one or more underlying assets or indexes of asset value.”

He said that they should have the “SWCD Investment Policy PPM” complete by December’s Commission meeting.

Ethics Training

Chairman Skains said that we discussed the Ethics training for employees in Election Convention. Mr. Spicer said that he may send a survey out to the districts to make sure we have commitments from supervisors and employees to attend the training. He said that it was embarrassing last year to have promised the Ethics Commission that we would have the required 50 attendees and only have 14 to attend the training. Chairman Skains said that the training is also required for district employees this year. Mr. Fletcher said that since they are requesting that all supervisors and employees do the ethics training that the LACD ethics training should have better attendance this year. Mr. Spicer said that Mr. Mike Watson started taking the ethics training on the computer and had to take a break and did not realize that he would have to start over. He said that Mr. Robbins, with the Ethics Commission, conducted the training last year. Mr. Fletcher asked can anyone other than someone from their office provide the ethics training. Chairman Skains said that he thinks the trainer has to be from the Ethics Commission. Mr. Spicer said that they don’t do many outside training sessions because the sessions are already prescheduled at specific locations across the state. Mr. Norton said that we needed to get the information out to the districts about their choices to come to LACD and be trained or to take the training session online.

State Commission Convention Election Results- Area I and Area II

Chairman Skains said the next agenda item is the State Commission Election Convention results for Area I and Area II. He said the State Commission conducted Area I and Area II State Soil and Water Conservation Commission Election Conventions earlier in the morning.

Chairman Skains said the voting results of the Area I and Area II Election Convention are as follows:

**Area I- State Commission Member**

Mr. Reggie Skains

D’Arbonne Soil and Water Conservation District

**Area I- State Commission Alternate Member**

John “Pat” Boudreaux

Sabine Soil and Water Conservation District

**Area II- State Commission Member**

Mr. Edward Yerger

Madison Soil and Water Conservation District

**Area II- State Commission Alternate Member**

Mr. Chris Carter

Morehouse Soil and Water Conservation

Chairman Skains asked if there were any public or Commission comments regarding the election and there being none, he requested a motion to accept the election results.

**Motion:** Mr. Randell Fletcher made a motion and it was seconded by Mr. John Compton to accept the results of the Area I and Area II Convention with Mr. Reggie Skains as Member and Mr. John “Pat” Boudreaux as alternate for Area I and Mr. Edward Yerger as Member and Mr. Chris Carter as alternate for Area II and passed unanimously.

Resolved, Mr. Reggie, D’Arbonne Soil and Water Conservation District will serve as the Area I Member of the State Commission and Mr. John “Pat” Boudreaux, Sabine Soil and Water Conservation District will serve as Area I Alternate Member of the State Commission. Mr. Edward

Yerger, Madison Soil and Water Conservation District will serve as the Area II Member of the State Commission and Mr. Chris Carter, Morehouse Soil and Water Conservation, will serve as

Area II Alternate Member of the State Commission with their terms beginning

November 7, 2017 – November 7, 2020

Chairman Skains congratulated the newly elected Members and Alternate members on the State Commission.

Mr. Spicer sad he also wanted to congratulate those elected to serve on the Commission.

Mr. Spicer said that he also wanted to mention that Ms. Laura Edwards retired on November 1, 2017 and we have promoted Ms. LaClasha “Clay” Alexander into that position. He said that we are now advertising to fill Clay’s Administrative Coordinator position. He said that it will be a while until we can get people trained and an additional person on staff. Chairman Skains said that Laura was a great person and that he feels that the Commission should write a letter to thank her for the many years that she worked with the Commission and the Soil and Water Districts. Mr. Spicer said that Commissioner Strain and the Executive Staff came down to read a letter to her from the Commissioner. Mr. Spicer said he greatly appreciated working with Ms. Edwards. Chairman Skains called for a motion to send a letter of appreciation to Ms. Laura Edwards for her many years of service to the conservation districts and the Commission.

