

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

May 29, 2019
1:15 PM

M& F CONFERENCE ROOM
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. David Daigle- LACD President
Mr. John Compton- Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. Ed Yerger

Members absent:

Mr. Larry Sayes

Southern University Agricultural Center
Representative

Dr. Rogers Leonard, LSU AgCenter

A quorum was present.

Others Present:

Mr. Scott Edwards, NRCS Asst. State
Conservationist of Programs, USDA-NRCS

Mr. Brad Spicer, LDAF-OSWC/Executive Director
SSWCC

Mr. Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC

Dr. Brian Leblanc, LSU AgCenter

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. Chairman Skains said that he wanted to congratulate Mr. Spicer on the resolution he received from the State of Louisiana for fifty-five years of service. He said State Representative Andy Anders and a member of the Tensas-Concordia SWCD authored HCR 86 and presented the resolution to him during the May 28th Louisiana House of Representatives General Session. Mr. Spicer said that he was honored to have been recognized for his work. He said that he was also happy and thankful that his family were able to attend the ceremony and was honored that Chairman Skains, Joey Breaux, and several LDAF coworkers and legislative staff members also attended.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or Commission members about the April 23, 2019 State Commission minutes and there were none. Chairman Skains called for a motion to approve the April 23, 2019 State Commission Meeting minutes.

Motion: Mr. John Compton made a motion to approve April 23, 2019 State Commission Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Yerger 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 had technical issues with entering additional FB funds to the system. He said we expect to have the problems resolved shortly and will reimburse districts ASAP. He said most districts have had a significant increase in their Farm Bill allocations. He said the district employees need to be sure to charge all their farm bill activities to their farm bill accounts.

Mr. Spicer asked if there were any questions regarding the farm bill agreement and there were none.

Legislative Regular Session/State Funding

Chairman Skains said the next item on the agenda is *Legislative Regular Session/State Funding* and asked Mr. Spicer if he had any comments. He said HB 558: Louisiana Watershed Commission by Representative Hodges that was mentioned in last month's meeting was amended to include Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission as Commission members. Mr. Breaux said there are several districts that could use the assistance of this initiative to get some projects started. Dr. Girouard said Vermillion SWCD has been reaching out to get a meeting scheduled. He said there is an online survey available that allows you to give your opinions on where you would want your watershed limits to end. He said he thinks it would benefit districts if the Commission formed a group to represent the districts at these watershed meetings. He said there is a meeting scheduled for June 12, 2019 at the Bossier City Civic Center. Chairman Skains called for a motion to have the Commission members attend the Watershed Initiative meeting in Bossier City, Louisiana. Mr. Spicer said the Bossier meeting is an interstate meeting covering the Governor Watershed Initiative that Governor Edwards created in 2018.

Motion: Dr. Ernest Girouard made a motion to have the Commission members attend the Watershed Initiative meeting scheduled for June 12, 2019 in Bossier City, Louisiana. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains asked were there any questions regarding the Legislative Regular Session/State Funding and there were none.

District Supervisor Election- June 8, 2019

Chairman Skains said the next item on the agenda is *District Supervisor Election*. He asked Mr. Spicer if he had any comments. Mr. Spicer said Capital SWCD was scheduled to have an election but one of the two candidates, Mr. Burnell Muse, decided to withdraw his petition. Chairman Skains called for a motion to accept Mr. Bernell Muse from the Capital SWCD Supervisors' election.

Motion: Mr. John Compton made a motion to accept the withdrawal letter of Mr. Bernell Muse from the Capital SWCD supervisor election. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Yerger and passed unanimously.

Mr. Spicer said Bogue-Chitto Pearl River SWCD is scheduled to have an election on June 8, 2019. He said that he has spoken with Ms. Rebecca Coulon and has assured that everything is prepared for the election. He

said that he wanted to ask the Commission to pay for election expenses for Bogue-Chitto Pearl River SWCD. Chairman Skains called for a motion to approve the Commission reimbursing Bogue-Chitto Pearl River SWCD funds for their 2019 election.

