

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

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

March 29, 2022  
1:15 PM

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

PROCEEDINGS/MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Members and Alternate Members present:**

Mr. Earl Garber, Chairman, Area IV  
Mr. Ruben Dausat, Secretary-Treasurer, Area III  
Mr. Jason Nolde, LACD President, Area III  
Mr. Brad Spicer, LDAF Alternate Member  
Mr. Reggie Skains, Area I Member  
Mr. Ed Yerger, Area II Member  
Mr. Ed Giering, Area III Alternate Member  
Mr. Steve Horvath, Area V Member  
A quorum was present.

**Members Absent:**

Southern University Agricultural Center Representative

**Others Present:**

Mr. Steve Nipper, Acting Assistant State Conservationist of Field Operations  
Dr. Michael Deliberto, LSU AgCenter  
Mr. Theron Phillips, LDAF-OSWC  
Mr. Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC/ Director SSWCC  
Ms. LaClasha "Clay" Alexander, LDAF-OSWC

**Public Comments**

Chairman Garber asked if there were any comments from the public and there were none.

**Approval of the minutes**

Chairman Garber called for a motion to approve the February 22, 2022 SSWCC minutes.

**Motion by:** Mr. Jason Nolde

**Seconded by:** Mr. Steve Horvath

Motion passed unanimously.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**NRCS/OSWC Farm Bill Cooperative Agreement-** Mr. Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC/ Director, SSWCC  
Mr. Breaux said February's Farm Bill total was \$91,850. The total FY 21-22 remaining balance is \$314,617 with 7 months to use it. If Farm Bill totals continue to average the same, all funds will be allocated before the fiscal year is completed.

### LACD Annual Meeting-April 19-21,2022

Chairman Garber asked Mr. Nolde and Mr. Breaux did they have any updates on the LACD planning. Mr. Nolde said planning has been going pretty good. Reminders have been sent out to everyone and it seems to be getting great response. Mr. Breaux said nearly 150 people have made hotel reservations to attend the meeting. These figures are lower than 2020 but this was expected due to all the field work going on and some lingering Covid worries. As of now, there are approximately 35 non-district employees registered which is expected to increase. Consultants and partners who were once thought to be exhibitors have leaned more towards donating to the meeting as sponsors. LACD is expected to have exhibitors from NACD, NRCS, and different feral swine trapping and surveillance companies. It has been discussed that there will be an opening for the Governor's office staff to give an update on what is being done to implement the Louisiana Climate Action Plan. Dr. Naveen Adusumilli from the LSU AgCenter will discuss strategies within the Climate Action Plan that are geared towards conservation and opportunities for conservation districts. Mr. Stuart Gardner will discuss conservation opportunities within the CAP for livestock producers and Ms. Sarah Trichel, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, will address programs and program adaptations or opportunities to help address soil health and help landowners gear themselves towards ecosystem service market opportunities. On the second day, committee meetings will be held. On the final morning, Ethics training will be given by Mr. Greg Thibodeaux of the LA Ethics Commission. During the Legislative Meeting, Rep. Jack McFarland will discuss the Feral Swine Task Force bill. Additionally, Rep. Jerome "Zee" Zeringue will discuss the two bills he submitted called the Louisiana Outdoor Forever program and the Louisiana Forever fund. Mr. Breaux recommended that LACD create a resolution in support Mr. Zeringue's efforts for conservation. Chairman Garber asked would private lands be funded under the Louisiana Forever program. Mr. Breaux said yes, that's the intention.

### Legislative Regular Session/State Funding- Mr. Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC/ Director, SSWCC

Mr. Breaux said there hasn't been any new information since the last meeting. Soil and Water's financial review has taken place, and all went well. All indications show that funding for districts will remain unchanged. Chairman Garber said it may be good to have a conversation with legislators that are attending our annual meeting in a few weeks so that districts continue to stay on their radar. Chairman Garber asked were any topics that the Commission should be paying attention to, and Mr. Breaux said that he will send all the Commission members a list of the conservation related bills being submitted.

### NACD Fly-In-Virtual

Chairman Garber said that he, Mr. Nolde, and Mr. Breaux participated in a conference call with Representative Scalise's office today. They were not able speak to Representative Scalise directly but were able to speak to one of his newest staffers and had a great discussion. There are meetings currently scheduled all the way up to week prior to the LACD annual meeting. Representative Letlow will be the next scheduled meeting and LACD is hoping to schedule a meeting with Representative Higgins as well as a few others.