**Motion:** Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to send a letter of appreciation to Ms. Laura Edwards for her many years of service to the conservation districts and the Commission. It was seconded by Mr. Fletcher and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said anytime we have people move into new positions we have to work with them and not criticize them. He said that we want them to grow into their new position. Mr. Breaux said that Mr. Blaize Pezold who had been our Coastal Resources guy and managed our Revegetation Program and was located in Thibodaux, LA left to pursue another job and Mr. Jeremy Rodriguez moved into that position so we have two vacancies in Soil and Water in our Baton Rouge office.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**NRCS State Conservationist Report**

Chairman Skains said they would now take up New Business and asked Mr. Kevin Norton to give the NRCS report. Mr. Norton said November’s issue of the Louisiana *Conservation Update* is highlighting the 700,000 acre celebration of the Wetland Reserve Program/Wetland Reserve Easement Program. He said Mr. Spicer came to the celebration in Tensas parish. He said that Mr. Jay Hardwick who is a SWCD board member for Tensas-Concordia was the Master of Ceremony. He said that Mr. Hardwick represents the districts, NRCS and agriculture producers exceptionally well. Mr. Norton said they had a number of great speakers and that the program was very nice. He said of the 700,000 acres that in Louisiana has over 300,000 acres; Arkansas is just over 200,000 acres, and also Mississippi nearing 200,000 acres which equals the 700,000 acres that was being celebrated. He said that the celebration had great attendance and that a lot of people from the start of the WRE program from over 25 years attended the celebration. He said that the featured speaker of the celebration was Mr. Bonner Wiggers, who was a former chairman of the Northeast SWCD and a longtime Wetland Reserve Easement Program (WRE) participant. Mr. Wiggers’ great nephew, Mr. Drew Wiggers, is now chairman of Northeast SWCD. He said that Mr. Wiggers told a great story about the generational aspects of agriculture in Louisiana. Mr. Norton said Mr. Wiggers’ great grandfather started the farming in the family and now they have three generations with the fourth, fifth, and sixth currently active on the farm. He said that Mr. Wiggers talked about the values they carried in the agriculture operation through the generations and how the WRE program has helped the family.

He said Wyatt Labrano, from Congressman Abraham’s staff, and a representative from a Mississippi congressional district came and did a great job of commemorating the work that the WRE program. Mr. Norton said that the Nature Conservancy, Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture, and Ducks Unlimited (DU) were just a few sponsors of this event.

Mr. Norton said a lot of conservation work has been going on in the state. He said that the Grazing Lands Coalition took a tour over to visit four farms in Texas. He said that our LACD first vice president, Mr. David Daigle, is the chairman of the group and that the group is comprised of SWCD supervisors. He said that we had been doing some engineering design work with the Veteran’s Therapy Garden in North Louisiana and that they also did a Coastal Restoration Dedication service in Lacombe, Louisiana.

Mr. Norton said there was a press release on Friday from Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, on President Trump announcing Craig McCain as Louisiana’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) Executive Director and he will start work on Monday, November 13, and Dr. Carrie Castille is the new Rural Development Director and started work on October 30. He said that Mr. Bill Northey, Iowa’s Secretary of Agriculture, has been nominated and has gone through the Senate confirmation to be USDA’s Under Secretary of Farm Production and Conservation. He said that he has a hold placed on him by Senator Ted Cruz of Texas.

Mr. Norton said that NRCS is now under Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC). He said as a part of the effort under President Trump’s desire to streamline the operations of the Federal government, they consolidating the administrative units at the department levels. He said that Mr. Tom Christensen NRCS Associate Chief of Operations will serve as the FPAC Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Business Services. He said that Tom will be over the contracting, Human Resources, and Property Management side while another Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Enterprise Services Associate will be over IT, Public Affairs, and Commodity Credit Corporation. Mr. Norton said that there will be reduction of 975 NRCS vehicles across NRCS by December 31, 2017. He said not only are we not able to hire staff but we are also having reductions in other areas and the Department and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) are asking a lot of questions regarding our internal operations. He said that we must continue to tell the story of the partnership and how NRCS is connected to the field level with Soil and Water Conservation Districts. He said that the partnership has been working together for over 80 years and we will work our way through these changes. He said that Dr. Girouard made a point earlier that it is important that we let the State Legislature know that NRCS and Soil and Water Conservation Districts have been able, with extensive cuts, to accomplish because we have had a lot of flexibility and partner support at the state level. Mr. Norton said that in the future there may be a time where districts will have to figure out a way to get their own resources to service our customer base.

