

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

June 25, 2019
1:15 PM

VETERAN'S AUDITORIUM
5825 FLORIDA BLVD.
BATON ROUGE, LA 70806

PROCEEDINGS/MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Skains called the regular monthly Commission Meeting to order at 1:15 P.M and gave the invocation and Mr. David Daigle lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Ms. LaClasha "Clay" Alexander.

Members and Alternate Members present:

Mr. Reggie Skains- Chairman
Dr. Ernest Girouard-Vice Chairman
Mr. John Compton- Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. Ed Yerger
Mr. Larry Sayes
Mr. David Daigle- LACD President
Dr. Rogers Leonard, LSU AgCenter_

Members absent:

Southern University Agricultural Center
Representative

A quorum was present.

Others Present:

Mr. Tim Landreneau, Acting NRCS State Conservationist
Mr. Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC
Mr. Brad Spicer, LDAF-OSWC/Executive Director SSWCC
Ms. LaClasha "Clay" Alexander, LDAF-OSWC
Ms. Wendy Gibson, LDAF-OSWC

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or Commission members about the May 29, 2019 State Soil and Water Conservation Commission minutes and there were none. Chairman Skains called for a motion to approve the May 29, 2019 State Commission Meeting minutes.

Motion: Dr. Ernest Girouard made a motion to approve May 29, 2019 State Soil and Water Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. John 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 reported that OSWC has approximately \$420,000 in the Farm Bill Agreement that ends September 30, 2019. He said that districts are carrying out a lot of Farm Bill work and are doing an excellent job in reporting their hours. Mr. Spicer said the funds were also used to pay Targeted Watershed technicians. He said that in the last few months, districts have been able to recoup funds that they earned earlier. Mr. Landreneau said that he will be speaking with Mr. Scott Edwards in regards to preparing additional funds for the OSWC agreement starting October 1, 2019. Mr. Spicer asked were there any questions regarding Farm Bill and there were none.

Mr. Spicer said there were some additional state funds recently made available to allocate to the districts. He said districts were notified of the availability of the FY 2018-19 funds. He said districts didn't have much time remaining in the current FY to use the funds. He said the districts must use the funds by June 30, 2019.

NACD South Central Region Meeting/SSWCC Meeting

Chairman Skains said the next item on the agenda is *NACD South Central Region Meeting/SSWCC*. He asked Mr. Spicer if he had any comments on this. Mr. Spicer said the NACD South Central meeting is scheduled on July 21-23, 2019 in Thackerville, Oklahoma. He said we previously mentioned this meeting is scheduled at the same time as our July SSWCC meeting which is currently scheduled for July 23, 2019. He said since some Commission members are planning to attend the NACD meeting, should the Commission plan to hold its July meeting on another date. He said they could discuss the July meeting date later in the meeting.

Mr. Spicer said East Carroll SWCD will host the Area II meeting on July 18, 2019 in Lake Providence, LA. He said that registration will begin at 10:00 AM and the meeting will begin at 10:20 AM. He said the LACD Coastal Resources Committee will also be holding its annual meeting on August 6, 2019 in Baton Rouge, LA at the LSU Center for River Studies. He said that Ms. Mitzi Dohrman is requesting that you RSVP for the event by July 29, 2019.

Mr. Spicer asked if there were any questions concerning any of the upcoming meetings and there were none.

Supervisor's Election Review Adhoc Committee

Chairman Skains said the next item on the agenda is *Supervisor's Election Review Adhoc Committee report* and asked Dr. Ernest Girouard, Chairman of the Committee, if he had any comments. Dr. Girouard passed out a copy of Section 1206 of the Revised Statue and a summary of the supervisor's election procedures. He said right now would be a great time to review these procedures before next year's election. He said the next hand out is a summary of the requirements for a valid nomination petition for the election of SWCD supervisor. Dr. Girouard said the summary has highlighted areas that he believes the committee should review and make recommendations for the future. He said that it is important the guidelines are followed precisely as directed. Mr. Spicer said the Commission members approve the Election Rules that are consistent with State law every year before they are sent out to the districts. Dr. Girouard said that all questions regarding the election should be directed to the OSWC and not any outside agencies. He said there are no plans to change the current rules of our election but he just wants the Committee to review. Mr. Spicer said we will consider putting a cover letter in the annual election materials directing the district boards to review the procedures and ask them to notify the Commission that they did formerly review the election documents.

