

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

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

April 19, 2022
10:00 AM

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE CONFERENCE ROOM
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 10:00 A.M. Chairman Garber gave the invocation and Mr. Ed Yerger 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. Reggie Skains, Area I Member
Mr. Ed Yerger, Area II Member
Mr. Brad Spicer, LDAF Alternate Member
Mr. Ben Langlinais, Area IV Alternate Member
Dr. Michael Salassi, LSU AgCenter

Members Absent:

Southern University Agricultural Center Representative
Mr. Jason Nolde, LACD President, Area III
Mr. Steve Horvath, Area V Member, Vice-Chairman

A quorum was present.

Others Present:

Mr. Chad Kacir, NRCS State Conservationist
Mr. Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC/ Director
Ms. LaClasha "Clay" Alexander, LDAF-OSWC
Dr. Ernest Girouard, Vermillion SWCD

Public Comments

Chairman Garber asked if there were any comments from the public. Dr. Ernest Girouard wanted to thank the Commission members for everything that they do. He said the Commission is vital to conservation in Louisiana. He also believes that the Commission as well other supervisors should consider being mentors to the newer generation of producers. Dr. Girouard said he has already been mentoring a few people confidentially. Mr. Breaux said that every time he speaks to Mike Crowder, President of NACD, he mentions mentoring. Louisiana should discuss forming a program that would introduce mentoring opportunities to producers with any level of experience.

Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Garber called for a motion to approve the April 19, 2022 SSWCC agenda.

Motion by: Mr. Ed Yerger

Seconded by: Mr. Brad Spicer

Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the minutes

Chairman Garber called for a motion to approve the March 29,2022 SSWCC minutes.

Motion by: Mr. Brad Spicer

Seconded by: Dr. Mike Salassi

Motion passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NRCS/OSWC Farm Bill Cooperative Agreement- Mr. Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC/ Director, SSWCC
Mr. Breaux said March's Farm Bill drawdown was \$74,643. The total remaining balance for FY 21-22 is \$239,974. The contract has 6 months remaining but the funds will be earned earlier than that. Mr. Kacir said that he would like to review reporting entries and discuss the figures due to the rapid drawdown. Mr. Breaux stated that the districts are reporting their tasks based on the task list set by NRCS. Each task has a specific time allocated for its completion, and time value based on SWCD employee pay rate. Mr. Breaux said that he and Mr. Kacir could review the set time frames for each task at a later date.

LACD Annual Meeting-April 19-21,2022

Mr. Breaux said that Mr. Jason Nolde, LACD President, will unfortunately not be at the LACD Meeting because of his job duties. Mr. Jacob Marceaux, 1st Vice President, has announced that he will not be pursuing SWCD board activities beyond the end of his current term, thus ending his LACD position after his term expires due to family obligations. Mr. Breaux said Mr. Marceaux will lead a good portion of LACD Meeting with assistance from Mr. Ben Langlinais, 2nd Vice President. Mr. Breaux said meeting attendance numbers have increased and are very close to what they were for the last in person Annual meeting in 2020. He said lots of exhibits are expected, and everyone will have an opportunity to visit with them. Everyone will also have a chance to hear presentations on topics such as Climate Action Plan, Feral Swine Pilot Program, and plans to get bring in large scale federal funding into Louisiana. Mr. Brad Spicer will also be introducing some of our retired State Conservationists and they will say a few words regarding their time as a State Conservationist.

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

Mr. Breaux said progress is being made with Soil Health legislation which is on the way to the Senate. There have been some requested changes to the text of the legislation, but no decisions have been made. As previously reported, department funding continues to be in good standing. We recently received news that the OSWC will receive an additional \$300,000 for feral swine management. This is in addition to and separate from the NRCS Feral Swine Agreement.

New Business

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

Mr. Kacir said currently NRCS Louisiana has 197 individuals on its staff. NRCS has approved 3,000 new positions nationwide with Louisiana hoping to receive at least 70 additional positions. With these openings, NRCS hopes to train in office and in the field during May and June. Mr. Kacir said that NRCS is hoping to open its offices at 100% on May 2nd while keeping a close eye on Covid-19 cases. NRCS is also working on the Climate Smart Program which will use EQIP and CSP dollars. Mr. Kacir said NRCS hopes to assist more urban agriculture and small-scale agriculture. NRCS has also submitted 55 EWP damage surveys to headquarters for a total of approximately 60 million dollars. EWP is on the way to completing assessments from Hurricane Laura and are getting started with assessments from Hurricane Ida. Mr. Kacir said 9 conservation districts are participating in Watershed plans. Two of the nine watershed plans were started last year. The watersheds are aimed to help poverty stricken and underserved areas. The window for new applications remains open.