Mr. Norton said that we spoke with the Commission about the field office restructuring effort at our last Commission meeting. He said that the packet has been put together and forwarded to the national office. He said that it hasn’t moved over to the department because they are waiting for Under Secretary Northey to move into the office and get the new administrative unit in place.

Mr. Norton said that the NRCS field office and the Lafayette Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) was housed in a bank building. He said the bank building has been sold to a company that is in process of turning the building into an entertainment venue (Rock n’ Bowl). He said that NRCS has requested authority move out of the city of Lafayette and co-locate with FSA at an undetermined location. He said we will continue to serve Lafayette SWCD and producers from the new office location.

Mr. Norton said that NRCS Louisiana hasn’t received the advisory allocations for this year as of yet. He said that they are expecting to get their allocations by the end of the month. He said that NRCS is still doing program sign ups. He said that after the funding comes that they will move on to obligating funds. Mr. Norton said that concluded his report.

Chairman Skains thanked Mr. Norton for his report.

Mr. Randell Fletcher said that Grant SWCD successfully received funding for the Grant Watershed Project due to the help of Mr. Norton and his team. He said that Mr. Britt Paul also helped in the effort. He said that Grant SWCD has been working on the “Grant Watershed Project” for the last ten years and we finally got the funds for the studies on this project. Mr. Fletcher said that they were many more requests but he thinks that there is someone reviewing the project and thinks it is a good idea. Mr. Norton said that we haven’t had money to do watershed work in close to 9 or 10 years. He said that they plan to have a small public meeting to get things going.

**Correspondence**

Chairman Skains said the first correspondence item is a letter from the Crescent SWCD requesting the Commission approval for Rebecca Livaudais, Thomas Vitrano, Nina Ockman, Allan Ensminger, and Irvin Dares III attend the National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting in Nashville, TN on January 27-31, 2018. Chairman Skains asked for any comments from the public or Commission members and there were none. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve Crescent SWCD’s out of state travel. Chairman Skains requested a motion to approve the request.

**Motion:** Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to approve Crescent SWCD’s request for Rebecca Livaudais, Thomas Vitrano, Nina Ockman, Allan Ensminger, and Irvin Dares III to attend the National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting in Nashville, TN on January 27-31, 2018. Mr. John Compton seconded and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next correspondence item is a letter from Avoyelles SWCD requesting Commission approval for Dirk Dupuy, Kyle Lemoine, James Deshotel, Larry Sayes, Ruben Dauzat, and Maddy Coco to attend the National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting in Nashville, TN on January 27-31, 2018. Chairman Skains asked for any comments from the public or Commission members and there were none. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve Avoyelles SWCD’s out of state travel. Chairman Skains requested a motion to approve the request.

**Motion:** Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to approve Avoyelles SWCD’s requesting for Dirk Dupuy, Kyle Lemoine, James Deshotel, Larry Sayes, Ruben Dauzat, and Maddy Coco to attend the National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting in Nashville, TN on January 27-31, 2018. Mr. John Compton seconded and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next correspondence item is a letter from Calcasieu SWCD requesting Commission approval for Mrs. Rose Sharbeno and Mr. David Daigle to attend the National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting in Nashville, TN on January 27-31, 2018. Chairman Skains asked for any comments from the public or Commission members and there were none. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve Calcasieu SWCD’s out of state travel request. Chairman Skains requested a motion to approve the request.