Motion: Mr. David Daigle made a motion to approve the Commission paying for Bogue-Chitto Pearl River SWCD's 2019 election expenses. The motion was seconded by Mr. John Compton and passed unanimously.

Mr. Spicer said the Commission also received a letter from Bodcau SWCD about Mr. William Bart Dobson submitting his nominating petition late. He said the district secretary notified the OSWC that Mr. Dobson's petition would be submitted late due to an election being held in the parish and Registrar of Voters making that its priority which delayed Mr. Dobson getting his petition signatures certified. He asked Chairman Skains to call for a motion to waive the nominating period deadline and to accept Mr. Dobson's petition. Chairman Skains called for a motion to waive the nominating period and accept Mr. William Bart Dobson's petition.

Motion: Dr. Ernest Girouard made a motion to waive the nominating period and accept the petition of Mr. William Bart Dobson. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said we have five districts with candidates that did not meet the board meeting attendance requirements in the past year. He said we have received letters from Boeuf River SWCD; Mr. Christopher Johnson, DeSoto SWCD; Mr. Jeremy Evans, Evangeline SWCD; Mr. Ike Moorein, Grant SWCD; Mr. Richard Bonner, and Sabine SWCD; Mr. Thomas Christian Pierce. Chairman Skains said he reviewed letters from each district and all five boards consider the above referenced candidates very good board members and are requesting the attendance requirement to be waived and they be duly elected to their boards. Chairman Skains called for a motion to waive the attendance requirements and accept the petitions of Boeuf River SWCD; Mr. Christopher Johnson, DeSoto SWCD; Mr. Jeremy Evans, Evangeline SWCD; Mr. Ike Moorein, Grant SWCD; Mr. Richard Bonner, and Sabine SWCD; Mr. Thomas Christian Pierce.

Motion: Mr. John Compton made a motion to waive the board meeting attendance requirements and accept the petitions of Boeuf River SWCD; Mr. Christopher Johnson, DeSoto SWCD; Mr. Jeremy Evans, Evangeline SWCD; Mr. Ike Moorein, Grant SWCD; Mr. Richard Bonner, and Sabine SWCD; Mr. Thomas Christian Pierce. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said although the districts advertised the election three districts: Caddo SWCD, Jefferson Davis SWCD, and St. Martin SWCD did not have any nomination petitions to submit, resulting in vacancies effective July 1, 2019 in their districts.

Chairman Skains said listed below are forty four districts and forty one candidates that had no opposition for the 2019 Supervisors Election. He said the list include one candidate that the Commission accepted his petition late and five candidates that the Commission waiver board meeting attendance requirements and therefore are in compliance with State Commission supervisor's election requirements. He said the term of office for the candidates listed below starts on July 1, 2019 and expires June 30, 2022.

DISTRICT	SUPERVISOR
Acadia	Glenn Simon
Allen	Ronnie Sonnier
Avoyelles	Dirk Dupuy
Bodcau	Bart Dobson
Boeuf River	Christopher Brian Johnson
Caddo	VACANT
Calcasieu	Wesley Coffman
Capital	*Anthony Butler
Catahoula	Jeramy Slade