### State Conservation Law Revision-Soil Health- Mr. Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC/ Director, SSWCC

Mr. Breaux said everyone should have the latest copy of Bill 205 by Senator Jackson in their packets. The bill is now heading to the Senate with a few grammatical changes. This bill was submitted to add soil health as a primary objective to our state law as well as updating some other key terms and names including changing "Committee" to "Commission as well as "Soil Conservation Service" to "Natural Resources Conservation Service".

## New Business

### NRCS State Conservationist Report- Mr. Steve Nipper. Acting Assistant State Conservationist of Field Operations in North Louisiana

Mr. Nipper thanked the Commission for allowing him to be a part of the meeting. He said Mr. Kacir left him with some information that he wanted him to present to the Commission. NRCS recently completed their EQIP rankings and are in the process of making selections.

- EQIP Classic: 1,698 applications with \$20.1 million allocated
- EQIP CIC: 28 applications, \$887,400 allocated

NRCS has requested an additional \$4.5 million for EQIP classic and an additional \$1 million for EQIP CIC from the national office.

- CSP renewal applications: 224
- CSP GSI applications: 44 applications
- CSP Classic: 582 applications.

NRCS is in the process of assessing CSP applications and hope to be completed soon.

- 2021 CSP: \$6.9 million allocated
- 2021 CSP GCI: \$224,665 allocated
- 2021 CSP Classic: \$9 million

NRCS has requested an additional \$4.2 million of CSP funds. He also said NRCS is expecting to have 35 WRE easements on approximately 7,200 acres costing approximately \$23 million. There maybe some increase or decrease in the cost depending on the application rankings.

Mr. Nipper said NRCS is expected to hire at least 20 new employees in May. He said he usually assists in training the new employees in his regular position and other NRCS employees who will assist with training as well.

The Secretary of Agriculture is very serious about soil and water conservation districts working with urban agriculture. New Orleans was one of the cities chosen to have an urban conservation district office. Mr. Breaux said several entities including the Merrill Foundation and Sprout NOLA have also been involved. He said during NACD meeting it was announced that the urban agriculture offices would have a separate State Executive Director. Mr. Nipper said this concluded his report and Chairman Garber thanked him.

### LSU AgCenter Center Report- Dr. Michael Deliberto, LSU AgCenter

Dr. Deliberto thanked the Commission for allowing him to give the LSU AgCenter presentation today. He said the LSU AgCenter is working with LDAF and commodity organizations to schedule private pesticide applicator certification trainings across the state. These trainings are in response to farm workers needing specific training on Dicamba and paraquat herbicides. The trainings started in February throughout the state and are continuing. The remaining trainings are:

- Wednesday, April 6, 2022- Crowley, LA
- Thursday, April 7, 2022- Napoleonville, LA
- Wednesday, April 20, 2022- Lake Charles, LA
- Thursday, April 21, 2022- Jenerette, LA

Dr. Deliberto said he also wanted to remind the Commission about some other upcoming events:

- Thursday, April 21, 2022- Central Louisiana Beef and Forage Field Day- Dean Lee Research Station, Alexandria, LA- 2:00 P.M.

- Thursday, April 28, 2022- Northwest Louisiana Beef and Forage Field Day- Red River Research Station- Bossier City, LA

Dr. Deliberto said this concluded his report and Chairman Garber thanked him.

Supervisor Resignations/ Appointments / Reappointments

Chairman Garber said there is five appointments this month:

- East Carroll SWCD, Ms. Rebecca Thom, elected position formerly held by Mr. Stephen “Burt” Lensing, effective March 29, 2022- June 30, 2024.
- Lafayette SWCD, Mr. Chad Courtois, elected position formerly held by Mr. Eddie Lewis Sr., effective March 29, 2022-June 30, 2023.
- LaSalle SWCD, Mr. Jimmy Keene, elected position formerly held by Mr. Steve Andrews, effective March 29, 2022-June 30, 2024.
- Rapides SWCD, Ms. Duana Juneau, elected position formerly held by Mr. Richard Melder, effective March 29, 2022- June 30, 2023.
- Red River SWCD, Mr. Jolly Nash, elected position formerly held by Mr. Billy Shaw, effective March 29, 2022- June 30, 2022.

