

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

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

May 23, 2023  
1:15 PM

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

MEETING MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Garber called the regular monthly Soil & Water Conservation Commission Meeting to order at 1:15 P.M. Mr. Steve Horvath gave the invocation and Chairman Garber led 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. Steve Horvath, Vice Chairman, Area V  
Mr. Reggie Skains, Secretary-Treasurer, Area I  
Mr. Ben Langlinais, LACD President, Member  
Mr. Brad Spicer, LDAF Alternate  
Mr. Ed Yerger, Area II Member  
Mr. Ed Giering, Area III Member  
Dr. Michael Salassi, LSU AgCenter, Alternate

**Members Absent:**

Southern University Agricultural Center Representative

A quorum was present.

**Others Present:**

Mr. Chad Kacir, NRCS State Conservationist  
Mr. Michael Schooler, LDAF-OSWC

Mr. Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC / Director  
Ms. LaClasha "Clay" Alexander, LDAF-OSWC

**Public Comments**

Chairman Garber asked if there were any comments from the public and there were none. He thanked Secretary-Treasurer Skains for leading last month's meeting.

**Approval of the agenda**

Chairman Garber called for a motion to approve the May 23, 2023 SSWCC agenda.

**Motion by:** Mr. Reggie Skains

**Seconded by:** Mr. Steve Horvath

Motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of the minutes**

Chairman Garber called for a motion to approve the April 23, 2023 SSWCC minutes.

**Motion by:** Mr. Ed Yerger

**Seconded by:** Mr. Brad Spicer

Motion passed unanimously.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **NRCS/OSWC Farm Bill Cooperative Agreement**

Mr. Breaux said April's Farm Bill drawdown was \$81,474 leaving a balance of \$306,503. Eleven districts have maxed out of their farm bill funds and other districts continue to input their hours as advised. Chairman Garber asked were there any questions or comments and there were none.

### **Legislative Regular Session/State Funding**

Mr. Breaux mentioned some recent updates to the following bills from the Legislative Analysis list:

1. HB 82- (Rep. Kathy Edmonston) which was set to abolish the Louisiana Environmental Education Commission was repealed and removed.
2. HB425(Rep. Ryan Bourriaque) and SB 102 (Rep. Fred Mills)- relative to the creation of the Acadiana Watershed District.
3. HB 453 (Rep. Sherman Mack)- Requires that carbon dioxide injected for geologic sequestration using a Class VI injection well be transported to and sequestered in a storage facility in the Gulf of Mexico.
4. HB 454 (Representative Sherman Mack)- Requires a local election for the approval of carbon dioxide sequestration within a parish.
5. HB 465 (Rep. Valerie Hodges)- Provides relative to the Louisiana Scenic Rivers Act.
6. HB 570 (Rep. Alan Seabaugh)- Establishes a bounty to control feral hogs.
7. HB 476 (Rep. Mike Huval)- Establishes the Acadiana Watershed District
8. HB 537 (Rep. Valerie Hodges)- Provides for a prohibition against foreign adversary purchasing, leasing, or acquiring land.
9. HCR 45 (Rep. Phillip Devillier)- Creates the Louisiana Solar Sitting Task Forces to study the impact of, and alternatives to, locating solar energy developments on farmland. Provides for the composition of the task forces, structure, meeting requirements, and quorum.
10. SB 10 (Sen. Fred Mills)- Provides relative to the Acadiana Watershed District.
11. SB 22- (Sen. Glen Womack)- Provides relative to soil conservation policy.
12. SB 206 (Sen. Barry Milligan)- Provides relative to foreign interest in certain Louisiana research facilities.
13. SCR 6 (Sen. Bob Hensgens)- Approves the annual state integrated coastal protection plan for Fiscal Year 2024, as adopted by the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board (CPRA).
14. SCR 17 (Sen. Bob Hensgens)- Approves the comprehensive master plan for integrated coastal protection.
15. SR 21(Sen. Stewart Cathey)- Designates May 4, 2023, as Future Farmers of America (FFA) Day at the Louisiana Capital and commends the officers of the Louisiana FFA Association.
16. HCR 81(Rep. Michael Echols)- Establishes the ArkLaMiss Timber and Bioinnovation Corridor Commission.

