

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

OFFICE OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION  
STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

July 21, 2021  
1:15 PM

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY  
VETERANS MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM  
5825 FLORIDA BOULEVARD  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

PROCEEDINGS/MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Girouard called the regular monthly Soil & Water Conservation Commission Meeting to order at 1:15 P.M. Mr. Reggie Skains gave the invocation and Mr. Larry Sayes lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

The roll was called by Ms. LaClasha Alexander.

**Members and Alternate Members present:**

Dr. Ernest Girouard – Chairman, Area IV  
Mr. Steve Horvath-Vice Chairman, Area V  
Mr. Larry Sayes- Secretary-Treasurer, Area III  
Mr. John Alan Williams- LACD President  
Mr. Reggie Skains- Area I Member  
Mr. Ed Yerger- Area II Member  
Mr. Brad Spicer- LDAF Alternate Member

**Members absent:**

Southern University Agricultural Center  
Representative

Dr. Mike Salassi, LSU AgCenter, Alternate Member

A quorum was present.

**Others Present:**

Mr. Chad Kacir, NRCS State Conservationist  
Mr. Theron Phillips, LDAF-OSWC  
Ms. LaClasha “Clay” Alexander, LDAF-OSWC

Mr. Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC/ Director SSWCC  
Ms. Wendy Gibson, LDAF-OSWC

**Public Comments**

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

**Approval of the Agenda**

Chairman Girouard called for a motion to approve the July 21, 2021 SSWCC agenda.

**Motion by:** Mr. Reggie Skains

**Seconded by:** Mr. Steve Horvath

Motion passed unanimously.

## Approval of the minutes

Chairman Girouard called for a motion to approve the June 22, 2021 SSWCC minutes.

**Motion by:** Mr. Ed Yerger

**Seconded by:** Mr. Steve Horvath

Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Spicer said Mr. Breaux had to attend a Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) meeting in Lake Charles and requested that he give the reports until he arrives.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### NRCS/OSWC Farm Bill Cooperative Agreement- Mr. Brad Spicer, LDAF Alternate Member

The Farm Bill program reporting system closed July 10th. June's Farm Bill total is \$61,873. The districts have \$105,465 to earn over the next 3 months. Mr. Kacir said NRCS and LDAF OSWC recently signed an amended agreement that added \$1,000,000 to the current Farm Bill agreement making it a 4 year, 4 million dollar agreement.

### District Funding- Mr. Brad Spicer, LDAF Alternate Member

Mr. Spicer said LDAF has not given OSWC their budget amount for allocation to districts. We hope to be able to report the figures at the next Commission meeting.

### NACD Summer Meeting- Mr. Alan Williams, LACD President

Mr. Williams said this NACD meeting will be a shorter meeting than normal. Right before the meeting today, we found out there is a travel advisory. The Chicago Department of Health added Louisiana to its travel advisory list which means unvaccinated individuals traveling from Arkansas, Missouri, Florida, Louisiana, Nevada, and U.S. Virgin Islands are "advised" not "required" to obtain a negative COVID-19 test result no more than 72 hours prior to arrival in Chicago or quarantine for a 10-day period upon arrival. Vaccinated individuals are exempt from the advisory.

## **New Business**

### NRCS State Conservationist Report- Mr. Chad Kacir, State Conservationist (13:45)

Mr. Kacir said currently NRCS has approximately 24-25 million dollars of EQIP funds this year and 50% of the funds have been obligated. NRCS hopes to spend the month of August working through their 600 CSP applications. The process of automatically renewing CSP contracts has now become competitive for anyone applying. In March 2021, NRCS funded approximately 100 CSP renewals with a value of 10 million dollars. This fiscal year, NRCS will have to use 11 million dollars for renewals and new applications.

Mr. Kacir said NRCS plans to bring back the Assistant State Conservationist for Partnership position. Mr. Scott Edwards held this position previously. He said he believes this will be vital to assist in working on the current agreements and as well as future agreements. NRCS is also creating two new positions that will be strictly working to identify wetland IDs. One wetland position will be in Monroe, LA and one wetland position will be in Lafayette, LA.

Mr. Kacir said Congressman Graves had a meeting at the request of many parish presidents and police juries of the state to discuss drainage funds in our state. Mr. Horvath said that he was able to attend a few meetings in Livingston Parish to hear ideas and possible solutions drainage. Dredging seems to be the main option that is discussed but is not always the answer. NRCS has started with Upper Delta SWCD to assist in watershed implementation. Chairman Girouard said Vermillion SWCD submitted a watershed plan to NRCS for review and has received comments back. Mr. Spicer said there had been previous discussions with the Louisiana Watershed Initiative and Mr. Skains said he attended a few meetings since their presentation to the Commission a year ago. Mr. Spicer said when he worked with the Governor's office, Baton Rouge implemented a plan where you could not develop any home site without having a drainage plan. You weren't couldn't increase the runoff.

Mr. Kacir said Louisiana is:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest vaccinated state (40%-one shot, 36%- fully vaccinated)
- 4<sup>th</sup> on increased cases (3 cases per 10,000 people)
- Reaching 1,500 cases per day

NRCS has restricted all travel to “mission essential time critical” status. They have also said that unvaccinated employees must quarantine for 7 days after personal or official travel. Many field offices have been seeing a drastic increase in COVID-19 cases that can compare to last March and April. NRCS is hoping that headquarters does not limit staffing back to 25% or limit staffing to “essential personnel”.

#### LSU AgCenter Center Report-

No report given.

#### Supervisor Resignations/ Appointments / Reappointments

Chairman Girouard said there is one appointment this month: Bodcau SWCD, Mr. Rick Adams, filling elected position formerly held by Randal Drew Lafler, effective July 21, 2021- June 30, 2024.

Chairman Girouard said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve the appointment of Bodcau SWCD, Mr. Rick Adams, filling elected position formerly held by Randal Drew Lafler, effective July 21, 2021- June 30, 2024.

**Motion by:** Mr. Reggie Skains

**Seconded by:** Mr. Alan Williams

Motion passed unanimously

#### Correspondence/Articles:

Chairman Girouard said the Commission received four travel requests to attend the NACD South Central Regional Conference in Eureka Springs, AK on August 12-13, 2021 from:

Calcasieu SWCD- Mr. David Daigle, Mr. Preston Broxson, Mr. Wesley Coffman, Mr. Jason Nolde, Mr. Jacob Marceaux, Ms. Rose Sharbeno, and Ms. Kathleen Soto

Capital SWCD- Mr. Steve Horvath and Mr. Scott Graham

D'Arbonne SWCD- Mr. Reggie Skains

Madison SWCD- Mr. Ed Yerger

Rapides SWCD- Ms. Brenda Archer

Chairman Girouard said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve the out of state travel request.

**Motion by:** Mr. Reggie Skains

**Seconded by:** Mr. Steve Horvath

Motion passed unanimously.

#### Articles

- Legislature offers glimmer of conservation hope
- Learn how to operate, rent a no-till drill
- Killing the Weed King: Could Groundbreaking Pollen Technology Control Palmer Amaranth?

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Next Meeting

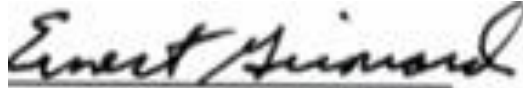
Chairman Girouard said the next State Commission Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 24, 2021 at 1:15 PM in the Veterans Auditorium, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806.

Adjournment

Chairman Girouard 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 2:41 P.M. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brad Spicer and passed unanimously.

/s/ Dr. Ernest Girouard



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Dr. Ernest Girouard, Chairman State Soil and Water Conservation Commission