Chairman Garber said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve these appointments:

- East Carroll SWCD, Ms. Rebecca Thom, elected position formerly held by Mr. Stephen “Burt” Lensing, effective March 29, 2022- June 30, 2024.
- Lafayette SWCD, Mr. Chad Courtois, elected position formerly held by Mr. Eddie Lewis Sr., effective March 29, 2022-June 30, 2023.
- LaSalle SWCD, Mr. Jimmy Keene, elected position formerly held by Mr. Steve Andrews, effective March 29, 2022-June 30, 2024.
- Rapides SWCD, Ms. Duana Juneau, elected position formerly held by Mr. Richard Melder, effective March 29, 2022- June 30, 2023.
- Red River SWCD, Mr. Jolly Nash, elected position formerly held by Mr. Billy Shaw, effective March 29, 2022- June 30, 2022.

**Motion by:** Mr. Reggie Skains

**Seconded by:** Mr. Jason Nolde

Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Garber said there were four reappointments this month:

- Boeuf River SWCD, Mr. Everette Colloway, appointed position effective March 29, 2022- May 1, 2025
- Dorcheat SWCD, Ms. Harol Thompson, appointed position effective March 29, 2022- March 29, 2025
- Dugdemona SWCD, Mr. Don Price, appointed position effective March 29, 2022- March 29, 2025
- Grant SWCD, Mr. Kenneth Richardson, appointed position effective March 29,2022- March 29, 2025

Chairman Garber said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve these appointments:

- Boeuf River SWCD, Mr. Everette Colloway, appointed position effective March 29, 2022- May 1, 2025
- Dorcheat SWCD, Ms. Harol Thompson, appointed position effective March 29, 2022- March 29, 2025
- Dugdemona SWCD, Mr. Don Price, appointed position effective March 29, 2022- March 29, 2025
- Grant SWCD, Mr. Kenneth Richardson, appointed position effective March 29,2022- March 29, 2025

**Motion by:** Mr. Brad Spicer

**Seconded by:** Mr. Steve Horvath

Motion passed unanimously.

Meritorious Award:

Mr. Breaux said we received one Meritorious Award Request:

1. Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD nominating Ms. Cecilia Spiess, District Secretary, to receive an exceptional performance award of 3% of her annual base salary. (\$985.00)

The Meritorious award nomination packets were reviewed and included the following as requested in PPM#1:

1. Employee's Name
2. Title of Employee
3. Personnel number
4. A successful performance evaluation in the same fiscal year, a job performance plan showing an explanation of the significant achievement and how it benefited the SWCD, the conservation partnership and the district cooperators.
5. The reward amount proposed by the SWCD.

Chairman Garber said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve the nomination packets for:

1. Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD nominating Ms. Cecilia Spiess, District Secretary, to receive an exceptional performance award of 3% of her annual base salary. (\$985.00)

**Motion by:** Mr. Brad Spicer

**Seconded by:** Mr. Steve Horvath

Motion Passed unanimously.

Correspondence/Articles:

Articles

- April 7, 2022- NRCS 2022 Local Workgroup Meeting
- 2022 Friends of NACD District Grant Program Recipients announced: Congratulations to Catahoula SWCD
- How do we solve the problem of agricultural nutrient runoff?
- LSU AgCenter shines light on resistant weeds
- Survey: Less Than 20% Consumers Have heard of No-Till
- USDA to Extend Application Deadlines for Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Funding Opportunities
- Can poultry litter offset rising fertilizer prices?

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Area Reports- Area IV- Chairman Earl Garber

Chairman Garber said during the last Commission meeting he suggested the idea that each Commission member present an area update on the districts they represent. He said that he volunteered to do Area IV's report 1<sup>st</sup>. A copy of Area IV's report is in everyone's packet. Chairman Garber said he first wanted to thank Mrs. Caitlyn Joubert of LDAF and Ms. Phyllis Cart, Acadia SWCD's secretary for assisting him with the report. He wants all the members to know that there is help there if you ask for it. He said the goal is to have everyone research and get information to share with the other Commission members as well as the readers of the minutes. He said his vision would involve each member presenting 2x a year and his idea for the next meeting will probably include more figures just like what is being stated the NRCS report. Some of the highlights include:

- Acadia SWCD: Received the 2022 Conservation Champion Grant through the National Wildlife Federation. The grant will assist Acadia in its outreach plan to target the implementation of cover crops in rice/crawfish production.
- Vermillion SWCD: Vermillion SWCD partnered with NRCS, Vermillion Parish Police Jury, 7<sup>th</sup> Ward Drainage District and local stakeholders, have submitted the Draft Environmental Assessment of a proposed Watershed plan to address the ongoing flooding and hydrologic restoration of the Lower Vermillion River Watershed. The purpose of developing a Watershed Plan for the Lower Vermillion River

Basin is to study and identify solutions to mitigate and reduce saline storm surge and other flood damage to farms, homes, and businesses, while also enhancing public safety and improving overall water quality and preserving wetland habitat in the area.