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

Mr. Kacir said NRCS recently met with four conservation districts that have aging watershed structures. The districts discussed how the watershed (dams) had gone past their design life span of 50 years. A lot of the structures have reached the 60 to 70-year mark and O&M agreements have expired. Proper maintenance is necessary for these watershed structures to be eligible for watershed rehabilitation program funding. Mr. Kacir said there are more meetings planned in other areas of the state to discuss watershed maintenance options. Chairman Garber asked what NRCS noticed during inspections of the watersheds. Mr. Kacir said a lot of the issues stem from trees and erosion in the emergency spillways. Mr. Giering said he was able to attend the meeting along with 4 parish presidents. They discussed their area watersheds and classified some as being "High Hazard class" and some are considered "significant". Mr. Giering explained that when a district signs a cooperative agreement with a landowner to construct a watershed, the district would usually end up with the maintenance responsibility. Mr. Giering said he believes districts missed out on getting watershed maintenance funding through LA Outdoors Forever, but Mr. Kacir said funding through the LA Watershed Initiative is still possible.

Mr. Kacir announced that final paperwork from NRCS was emailed to Mr. Langlinais regarding the LACD Executive Director position. Mr. Langlinais will review the agreement and return the signed copy to NRCS

Grants and Agreements for processing. Mr. Kacir also mentioned a pending application for an education trailer. Discussions and a decision for the trailer will be made within a few weeks. The New Orleans Urban Agriculture office has done a soft opening and the grand opening is expected to happen this summer.

He said that 60% of EQIP contracts have been obligated and they plan to begin reviewing CSP applications next week. IRA funds will also begin to roll out with CSP and EQIP funds. Mr. Kacir also wanted to remind everyone of the upcoming NACD summer meeting scheduled for July 15-19, 2023 in Bismarck, North Dakota.

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

Dr. Salassi said as previously mentioned LSU has been encouraging their staff to assist in increasing their federal research funding sources. Only competitive grants can be increased and have increased substantially this year. This past year competitive grants were able to reach a high of \$32.8 million and within the first 10 months of this year, LSU reached over \$41 million. Dr. Blake Wilson from the Entomology department received \$300,000 grant from ARS to study apple snail control, crawfish, and rice production. Dr. Changyoon Jeong received a 3-year, \$650,000 grant to review cover crop production, green house gas, and soil health. The Red River research station received a \$1 million grant from NRCS to work on a 3-year project to review some climate smart productions on sugarcane and rice. Dr. Jim Wang was apart of a \$550,000 project that researched modernizing fertilizer recommendations.

LSU recently filled some animal science positions that will start in July. An offer was recently accepted to fill the Sugarcane Pathologist position formerly held by Dr. Jeff Hoy. There are two vacant positions available: Sugarcane/Soybean Agronomist at the Dean Lee research station and Row Crop Entomologist in Winnboro, LA.

#### Important dates to remember:

May 30, 2023-Pointe Coupee Sugarcane Field Day- Morganza, LA

June 22-25,2023- Farm Bureau Convention- New Orleans, LA

June 24, 2023- Commodity meetings

June 28, 2023- Rice Field Day- Crowley, LA

July 19, 2023- Sugarcane Field Day- St. Gabriel, LA

July 20, 2023- Central Region Row Field tours

#### OSWC Report

Mr. Breaux wanted to mention that he had an opportunity to report OSWC's ongoing programs and recent accomplishments alongside Commissioner Strain to the House Agriculture committee, which went quite well. The Coastal Revegetation projects have been moving along with help from OSWC's Kenny Bohnsack. This is Mr. Bohnsack's first project season as project manager. He was originally a technician in Lafourche-Terrebonne who filled the OSWC position formerly held by Mr. Jeremy Rodriguez. The 319 projects are also flowing, and we recently received approval for a submission that was done last year. Mr. Schooler stated that this year's submission is being worked on and will be submitted soon. The Bilateral Infrastructure project will soon be ready to begin in Tensas-Concordia parish in the Lake Saint Joseph watershed. This information was also reported during the House Agriculture committee meeting. It had been suggested that Mr. Breaux compose a proposal to the Louisiana Watershed Initiative (LWI) highlighting options for some of the aging watershed structures throughout Louisiana. Mr. Breaux stated that he hopes to speak to Mr. Pat Forbes about the proposal soon. LACD recently signed the contract that sets the 2024 Annual LACD meeting for January 8-10, 2024 with plans to start the program in the afternoon. Most districts have submitted their Locally Led Conservation Investment reports and OSWC is working on getting these documents together to give to the Commissioner to make sure that he has the available when asked about districts. Chairman Garber asked were there any questions and there were none.

#### Supervisor Resignations/ Appointments / Reappointments

Chairman Garber said there are 1 SWCD supervisor resignations this month:

- Mr. Lewis Lauve, Rapides SWCD, elected position, effective November 8, 2022.

Chairman Garber said if there were no more comments, he would call for a motion to approve the SWCD supervisor resignations for:

- Mr. Lewis Lauve, Rapides SWCD, elected position, effective November 8, 2022.

