

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

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

March 23, 2021
1:15 PM

5825 FLORIDA BOULEVARD
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

PROCEEDINGS/MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Girouard called the regular monthly Commission Meeting to order at 1:15 P.M. Mr. Steve Horvath gave the invocation and Mr. Alan Williams lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Ms. LaClasha Alexander.

Members and Alternate Members present:

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

Members absent:

Southern University Agricultural Center
Representative

A quorum was present.

Others Present:

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

Mr. Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC/ Director SSWCC
Mr. Theron Phillips, 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 March 23, 2021 SSWCC agenda.

Motion by: Mr. Reggie Skains

Seconded by: Mr. Ed Yerger

Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the minutes

Chairman Girouard called for a motion to approve the February 23, 2021 SSWCC minutes.

Motion by: Mr. Ed Yerger

Seconded by: Mr. Steve Horvath

Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Girouard called for a motion to approve the February 25, 2021 SSWCC special meeting minutes.

Motion by: Mr. Ed Yerger

Seconded by: Mr. Steve Horvath

Motion passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NRCS/OSWC Farm Bill Cooperative Agreement- Mr. Joey Breaux, Director, SSWCC

Districts reported earning \$73,104 for the month of February. The reporting system will reopen on April 1st to enter the figures for March. OSWC has been working with the LDAF IT Department in developing a program similar to the Farm Bill reporting system that will be used by Targeted Technicians and Program Support Specialists (PSS) to input their reporting information as required by the NRCS agreements through which they are funded. This information will be used to generate reports for OSWC to submit as a requirement in their agreements with NRCS, and this will significantly streamline our reporting requirements for those agreements.

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

Mr. Breaux said all indications suggest funding for OSWC budgets will be stable through the current fiscal year and the next. Districts are encouraged to contact their state representatives to get their support and to maintain legislative contacts for the general benefit of the conservation program. OSWC has also been receiving Grassroots reports from many districts. From what has been submitted, we can tell that districts have made great strides toward engaging their local elected officials. We have received most of the Grassroots reports and are working with the few districts who have not submitted their reports.

NACD Virtual Advocacy Week- Mr. Alan Williams, LACD President

Mr. Williams said he attended an NACD Executive Board meeting this morning. He said they discussed having the NACD Summer Meeting on July 24-27, 2021 in Chicago, IL. They may end up reducing the days and eliminating the tours this year. NACD is also working to finalize the hotel accommodations as well.

New Business

Supervisor Resignations/ Appointments / Reappointments

Chairman Girouard said we have three districts this month with candidates that did not meet the board meeting attendance requirements in the past year. He said we have received letters from Evangeline SWCD, Mr. Larry Fontenot; Tensas-Concordia SWCD, Mr. Andy Anders; and Upper Delta SWCD, Mr. Robert Morris.

Chairman Girouard said he reviewed letters from each district board and each supervisor. Each board considered the above referenced candidates very good board members and is requesting the attendance requirement to be waived. Chairman Girouard called for a motion to waive the attendance requirements for from Evangeline SWCD, Mr. Larry Fontenot; Tensas-Concordia SWCD, Mr. Andy Anders; and Upper Delta SWCD, Mr. Robert Morris.

Motion by: Mr. Brad Spicer

Seconded by: Mr. Steve Horvath

Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Girouard said there are 2 resignations this month: Catahoula SWCD, Mr. Howard Hardie, effective March 28, 2021 and Red River SWCD, Mr. Billy Shaw, effective March 1, 2021.

Chairman Girouard said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve the resignation of Catahoula SWCD, Mr. Howard Hardie, effective March 28, 2021.

Motion by: Mr. Reggie Skains
Seconded by: Mr. Ed Yerger
Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Girouard said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve the resignation of Red River SWCD, Mr. Billy Shaw, effective March 1, 2021.

Motion by: Mr. Brad Spicer
Seconded by: Mr. Ed Yerger
Motion passed unanimously

Chairman Girouard said there are 6 supervisor reappointments for three year terms: Boeuf River SWCD-Mr. Dustin Morris effective May 1, 2021-April 30,2024, Dugdemona SWCD- Mr. Billy Gaines- effective March 25, 2021- March 24, 2021, Evangeline SWCD-Mr. Walter Tortorich-effective March 23,2021- March 26, 2024, Lafourche-Terrebonne SWCD-Mr. Timothy Allen- effective June 10, 2021- June 10, 2024, St. Mary SWCD- Mr. Daniel Luke-effective June 11, 2021- June 10, 2024, and Tensas-Concordia SWCD- Mr. Andy Anders-effective April 24, 2021-April 23,2024.