Chairman Skains asked were there any questions regarding the Supervisor's Election Adhoc Review Committee and there were none.

NEW BUSINESS

NRCS State Conservationist Report

Chairman Skains said they would now take up New Business and asked NRCS Acting Asst. State Conservationist, Mr. Tim Landreneau to give the NRCS report. Mr. Landreneau said he attended the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation Annual Conference in New Orleans last week. He said the conference had great speakers and presentations and that attending these conferences is always a learning experience. He said that he has noticed a lot of SWCD employees are involved in their local Farm Bureaus and that they attend the conference. He said it was great to see the involvement and the dedication of these district employees that were there on their own time to help and to participate in the conference.

Mr. Landreneau said the new 2018 Farm Bill is in full implementation. He said the new rules and regulations are beginning to get implemented in all programs. He said EQIP recently received an additional 4.2 million dollars which brings the state EQIP allocation to \$27.8 million dollars. He said that of the \$27.8 million, there is approximately 40% obligated and another 13% in approved status which means contracts have been developed with land owners and are awaiting signatures. Mr. Landreneau said that we are in the last quarter of the fiscal year so there is still a lot of work to be done. He said CSP had a great turnout with applications this year. He said they are currently waiting on funding totals to decide on how many contracts can be select and funded.

Mr. Landreneau said there was a new initiative introduced in the 2018 Farm Bill called CSP Grassland Conservation Initiative. He said there were some specific program eligibility requirements. He said letters went out last week to potentially eligible landowners and producers. He said the program recipients were identified by the Farm Service Agency. Mr. Landreneau said the recipients had land that included crop based acres that had been reported as grass, fallow, or idle over the last ten years. He said letters went out last week and applications are due on June 28, 2019. He said if they miss the deadline this year, there will be opportunities for them to submit an application next year. He said this is a five year contract so an eligible recipient has until 2023 to apply. Mr. Landreneau said there is no ranking or open sign-up period involved with this initiative. He said approved recipients are given CSP contracts and are given a flat rate of \$18 per acre.

Mr. Landreneau said another new addition to the 2018 Farm Bill is the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program. He said announcements for proposals went out last week. He said Louisiana is one of the states on the lists and they have identified some target areas. He said the LSU AgCenter as well the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) have indicated that are interested in participating in the program. Mr. Landreneau said Mr. John Pitre is the contact person for this program. He said NRCS is hoping the interested groups can come together and make this a collective effort. Mr. Breaux said he hopes that LSU AgCenter creates something similar to their pre- and post- implementation surveys that were done previously. He said the surveys measured resource damage and gave land owner preferences and outcomes. Mr. Landreneau said this program is a joint effort between NRCS and the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

Mr. Landreneau said they are getting ready to begin the Cameron Creole Freshwater Introduction project. He said NRCS is expecting to be awarding contracts within the next month and starting construction this fall. He said progress is also being made with the two Emergency Watershed Protection Programs (EWP) in Livingston Parish as well as the two Floodplain Easement projects happening in Gonzales and New Roads. He said Upper Delta SWCD has hired an engineering firm to prepare the Watershed Plan for the Upper Terrebonne Basin Project. Mr. Landreneau said the announcement for 2019 funding opportunities was released yesterday. He said he also spoke with Mr. Britt Paul about local interest in potential projects in Vermillion, Madison, and Tensas-Concordia. He said the deadline for submission is July 24th. He said that they are in the process of developing an agreement with the town of Plain Dealing, LA to develop a rehab plan for three structures in the Upper Westfork Bayou Watershed.

Mr. Landreneau said in this month's *Conservation Update*, Mrs. Betty Lou Young of Winn Parish discusses working with Dugdemona SWCD to restore longleaf pine to her property. He said that Mrs. Young believes the restoration efforts would improve wildlife habitat as well as provide a financial benefit to her children and grandchildren. He said also featured in this month's edition is Mr. Brad Spicer. He said NRCS wants to congratulate Mr. Spicer for his accomplishments and thank him for his service assisting private landowners across the state and improving Louisiana's natural resources.