LSU AgCenter Center Report- Dr. Michael Salassi, LSU AgCenter

Dr. Salassi said he is looking forward to the Master Farmer Luncheon which will include recertifying 8 Master Farmers. He is expecting more farmers to be certified at next years' LACD Annual Meeting. Last month, the LSU Agcenter held a ceremony to rename the Central Research Station after Mr. Doyle Chambers. Mr. Chambers championed increased funding and greater visibility and in the 1970s, he played a key role in making the LSU AgCenter an independent campus of the LSU system dedicated to serving the agriculture industry. The ceremony was held on March 24th which would have been Mr. Chambers 104th birthday. Dr. Salassi said he wanted to remind us about a few upcoming events:

- April 20, 2022- Wheat and Oat Field Day- Macon Ridge Research Station
- April 21, 2022- Dean Lee Research Station's Beef and Forage Field Day- Dean Lee Research Station- Alexandria, LA
- April 28, 2022- NW Region Beef and Forage Field Day- Red River Station- Bossier City, LA

District Supervisor Election- June 11, 2022

Chairman Garber said districts have submitted their election notices to OSWC in a timely manner. Districts were sent emails requesting sample notices with their locations to be submitted by March 28, 2022. The nominating period began on April 1, 2022 and will expire on April 30, 2022. The candidates are to have their signatures reviewed by the Registrar of Voters and then they are to be sent to the OSWC by May 16, 2022. If the candidates did not have any opposition, the supervisors will be duly elected during our tentatively scheduled May 24, 2022 SWCC meeting. So far, OSWC has received 4 completed petitions in office.

Supervisor Resignations/ Appointments / Reappointments

Chairman Garber said there is one appointment this month:

- Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. William "Bill" Bresher, elected position formerly held by Ms. Carolyn Falgout, effective April 19, 2022- June 30, 2024.

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

- Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. William "Bill" Bresher, elected position formerly held by Ms. Carolyn Falgout, effective April 19, 2022- June 30, 2024.

Motion by: Mr. Brad Spicer

Seconded by: Mr. Reggie Skains

Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Garber said there is one reappointment this month:

- Lower Delta SWCD, Mr. Chris Mattingly, appointed position effective April 19, 2022- May 4, 2025

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

- Lower Delta SWCD, Mr. Chris Mattingly, appointed position effective April 19, 2022- May 4, 2025

Motion by: Mr. Brad Spicer

Seconded by: Mr. Reggie Skains

Motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence/Articles:

Articles

- Letter of Condolences to Ms. Fannie Compton, Wife of John Compton
- AgMagic, an interactive children's event, returns to the LSU AgCenter after a two-year hiatus
- US Army: Central Review of Environmental Legislative and Regulatory Actions
- EPA to collaborate with ag on reducing nutrient pollution
- Two USDA Agencies and the State of Louisiana Sign Shared Stewardship Agreement

OTHER BUSINESS

Area Reports- Area I- Mr. Reggie Skains

Chairman Garber asked Mr. Reggie Skains to review the Area I's report. Mr. Skains reviewed the highlights from Area I (attached)

Chairman Garber thanked Mr. Skains for his presentation and asked who the next volunteer would be to give their area report. Mr. Ruben Dauzat volunteered and said that he would present Area III's report at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

Chairman Garber said the next State Commission Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 24, 2022 at 1:15 PM in the Veterans Memorial Auditorium, 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. Brad Spicer made a motion to adjourn at 11:47 AM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reggie Skains and passed unanimously.

/s/ 

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

Bodcau SWCD

- Hosted Annual LACD Auxiliary poster contest
- District staff read at Bossier public library

DeSoto SWCD

Rental Programs

- The district has an aerator to rent for landowners in the parish to help increase gas exchange between the soil and atmosphere
- The district recently purchased a Pig Brig to rent to landowners in the Parish to help with feral hog populations and decrease the damage they cause
- Just finished the annual tree seeding sale
- Preparing for forestry awareness day



Board Member Ricky Weeks and District Tech Chad Berly inspecting the trap after catching 8 hogs

DORCHEAT SWCD

- *Provides an annual scholarship program for two graduating seniors in Dorcheat SWCD/Webster Parish.
- *Presents a Dorcheat SWCD “Conservation Farmer of the Year” award
- *Submits frequent newspaper articles and maintains a Facebook page to keep the public informed of projects and program availability.
- *Provides geo-textile materials for sale for landowners.
- *Provides a gopher machine rental for landowners.
- *Provides educational materials to schools and churches concerning Soil and Water Stewardship Week.
- *Hosts Locally Led Conservation meeting.