Chairman Girouard said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve the reappointments for Boeuf River SWCD-Mr. Dustin Morris effective May 1, 2021-April 30,2024, Dugdemona SWCD- Mr. Billy Gaines- effective March 25, 2021- March 24, 2021, Evangeline SWCD-Mr. Walter Tortorich-effective March 23,2021- March 26, 2024, Lafourche-Terrebonne SWCD-Mr. Timothy Allen- effective June 10, 2021- June 10, 2024, St. Mary SWCD- Mr. Daniel Luke-effective June 11, 2021- June 10, 2024, and Tensas-Concordia SWCD- Mr. Andy Anders-effective April 24, 2021-April 23,2024.

Motion by: Mr. Reggie Skains
Seconded by: Mr. Ed Yerger
Motion passed unanimously.

District Supervisor Election- June 12, 2021- Mr. Joey Breaux, Director, SSWCC

Mr. Breaux said districts received their election packets through email from OSWC. They are preparing their notices and OSWC has requested that the notices with a list of the names and addresses of the polling locations be submitted before the nominating period begins on April 30th. OSWC has notified every elected supervisor who had exceeded the maximum amount of missed meetings in the 2020 calendar year. These supervisors must submit letters explaining why the meetings were missed, and request waiver from the Commission. This must be done before the supervisor is elected to a position on the board before July 1, 2021 which is the start of the new term.

Correspondence- Dr. Ernest Girouard, Chairman, SSWCC

Chairman Girouard said the first correspondence is from Vermillion SWCD requesting to enter into agreement with Langlinais, Broussard, Kohlenberg. The fee for their service is \$3,500.

Chairman Girouard said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve Vermillion SWCD requesting to enter into agreement with Langlinais, Broussard, Kohlenberg. The fee for their service is \$3,500.

Motion by: Mr. Brad Spicer
Seconded by: Mr. Ed Yerger
Motion passed unanimously.

Articles:

- Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry Media Advisory: Strain to Visit Central Louisiana Nursery Industry Impacted by Hurricanes, Ice Storm, and Pandemic
- Ag Policy Blog: USDA Official- Carbon is a Commodity, Justifies CCC Use
- Lexology: Climate Change Resolutions Top 2021 Annual Meeting Agenda
- Court Stay Allows Waters of the U.S. Rule Review- DTN
- How Tom Vilsack sees the future of U.S. Agriculture
- Biden Bets the Farm on Climate
- Louisiana Conservation and Commodity Updates: February 2021, Issue 2
- Sustainability Markets, Part 1: Agricultural Ecosystem Credit Markets- The Primer

NRCS State Conservationist Report- Mr. Chad Kacir, State Conservationist

Mr. Kacir said NRCS had a great Cover Crop virtual Field Day in conjunction with the LSU AgCenter. There were some great presentations given and the attendees took away some great information and details. NRCS has been hiring and has filled 9 Soil Conservationist positions, 10 Soil Conservation Technicians, 3 Range Conservations, with 25 more positions to be announced soon in Louisiana. NRCS is hoping to fill 1500 positions nationwide which include more Soil Conservationists, Agricultural Engineers, and other entry level positions. There is also a new Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations scheduled to begin on June 6th. The applicant will be filling the position formerly held by Mr. Kendal Hicks who retired last year. Per COVID-19 restrictions, NRCS has been working with a reduced staff at 25% that recently went to 50% with the exception of the state office and headquarters. Mr. Kacir said NRCS is hoping to have board supervisors assist with mentoring some of the new NRCS employees during the summer to give some insight into the conservation program. He mentioned that Mr. Kevin Norton plans to retire on May 5th and travel back to Louisiana. NRCS is hosting a special sign up for any producer dealing with losses to their high tunnel structure due to snow and ice to help with replacement of their items, and the RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA). Proposals will be accepted through late May, 2021.

LSU AgCenter Center Report- Dr. Michael Salassi

Dr. Salassi said he wanted to remind the Commission of a couple of upcoming events:

March 23, 2021- 2021 LSU AgCenter Virtual Forestry Forum- Focus: "Marketing & Managing your Forests and Tax Advice"

March 31, 2021- Virtual Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification Meetings

April 1, 2021- Pesticide Disposal – Monroe, LA

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Skains suggested that the Commission send a letter commending Ms. Anita Manshack for years of service to Sabine SWCD. He asked that Chairman Girouard approve a motion to send Ms. Manshack a letter thanking her for her service.

Motion by: Mr. Reggie Skains
Seconded by: Mr. Ed Yerger

Motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

Chairman Girouard said the next State Commission Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 1:15 PM virtually. Information will be sent to members prior to the meeting.

Public Comments

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

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. Brad Spicer made a motion to adjourn at 2:06 P.M. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alan Williams and passed unanimously.

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