**Motion:** Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to approve Calcasieu SWCD’s request for Mrs. Rose Sharbeno and Mr. David Daigle to attend the National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting in Nashville, TN on January 27-31, 2018. Mr. John Compton seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next few correspondence items are audit engagement letters for D’Arbonne SWCD, West Carroll SWCD, Allen SWCD, and Morehouse SWCD. He asked Mr. Spicer did he have any comments regarding the audit contracts. Mr. Spicer said that D’Arbonne SWCD, West Carroll SWCD, and Allen SWCD are working with J.Aaron Cooper, LLC who is charging each district $575 to complete their audits. He said that Morehouse SWCD’s budget is not much different than D’Arbonne SWCD and their CPA, Hill, Inzina, Company, are requesting $1,750 a year. Chairman Skains asked Mr. Spicer to contact Mr. Jason Waller, Chairman of Morehouse SWCD, to clarify the significant differences in cost.

Chairman Skains asked if there were any comments from the public or Commission members and there were none. Chairman Skains requested a motion to approve D’Arbonne SWCD, West Carroll SWCD, and Allen SWCD’s audit contracts with J. Aaron Cooper, LLC.

**Motion:** Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to approve D’Arbonne SWCD, West Carroll SWCD, and Allen SWCD’s engagement letters with J. Aaron Cooper, LLC and have Mr. Spicer discuss CPA, Hill, Inzina,Company, Morehouse SWCD’s audit contract with Mr. Jason Waller, Chairman of Morehouse SWCD to determine why the high cost for their audit. Mr. John Compton seconded it and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Spicer said that before we start reviewing the reading material he wanted mention that Governor Edwards and Dr. Strain are going on an Agriculture and Forestry listening tour. He said that this is a great opportunity for local supervisors to get out and talk to the Commissioner and the Governor about the partnership and importance of funding our conservation program. The schedule is as follows:

**When/:   Tuesday, November 14, 2017**

**Where     9:00 – 10:30 a.m.**

Wooldridge Cattle Company

10724 Highway 1

Mooringsport, La. 71060

**12:00 – 2:30 p.m. (Lunch provided)**

Venoy Kinnaird Farm

16388 Old Bonita Road

Bastrop, La. 71220

**Thursday, November 16, 2017**

**9:00 -10:30 a.m.**

Concordia Parish Community Center

26356 Highway 15

Ferriday, La. 71334

**12:00 – 2:30 p.m. (Lunch provided)**

Dennis Aucoin’s Camp

              6450 Highway 67

Slaughter, La. 70777

**Friday, November 17, 2017**

**9:00 – 10:30 a.m.**

            R & N Farms

3535 Vidrine Road

Ville Platte, La. 70586

**11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (Lunch provided)**

Olivier Farms

2056 Highway 31

Arnaudville, La.  70512

Chairman Skains said the next correspondence items are reading material that you can review later. Mr. Spicer said included is an article that he thought Dr. Girouard would want to discuss. Mr. Spicer said the article is titled “Louisiana Farmer Garners National Recognition for Conservation & Stewardship”. Dr. Girouard said that this is a great opportunity for Mr. Christian Richard because of how he is using the “Field to Market Fieldprint “. He said that he thinks this is the first year that they gave this award. He said that a lot of farmers supported Christian’s nominations and we are glad that he received the award

Chairman Skains said the next correspondence is a letter from Dr. Ernest Girouard thanking the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission for recognizing him for his work in their retirement letter.

**Supervisor Resignations/ Appointments and Reappointments**

Chairman Skains asked Mr. Spicer to report on the resignations and reappointments of supervisors. Mr. Spicer said that he first wanted to report on Mr. Charles Severance’s resignation from Capital SWCD effective November 7, 2017. Mr. Compton said that Charles has agreed to continue to serve on the board as an Associate member and ask the Commission to officially recognize him as an associate member.

Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or Commission members and there were none; he asked for a motion to accept the resignation of Charles Severance as an Appointed District Supervisor of Capital SWCD effective November 7, 2017 and accept him as an Associate Member of Capital SWCD effective November 7, 2017.