D'arbonne SWCD

Farmerville FO Staff: **Stephanie Paul, Lead Resource Planner; Darren Cooper, Soil Conservation Technician; Amy Henderson, District Secretary; Megan Bennett, Program Support Specialist; Mandy Jackson, Program Liaison.**

Farmerville FO has received 35 EQIP & 16 CSP requests for assistance. There has been 34 EQIP applications received of which 29 were eligible. There are 37 active EQIP contracts. There has been 11 CSP applications received, 11 active CSP contracts, 4 CSP renewals received, & 3 CSP renewals completed. 1 WRE application received this FY.

D'arbonne SWCD now has the Pig Brig hog trapping system. We provide a monthly rental to landowners in the District.



Locally LED meeting (Trailblazer RC&D "Estate Planning" held March 15, 2022. **Stephanie Paul, Lead Resource Planner of the Farmerville FO**, presented for NRCS and was available to address resource concerns. 19 were in attendance.



Darren Cooper, Soil Conservation Technician of Farmerville FO, provides technical assistance for conservation practices in Union parish including all land uses for forestry, pasture, & poultry houses. COVID did not slow this technician down a bit!

D'arbonne Soil & Water Conservation District assisted Union parish Cooperator in establishing pine & hardwood trees on his farm. This was an excellent site for training new NRCS & SWCD employees across Area 1 on planning & instillation of

conservation practice 612 (tree/shrub establishment). **Wayne Roberts, NRCS Area Forester** utilized this farm to train 11 new employees in March 2022.

Minden FO staff: **Jeff Foster, Lead Resource Planner; David LaMay, Soil Conservationist; Cathryn Ellis, District Special Projects Technician; Chris Stelly, Natural Resource Specialist; Cindy Beard, ACES Enrollee; Sabrina Claeys, Quail Forever.**

Minden FO has had 54 requests for assistance (37 requests for program assistance & 17 requests for brief technical assistance). 37 EQIP applications received (28 eligible, 20 ranked, 28 not funded, 6 active contracts, 2 cancellation/terminations). 15 CSP applications received (15 eligible applications not funded, 13 active contracts, & 3 renewals received).

Cathryn Ellis has been assisting the District-wide area with resource inventories, in-field analysis for resource concerns (such as pasture condition scoring, soil testing, basal areas & diameters of trees, & survival checks) & evaluation of conservation practices (such as HUAP, fences, livestock pipelines, watering facilities, etc.), to ensure correct implementation of NRCS standards by landowners. She has also assisted with the completion of Grazing Plans, CPA-52's, etc.

Chris & David attended the 2022 CENLA Forestry Forum in Alexandria March 3rd & the Soil Health in Your Garden workshop in Minden on April 12th. They will be attending the Forestry workshop April 25th & the Northwest Region Beef & Forage Field Day April 28th (both to be held in Bossier).

Monroe FO staff: **Jaime Shivers, Lead Resource Planner; Pam Meredith, District Secretary; Brittney Wells, Natural Resource Specialist; Terry Clampit, District Technician; Ben Williams, Soil Conservation Technician.**

Monroe FO has had 21 requests received (8 for EQIP info; 10 for general program information; 1 for soil information; 2 for CSP information). There have been 18 EQIP applications received, 10 of which were eligible, 18 applications ranked, & 16 active EQIP contracts. There were 3 CSP applications received, 3 applications pending, 4 active CSP contracts. There was 1 WRE application received this FY & 16 total number of easements.

Monroe FO has scheduled a **Cover Crop Workshop** April 20, 2022, with **Jaime, Brittney, Steve Nipper, Water Quality Specialist/Acting Area 1 Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations** representing NRCS at this event.

A **Wildlife Workshop** is scheduled for May 6, 2022, with **Jaime & Brittney** to present at this event.

Brittney represented NRCS & ran the booth at University of Louisiana at Monroe Career Fair on March 24, 2022.