Mr. Landreneau said that concluded his report and Chairman Skains thanked him.

Correspondence

Chairman Skains said the first items are out of state travel requests from Calcasieu SWCD; Ms. Rose Sharbeno, Mr. David Daigle, and Mr. Preston Broxson; Capital SWCD; Mrs. Jennifer Coats; Rapides SWCD; Mr. Danny Coombs and Ms. Brenda Archer; Tensas-Concordia SWCD; Ms. Zacki Cummings requesting authorization to attend the NACD South Central Region meeting scheduled on July 21-23, 2019 in Thackerville, OK. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve the out of state travel requests from Calcasieu SWCD; Ms. Rose Sharbeno, Mr. David Daigle, and Mr. Preston Broxson; Capital SWCD; Mrs. Jennifer Coats; Rapides SWCD; Mr. Danny Coombs and Ms. Brenda Archer; Tensas-Concordia SWCD; Ms. Zacki Cummings

Motion: Mr. John Compton made a motion to approve the out of state requests for Calcasieu SWCD; Ms. Rose Sharbeno, Mr. David Daigle, and Mr. Preston Broxson; Capital SWCD; Mrs. Jennifer Coats; Rapides SWCD; Mr. Danny Coombs and Ms. Brenda Archer; Tensas-Concordia SWCD; Ms. Zacki Cummings wanting to attend the NACD South Central Region meeting scheduled on July 21-23, 2019 in Thackerville, OK. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next item is a contract from the Calcasieu SWCD requesting the Commission's approval for the district to enter into a contract with Windham & Reed, LLC to conduct the district's FYE June 30, 2019 audit at the cost of \$850. Chairman Skains asked for any comments from the public or Commission members and there were none. He said if there were no comments, then he would call for a motion to approve the Calcasieu SWCD entering into a contract with the Windham & Reed, LLC to conduct the district's FYE June 30, 2019 audit at the cost of \$850.

Motion: Dr. Ernest Girouard made a motion for the Commission to approve Calcasieu SWCD's request to enter into a contract with Windham & Reed, LLC to conduct the district's FYE June 30, 2019 audit at the cost of \$850. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Yerger and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next item is a contract from the Iberia SWCD requesting the Commission's approval for the district to enter into a contract with Maraist & Maraist, CPA to conduct the district's FYE June 30, 2019 audit at the cost of \$1,200. Chairman Skains asked for any comments from the public or Commission members and there were none. He said if there were no comments, then he would call for a motion to approve the Iberia SWCD entering into a contract with the Maraist & Maraist, CPA to conduct the district's FYE June 30, 2019 audit at the cost of \$1,200.

Motion: Dr. Ernest Girouard made a motion for the Commission to approve the Iberia SWCD requesting to enter into a contract with Maraist & Maraist, CPA to conduct the district's FYE June 30, 2019 audit at the cost of \$1,200. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next correspondence item is a contract from the Lafayette SWCD requesting the Commission's approval for the district to enter into a contract with Maraist & Maraist, CPA to conduct the district's FYE June 30, 2019 audit at the cost of \$1,200. Chairman Skains asked for any comments from the public or Commission members and there were none. He said if there were no comments, then he would call for a motion to approve the Lafayette SWCD entering into a contract with the Maraist & Maraist, CPA to conduct the district's FYE June 30, 2019 audit at the cost of \$1,200.

Motion: Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion for the Commission to approve the Lafayette SWCD requesting to enter into a contract with Maraist & Maraist, CPA to conduct the district's FYE June 30, 2019 audit at the cost of \$1,200. The motion was seconded by Mr. John Compton and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next item the *Final Disposition of Water Resources Bills in the Louisiana Legislature*. He asked Mr. Spicer if he had any comments on this. Mr. Spicer said this is information covers "all things water" bills that have been signed or on the way to being signed into law by the Governor.