**Motion by:** Mr. Brad Spicer

**Seconded by:** Mr. Reggie Skains

Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Garber said we have 3 SWCD supervisor appointments this month:

- Mr. Stanley Dutile, Lafayette SWCD, appointed position formerly held by Mr. Tyler Clark, effective June 27, 2023- June 11, 2026.
- Mr. Joel Matthews, Rapides SWCD, elected position formerly held by Mr. Lewis Lauve, effective May 23, 2023- June 30, 2025.
- Mr. Lawrence “Kenny” Ryan, Saline SWCD, elected position formerly held by Mr. Richard Pullig, effective May 23, 2023- June 30, 2024.

Chairman Garber said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve the SWCD supervisor appointments of:

- Mr. Stanley Dutile, Lafayette SWCD, appointed position formerly held by Mr. Tyler Clark, effective June 27, 2023- June 11, 2026.
- Mr. Joel Matthews, Rapides SWCD, elected position formerly held by Mr. Lewis Lauve, effective May 23, 2023- June 30, 2025.
- Mr. Lawrence “Kenny” Ryan, Saline SWCD, elected position formerly held by Mr. Richard Pullig, effective May 23, 2023- June 30, 2024.

**Motion by:** Mr. Brad Spicer

**Seconded by:** Mr. Reggie Skains

Motion passed unanimously.

District Supervisor Election-June 10, 2023

Chairman Garber said there were 42 candidates that had no opposition for the 2023 Supervisors Election. He said the term of office for the candidates would start July 1, 2023 and expire June 30, 2026.

District	Mr./Ms.	Name
Acadia	Mr.	George Guillory
Allen	Mr.	Jeffrey Manuel
Avoyelles	Mr.	Chadrick Tassin
Bodcau	Mr.	Patrick Beauvais
Boeuf River	Mr.	William Shane Hart
Bogue Chitto-PR	Mr	Michael Thompson
Caddo	Mr.	Kyle Dill
Calcasieu	Mr.	Jason Nolde
Capital	Mr.	Burnell Muse
Catahoula	Mr.	H.C. Peck III
Crescent	Mr.	Alvin Melancon
D'Arbonne	Ms.	Patricia Avery
DeSoto	Mr.	Allen J. Gooden
Dorcheat	Mr.	Joe Robinson
Dugdeмона	Mr.	Steven Bates
East Carroll	Mr.	Fredrick Schneider

Evangeline	Mr.	Anthony Rozas
Gulf Coast	Mr.	Jim P. Dupont
Iberia	Mr.	Brad Judice
Jefferson Davis	Mr.	David Scott Romero
Lafayette	Mr.	Chad Courtois
Lafourche-Terrebonne	Mr.	Robert Pitre
LaSalle	Mr.	Michael McCartney
Lower Delta	Mr.	Grant Crochet
Madison	Mr.	Jack M. Varner III
Morehouse	Mr.	Clay Costello
Natchitoches	Mr.	Ed Giering III
New River	Mr.	Ozane Gravois
Northeast	Mr.	Randy Braswell
Plaquemines	Mr.	Bartol Taliancich Jr.
Rapides	Ms.	Duana Juneau
Red River	Mr.	Daniel Snead
Sabine	Mr.	James Pratt
Saline	Mr.	Stacey Conly
St. Landry	Mr.	Fred Lavergne
St. Martin	Mr.	Daniel Richard
St. Mary	Mr.	Alton Broussard Jr.
Tangi-St. Helena	Mr.	Darrell Sinagra
Tensas-Concordia	Mr.	Walker Head
Upper Delta	Mr.	Curtis Engemann
Vermilion	Mr.	Christian Richard
West Carroll	Mr.	Cullen Kovac

Chairman Garber said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve the elected supervisors listed.

**Motion by:** Mr. Brad Spicer

**Seconded by:** Mr. Steve Horvath

Motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence/Articles:

- Journal of Soil and Water Conservation- May/June 2023
- Lexology: EPA’s Waters of the United States regulation is now the law in only 23 of our 50 United States as all eyes turn to the Supreme Court.
- The Endangered Species Act: Understanding the Ramifications on Pesticides across the country.
- Delta Farm Press: ‘Ticking time bomb’ awaits EPA’s latest WOTUS rule.
- Kansas for conservation: State Adds \$35 Million to Water conservation.
- LSU AgCenter scientist to study climate-smart conservation practices
- Farm Progress: Biden WOTUS regulation may be dead.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Next Meeting

Chairman Garber said the next State Commission Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 27, 2023 in the LDAF Veterans 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. Ed Yerger made a motion to adjourn at 3:15 P.M. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brad Spicer and passed unanimously.



/s/

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