- ✚ **Terry Clampit** retired then returned to the Monroe FO as District Technician on a part-time basis to assist our producers.
- ✚ **Ruston FO** staff: **Brant Bradley, District Conservationist LARU 2 Area 1; Debra Beach, District Secretary; Madelyn Cheatwood, Soil Conservationist; Kevin Parker, Soil Conservationist Technician; Danny Suggs, District Technician; Jacob Paul, Engineer.**
- ✚ **Ruston FO** has had 127 requests for assistance. There are 9 Master Farmer certifications. There have been 28 EQIP applications received (6 Farm Energy, 12 Forestland, 9 Livestock, 3 Seasonal High Tunnels), 1 application deferred, 27 applications not funded, 2 pending applications not funded, & 15 active EQIP contracts. \$195,000 in EQIP payments alone from October 1, 2021-April 15, 2022. There are 9 CSP applications received, 1 application cancelled, 8 eligible applications not funded, 16 active CSP contracts, 5 CSP renewals received, 2 CSP renewals cancelled, 3 CSP renewals approved & 3 CSP renewals complete.
- ✚ **Ruston FO** has focused recruitment efforts at LA Tech University (April 9-10, 2022) and Grambling State University (March 23, 2021) Career Days. **Brant & Jeff Foster** represented NRCS at LA Tech where 28 students visited the booth. **Madelyn & Austin Daily, Intern at Ruston FO**, represented NRCS at Grambling 19 students visited the NRCS booth.
- ✚ **Danny Suggs** is a Master Farmer (certified 2011 & recertified 2016 & 2021) & Master Cattleman (since about 2010). Since returning from retirement, Danny has worked with poultry farmers in a multi-parish area on planning & contracts for the last 2 years. 2022 is planned with 7 producers going to contract in Lincoln & Jackson parishes.
- ✚ Ag Expo 2022 was attended by over 10,000 people. **Jaime Shivers, Brittney Wells, & Stephanie Paul** represented NRCS by running the booth for this event.



*Louisiana Women in Agriculture Conference & Expo 2022 was held April 7-8, 2022, in Alexandria. This event was attended by **Wanda Simmons, Area Administrative Support Assistant for Area 1; Brittney Wells; Pam Meredith, District Secretary for Monroe FO; Amy Henderson, District Secretary for Farmerville FO.***



The balloon art was AG-MAZING!

There were so many vendors at the Expo to be visited during the Conference. Here is one of those vendors:



Bayou Petals Flower Farm



Guest speakers at LWAG breakout sessions





Guest speaker



*Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts will be holding their 2022 Conference April 19-21, 2022, in Baton Rouge. This event will be attended by **Reggie Skains, Chairman D'arbonne SWCD; Amy Henderson; Stephanie Paul; Pam Meredith.***

D'arbonne SWCD Board Members:

Reggie Skains, Chairman
David Manuel, Secretary-Treasurer

Stephen Wade, Vice-Chairman
Patricia "Trissy" Avery, Member

Saline SWCD

Hosts Locally Led Conservation Meeting

Provides stewardship materials to schools, churches and libraries during Soil and Water Stewardship Week

Maintains a Facebook page to share information on conservation programs and tree sale

Submits newspaper articles to parish-wide newspaper

Holds an annual seedling sale. Sells a variety of seedlings

RED RIVER SWCD

- Red River SWCD has had a no-till drill available for rent for the past five years we have planted over 1000 acres of pastureland.
- The RRSWCD offers seed sell for the producers we have planted over 50 acres of pollinator habitat.
- The RRSWCD participates in the Feral swine program we have kills over 1000 hogs in the past year.
- The RSWCD participated with the NRCS on forestry training.



Sabine SWCD

- Educational day was held at the Zwolle Tamale Fiesta October 8, 2021. Mr. Chris Pearce Sabine SWCD member, spoke to some 300 Sabine Parish 3rd grade students. Mr. Pat Boudreaux, Sabine SWCD Chairman also participated.
- Sabine SWCD held a demonstration, October 12, 2021, on the set-up and management of Pig Brig Trapping Systems.
- The district has two Pig Brig net hog traps they rent to landowners on monthly basis. Since February a total of 32 hogs have been caught.
- A meeting was held with the SRA and TBLA to discuss the preparations for the district’s Thirteenth Annual Youth Fish Fest, held the First Saturday in June. The district hopes to register 150 youth fishermen.
- Locally Led Meeting was held at the Many, VFW Hall, March 28, 2022, fourteen were in attendance. Each attendee was given a copy of the list of resource concerns, and 10 points total to assign to them.
- Local Work Group meeting was held April 12, 2022, at the LSU AgCenter in Many, to further discuss the local resource concerns.

SABINE SWCD

*Board of Supervisors
From Right to Left:*

- James "Jim" Pratt, Sec.-Treasurer
Elected
- Thomas" Chris" Pearce, Member
Elected
- John "Pat" Boudreaux, Chairman
Appointed
- John Alan Williams, Vice-Chairman
Appointed
- Patricia Brown, Member
Elected

DISTRICT AT A GLANCE:

*Population--- 24,233
Land Area--- 647,500 acres
Water Area--- 97,000 acres
Forestland--- 478,500 acres
Grazing Land--- 51,000 acres
SWCD Cooperators--- 864*



Pictures from landowners. They are thankful we now able to provide this service.



Mr. Pearce, SWCD board member at the Zwolle Tamale Fiesta