Crescent	Henry "George" Schlorff
D'Arbonne	Stephen Wade
DeSoto	Jeremy Evans
Dorcheat	Gary Greene
Dugdemonia	Ronald Kenneth Jeane
East Carroll	George Larry Sanderson
Evangeline	Ike Moorein
Feliciana	Andrew Grezaffi
Grant	Richard Bonner
Gulf Coast	Louie Barbe III
Iberia	Guy Viator
Jefferson Davis	VACANT
Lafayette	Ronous Duhon
Lafourche Terrebonne	Randy Toups
LaSalle	Twyman Appleby
Lower Delta	Stacey Allee
Madison	Darrell Ellerbee
Morehouse	Antwain Downs
Natchitoches	James Wagley
New River	LeRoy Laiche
Northeast	Edward A Peters
Plaquemines	Earl Armstrong
Rapides	Edwin Lashney III
Red River	Billy Rogers Shaw
Sabine	Thomas Christian Pearce
Saline	Richard Noles
St. Landry	Ike Boudreaux
St. Martin	VACANT
St. Mary	Ricky P. Bourque
Tangipahoa St. Helena	Henry Schumcher
Tensas Concordia	Jon Hardwick
Upper Delta	Donald Schexnayder
Vermilion	Sherrill Sagrera
West Carroll	Sam Ross
*New District Board Members	

Chairman Skains asked for any comments from the public or Commission members regarding the list of nominees as duly elected supervisors and there were none. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to duly elect the qualified supervisors.

Motion: Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to declare the above list of unopposed candidates duly elected district supervisors to a three year term effective July 1, 2019 and will expire on June 30, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Dr. Girouard said that we must review the election rules and make some updates to them. Mr. Spicer said the Commission members should make a list of suggested updates to the election rules and discuss them at the next meeting. Chairman Skains said we will form an election adhoc committee that will include Dr. Ernest Girouard as chairman, Mr. David Daigle, Mr. Ed Yerger and Mr. Brad Spicer.

NEW BUSINESS

NRCS State Conservationist Report

Chairman Skains said they would now take up New Business and asked NRCS Asst. State Conservationist of Programs, Mr. Scott Edwards to give the NRCS report. He said in the past, NRCS and Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Louisiana formalized our shared unfunded Agreement cooperative and Operational Agreement through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each SWCD.

He said for Louisiana, the previous MOU's have each expired and NRCS had been instructed to hold for further guidance before entering into new MOU's. He said new national guidance was recently released, along with agreement templates, clarifying the purpose and authorities of future operational agreements between NRCS and SWCD's. Mr. Edwards said specifically, for Louisiana, there will be two agreement types needed to continue the cooperative partnerships and shared resources between NRCS and SWCD's:

1. MOU: A MOU between NRCS and each SWCD will be used to document the parties' cooperative relationship. The MOU will include standard language to document the relationship of the parties, their shared objectives, and the mutual understandings. Note: The MOU may not be used to transfer "things of value" from one party to another (i.e. incidental office space, vehicle use, or IT equipment). The new MOU will take effect upon the signature of the Parties and shall remain in effect until mutually modified or terminated.
2. Unfunded Cooperative Agreement: An Unfunded Cooperative Agreement between NRCS and each SWCD will be used to document authority and agreement for the exchange of resources (things of value), including incidental office space, vehicle use, and IT equipment, without obligation of funds. Unfunded Cooperative Agreements may have a period of performance for up to 5 years.

Mr. Edwards said the national templates that have been provided for the MOU and the Unfunded Cooperative agreement have been developed and approved by the Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Grants and Agreements Division. He said it will be critical, and strongly recommended, for NRCS and SWCD's to use the "template" language without edit. He said any changes to the template language that has not been previously approved will have to go through review by the FPAC Grants and Agreements Division (GAD) and will cause extensive delays.

Mr. Edwards said in the next few weeks, NRCS and OSWC will send out a joint email to each SWCD Board Member and NRCS District Conservationist in Louisiana explaining the new agreements, along with sample agreement templates. He said NRCS will begin populating the agreement templates for each SWCD and request review approval from FPAC Grants and Agreements Division to execute signatures. He said once approved by GAD, NRCS will send the MOU and Unfunded Cooperative Agreement documents to the SWCD Board Chairmen for signatures and have them to return them to NRCS State Conservationist. He said once signed by the NRCS State Conservationist, a fully executed copy will be sent to the SWCD for their file.