**Motion:** Mr. John Compton made a motion to accept the resignation of Mr. Charles Severance as an Appointed District Supervisor of Capital SWCD effective November 7, 2017 and accept him as an Associate Member of Capital SWCD effective November 7, 2017. The motion was seconded by Dr. Ernest Girouard and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said that we have another resignation from Steve Horvath, Elected Supervisor, Capital SWCD.

Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or Commission members and there were none; he asked for a motion to accept the resignation of Steve Horvath, elected Supervisor, Capital SWCD effective November 7, 2017.

**Motion:** Mr. John Compton made a motion to accept the resignation of Mr. Steve Horvath as an elected District Supervisor of Capital SWCD effective November 7, 2017. The motion was seconded by Mr. Randell Fletcher and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said that we also have two appointments from Capital SWCD.

Capital SWCD is requesting that Steve Horvath be appointed to fill the vacant appointed position formerly held by Charles Severance. Term will begin November 7, 2017 and expire on November 23, 2020.

Capital SWCD is requesting that Mr. Leeland Lee be appointed to fill the vacant elected position formerly held by Mr. Steve Horvath. Term will begin November 7, 2017 and expire on June 30, 2018.

Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or Commission members and there were none; he asked for a motion to accept the appointments of Capital SWCD, Mr. Steve Horvath, elected position and Capital SWCD, Mr. Leeland Lee, appointed position.

**Motion:** Mr. John Compton made a motion to approve the appointments of Mr. Steve Horvath, for the elected position; Capital SWCD effective November 7, 2017 and expiring November 23, 2020 and to approve the appointment of Mr. Leeland Lee to appointed position on Capital SWCD effective November 7, 2017 and expiring June 30, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Randell Fletcher and passed unanimously.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairman Skains asked Dr. Tara Smith to give a report from LSU AgCenter. She said that they received a grant from NRCS to promote Soil Health. She said they have planned two Soil and Health workshops scheduled for January 23-24, 2017. Dr. Smith said the workshops will be in West Monroe and Alexandria. She said that she knows there will be two or three more workshops around the state but they are not scheduled as of yet. Dr. Smith said they will also conduct a field day focusing on Soil Health and cover crop management in February at the Macon Ridge Research Station in Winnsboro, LA. She said they had a workshop there a couple years ago and it was well received so they are looking forward to conducting another workshop. She said that they have advertised a position at the Scott Research and Extension Center in Winnsboro but they haven’t selected the individual to fill the position. Dr. Smith said that they are looking forward to working with NRCS on projects.

Chairman Skains thanked Dr. Smith for her report.

Chairman Skains said that he would encourage Dr. Girouard and others to attend the Listening Session with Governor Edwards and Dr. Strain because Governor Edwards laid out a lot of the situations that the state is facing and some of the suggested solutions in fixing these things. He said that he encourages everyone to get involved with these listening sessions because others will be there to make their case for the projects and funding. He said that if we are not involved that we face getting left behind. He said to be prepared with questions to ask the Governor and he will have many staff members there to answer questions.

Chairman Skains asked if there were any comments from the public or Commission members.

Dr. Girouard said that he serves on the Vermillion River Preservation Association and they meet monthly. He said that they monitor the Vermillion River with 16 monitoring points. He said most of their sites are the same sites from which DEQ is taking samples. He said that once in a while a few people have issue with their fecal coliform levels and want to know why. He said individuals were blaming farm animals and wildlife. Dr. Girouard said that they collected water samples from two different sites and analyzed the DNA to see whether it was cattle, dogs, birds, or humans. He said humans were the greatest contributor to water quality.

**NEXT MEETING**

Chairman Skains said the next State Commission Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, December 5, 2017 at 1:15 P.M. in the Veterans Auditorium, LDAF Building, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana or an alternate site on the LSU Campus

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Skains asked if there were any other comments from the public or Commission members and there were none.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Skains said if there was no other business or comments from the public or Commission members, he will accept a motion to adjourn.

**Motion:** Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to adjourn at 1: 45 P.M. The motion was seconded by Mr. John Compton and passed unanimously.

/s/ Reggie Skains*\_\_\_\_\_\_*

Reggie Skains, Chairman

State Soil and Water Conservation Commission