- Evangeline SWCD: Working to manage a portable hog trap that is rented out to landowners and producers within the district.
- St. Mary SWCD: Through the Apache Corporation Tree Grant Program, St. Mary SWCD continues to work on their "Live Oak Beautification" project which was initiated in 2013.
- Iberia SWCD: The district purchased a GPS Reference Station with subscriptions available to farmers at a reduced rate at an effort to promote conservation on their farm. This station can broadcast an REK correction signal via the internet to promote decision ag practices.
- St. Landry SWCD: The district is hosting the Area Land Judging Contest and assisting with the Area III FFA Forestry Contest.
- Lafayette SWCD: The district is pursuing a no drip Weed Wiper with carpet rollers for rental purposes utilizing the equipment funds allowable in the budget for the Vermillion River 319 Project. The district is currently seeking 5 written bids and the Lafayette SWCD Board will choose the one that is most significant for producers in weed control.
- St. Martin SWCD: The district is a recipient of an EPA 319 Project for the Vermillion River which will provide public outreach and implement conservation Best Management Practices on agriculture land to improve, restore, or partially restore water quality to meet water quality standards in Bayou du Porage, Subsegment 06073, and its affected tributaries.
- Gulf Coast SWCD: The district has a Feral Hog Technician and is a part of the Feral Hog Task Force.
- Jefferson Davis SWCD: The district applied for 2022 PL-566 funding in hopes to alleviate the flooding in various watersheds within the parish.
- Lafourche-Terrebonne SWCD: The district participated in the Nicholls State University Summer Program for ages PreK-8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Chairman Garber asked who the next volunteer would be to give their area report. Mr. Skains said he would volunteer to give Area 1's report at the next Commission meeting.

Chairman Garber asked the Commission members to review their calendar to see if they would be available to have the Commission earlier than the tentatively scheduled April 26, 2022. The Commission members agreed that April 19, 2022 at 10 AM would be the reschedule date. Chairman Garber called for a motion to approve the April 26, 2022 SWCC meeting being rescheduled to April 19, 2022 at 10AM at LDAF.

**Motion by:** Mr. Brad Spicer

**Seconded by:** Mr. Steve Horvath

Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Garber also wanted to discuss some news that he received this morning. Mr. John Compton passed away on March 26, 2022. Mr. Compton was a member of the State Commission as well as LACD. He retired from LDAF and was a Regional Officer of NACD for years. Chairman Garber said Mr. Compton was a support system to him as he worked toward becoming an NACD member. He said this is a great loss to conservation in Louisiana, but he believes Mr. Compton would want us to continue putting in the hard work in all conservation efforts. We would like to send our condolences to his family and let them know that we appreciate everything that he contributed to conservation in Louisiana. Mr. Spicer and Mr. Dauzat suggested that a contribution be made to the LACD scholarship in Mr. Compton's name. Mr. Spicer said that his funeral is scheduled on Saturday April 2, 2022 at St. James Episcopal Church, 205 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Baton Rouge at 12:45 PM. Mr. Skains suggested the Commission write a letter to his family to recognize his contributions and years of service to Louisiana Conservation. Mr. Dauzat asked that Mr. Spicer assist Mr. Breaux and OSWC in composing the letter. The Commission members agreed that a letter would be sent to Mr. Compton's family.

Mr. Breaux wanted to remind the Commission members that the NACD South Central Regional Meeting will be in Baton Rouge on August 28-30, 2022. We have setup a tour of the River model at the Water Campus downtown which will include lunch.

Next Meeting

Chairman Garber said the next State Commission Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 19, 2022 at 10:00 AM in the Management and Finance Conference Room, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806.

Adjournment

Chairman Garber 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 3:05 P.M. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Horvath and passed unanimously.

/s/ 

Mr. Earl Garber, Chairman, State Soil and Water Conservation Commission