Chairman Skains said the next item is *Executive Order Number JBE 19-6: Louisiana Highly Automated Large -- Unmanned Air Craft Systems (L-UAS)*. He said this order requires the state of Louisiana to establish a commitment to develop L-UAS in support of first responder search and rescue, disaster recovery and damage assessment, environmental emergency monitoring, large oil spill monitoring in the Gulf of Mexico, and coastal erosion through partnerships. He said it also grants the Houma-Terrebonne Airport Commission and their general airport to develop the L-UAS infrastructure and flight operations.

Chairman Skains said the next correspondence covers Louisiana *Tax Exemption Form Due Soon*. He asked Mr. Spicer if he had any comments on this. Mr. Spicer said this is just a reminder to apply for commercial farmer certification through the Louisiana Department of Revenue by June 30, 2019. He said the Louisiana State Legislature changed the law and now requires farmers to be certified as a commercial farmer.

Chairman Skains said the next article is *Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program*. Chairman Skains asked Mr. Spicer if he had any comments. Mr. Spicer said it is an overview of the program from USDA. He said the program was established as a part of the 2018 Farm Bill in response to the threat of swine damage to Agriculture production.

Chairman Skains said the next article is *Landmark Farm Rule Aims to Protect Minnesota's Drinking Water*. He said the article is about an attempt for the State of Minnesota to cut nitrate levels in water drinking supplies which would regulating fertilizer use. Mr. Spicer said that there is a high level of concern that their effort will not cut nitrate in the state's drinking water supplies.

Chairman Skains said the last article is *NACD Testifies to Congress on Importance of Soil Health*. He asked Mr. Spicer did he have any comments on this article. Mr. Spicer said this article covers NACD Secretary-Treasurer, Ian Cunningham, going before the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry to discuss the importance of soil health practices have on agriculture production, and environmental benefits. Dr. Girouard said that he was able to listen to the testimony online and said the other five presentations are located online as well.

Supervisor Election Results/Resignations/Reappointments/Appointments

Chairman Skains said they would now take up supervisor election results, resignations, reappointments, and appointments.

He said that the first item is a letter from Bogue-Chitto SWCD. He said that they held their election Saturday, June 8, 2019 and there were 124 votes counted. He said that there were two candidates in the district election: Mr. Mark Magee and Mr. Alvin Triche. Mr. Alvin Triche received 47 votes and Mr. Mark Magee received 77 votes. He said that Mr. Mark Magee was the election winner, pending State Commission approval. Chairman Skains asked for any comments from the public or Commission members and there was none. Chairman Skains called for a motion to approve Mr. Mark Magee as the winner of the Bogue-Chitto SWCD Supervisor's election.

Motion: Mr. David Daigle made a motion to approve Mr. Mark Magee as the winner of the Bogue-Chitto SWCD election. The motion was seconded Mr. Larry Sayes and passed unanimously.

RESOLVED, Mr. Mark Magee is the winner of the Bogue- Chitto SWCD election.
His term will begin July 1, 2019 and expire June 30, 2022.

Chairman Skains said there are two resignations this month: Calcasieu SWCD, Mr. Tom Lester, appointed position; effective April 24, 2019 and Upper Delta SWCD, Ms. Lindsey Gaspard, elected position, effective May 14, 2019.

Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or the Commission members and there were none. Chairman Skains called for a motion to accept the resignations of Calcasieu SWCD, Mr. Tom Lester, appointed

position; effective April 24 2019 and Upper Delta SWCD, Ms. Lindsey Gaspard, elected position, effective May 14, 2019.

Motion: Mr. Larry Sayes made a motion to accept the resignations of Calcasieu SWCD, Mr. Tom Lester, appointed position, effective April 24 2019 and Upper Delta SWCD, Ms. Lindsey Gaspard, elected position, effective May 14, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said there is one reappointment:

Rapides SWCD, Mr. Larry Gillespie, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term will began June 26, 2019 and end June 26, 2022.

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 this reappointment.

Motion: Mr. John Compton made a motion to approve the reappointment of Rapides SWCD, Mr. Larry Gillespie, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term will began June 26, 2019 and end June 26, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Larry Sayes and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said there are three appointments:

Chairman Skains said the first appointment request is from Calcasieu SWCD requesting Mr. Jacob Marceaux to fill the appointed position formerly held by Mr. Tom Lester. Term to begin June 25, 2019 and expire July 27, 2019. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve this appointment.

Motion: Mr. David Daigle made a motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Jacob Marceaux to fill the appointed position formerly held by Mr. Tom Lester. Term will begin June 25, 2019 and expire July 27, 2019. The motion was seconded by Dr. Ernest Girouard and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next appointment request is from St. Martin SWCD requesting Mr. Mark Simon to fill the elected position formerly held by Mr. Alfred Guidry. Term to begin July 1, 2019 and expire June 30, 2022. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve this appointment.

Motion: Mr. Larry Sayes made a motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Mark Simon to fill the elected position formerly held by Mr. Alfred Guidry. Term to begin July 1, 2019 and expire June 30, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next appointment request is from Jefferson Davis SWCD requesting Mr. Eric Brown to fill the elected position formerly held by Mr. Timothy Wild. Term to begin July 1, 2019 and expire June 30, 2022. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve this appointment.

Motion: Mr. Larry Sayes made a motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Mark Simon to fill the elected position formerly held by Mr. Alfred Guidry. Term to begin July 1, 2019 and expire June 30, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Watershed Initiative Interstate Meeting-Bossier City

Chairman Skains said the next item on the agenda is *Watershed Initiative Meeting-Bossier City*. He asked Mr. Spicer if he have any comments on the meeting. Mr. Spicer said Chairman Skains, Mr. Joey Breaux, and himself attended this Watershed Initiative meeting in Bossier City. He said the meeting went quite well and was informative. Mr. Spicer said they had speeches covering a wide range of flood management topics; with speakers from Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas. He said that he had been in contact with the staff in the Governor's office and they were very excited to work with the districts and the Commission on the Watershed Initiative. He said also that HB 558: Floodplain Evaluation and Management Commission had been amended to be called "Louisiana Watershed Commission" and also added the Chairman of the Louisiana Soil

and Water Conservation Commission or his designee and the Commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry or his designee to serve on the Commission.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Skains said they would now take up Other Business. He asked Dr. Rogers Leonard did he have any comments. Dr. Leonard said that he wanted to remind Commission members of a number of field days coming up; which includes two this week:

1. Annual Rice Field Day-The LSU AgCenter H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station- June 26, 2019
2. 2nd Annual Agricultural Field Day Expo- Dean Lee Research and Extension Center- June 27, 2019
3. LSU AgCenter Northeast Research Station Field Day- July 9, 2019
4. Sugarcane Field Day- LSU Sugar Research Station, St. Gabriel, LA- July 17, 2019
5. Northeast Louisiana Rice Field Day- The Jason Waller Farm in Mer Rouge, LA- July 18, 2019
6. Morehouse Black Farmers' Annual Field Day- Bonita, LA- July 19, 2019

Dr. Leonard said LSU AgCenter held a luncheon meeting last week to announce the awarding of the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation \$1.4 million grant to the LSU AgCenter to fund a four-year project directed at reducing nutrient runoff from cropland. He said that he was excited about this opportunity and is looking forward to the implementation of this project. He said he also wants to thank Mr. Tim Landreneau and NRCS as well for the opportunities they have offered the LSU AgCenter. He said that the FY 2020 budget for the LSU AgCenter is slightly up. Dr. Leonard said they can now begin to look at filling some vacant positions. Dr. Leonard said he also wanted to mention that he is planning to retire in February 2020. He said that he has been an employee for LSU AgCenter for 41 years and that it is time. He said that he plans to become a part-time consultant.

Dr. Leonard said that concluded his report and Chairman Skains thanked him for his contributions to the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission and to the state's Soil and Water Conservation program.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Skains said the next State Commission Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 23, 2019 at 1:15 P.M. in the Veterans Auditorium, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806. Mr. Spicer said this date conflicts with the NACD South Central Region Meeting and that earlier in the meeting, the Commission discussed rescheduling the next meeting to July 30, 2019

Chairman Skains said with no objection the meeting will be scheduled for July 30, 2019 at 1:15 P.M. in the Veterans Auditorium, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806.


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. David Daigle made a motion to adjourn at 2:33 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