Mr. Edwards said May 10th was the cut off for CSP applications in Louisiana and we received 329 applications. He said they are currently ranking applications and will have decisions in the first week of June. He said Louisiana received nine proposals for partner agreements. He said NRCS is in the process of evaluating the proposals and will be working with selected partners to develop the agreements. Mr. Edwards said Louisiana has received an ACEP-WRE allocation for FY 2019 and anticipates enrollment of 35 new easements on over 7,000 acres. He said restoration activities continue on previously enrolled easements as well as enhancements on existing WRP and WRE easements, however high river stages and backwater flooding has caused some delays.

Mr. Edwards said three DC positions were recently advertised and selections have been made for Bastrop, Ville Platte, and Thibodaux. He said NRCS will continue to prioritize vacancy fillings and work toward filling additional field level and state support positions. Mr. Edwards said the May edition of the Louisiana Conservation Update features the benefits of Soil Health. He said Chris Coreil, NRCS State Agronomist,

writes about the significance of a “no-till” and cover crop combined system, and how soil health is fundamental to a productive and ultimately, cost effective crop production. He said the 2018 Farm Bill strongly supports programs that ensure financial assistance for improved soil health, water and air quality and other natural resource benefits. He said Marty Earnest of Caldwell Parish, featured this month in the *Conservation Update*, is a soybean and corn farmer who has embraced the principals of soil health and put them into practice on his land with amazing results.

Mr. Edwards concluded his report and Chairman Skains thanked him.

Correspondence

Chairman Skains said the first correspondence item is a contract from the Bogue-Chitto Pearl River SWCD requesting approval from the Commission to allow them to enter into a contract with Minda B. Rayborn, CPA to conduct the district’s FYE June 30, 2019 audit at the cost of \$1,300. Mr. Spicer said that he noticed a date error in the “Engagement Completion” section of the contract. He said the Commission can approve the contract contingent on revision. 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 Bogue-Chitto Pearl River SWCD entering into a contract with the Minda B. Rayborn, CPA to conduct the district’s FYE June 30, 2019 audit at the cost of \$1,300 contingent on revision of the date error.

Motion: Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to approve the Bogue-Chitto/Pearl River SWCD entering into a contract with the Minda B. Rayborn, CPA to conduct the district’s FYE June 30, 2019 audit at the cost of \$1,300 contingent on revision of the date error. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next few correspondences are out of state travel requests from Crescent SWCD; Mr. Henry George Schlorff and Mr. Irvin Dares, Vermillion SWCD; Dr. Ernest Girouard, and Sabine SWCD; Mr. John Alan Williams 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 Crescent SWCD; Mr. Henry George Schlorff and Mr. Irvin Dares, Vermillion SWCD; Dr. Ernest Girouard, and Sabine SWCD; Mr. John Alan Williams.

Motion: Mr. John Compton made a motion to approve the out of state requests for Crescent SWCD; Mr. Henry George Schlorff and Mr. Irvin Dares, Vermillion SWCD; Dr. Ernest Girouard, and Sabine SWCD; Mr. John Alan Williams 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 correspondence is an article in the *Louisiana Wildlife Federation* naming their *2018 Conservationists of the year*. He asked Mr. Spicer did he have comments on this article. Mr. Spicer said he wanted to congratulate two of our district supervisors: Mr. Sherrill Sagrera of Vermillion SWCD and Mr. Thomas Christian Pearce of Sabine SWCD. He said Mr. Sagrera won Volunteer Conservationist of the Year for his contributions to coastal restoration planning in southwest Louisiana and his work as a conservation advocate for more than twenty years. He said Mr. Thomas Christian Pearce from Sabine SWCD was named Conservation Educator of the Year for his wildlife education career and his work at the LSU AgCenter. Chairman Skains said congratulations to these two awardees and that it is great to see our board supervisors receiving recognition and awards.

Chairman Skains said the next article is *Farmers Using More Conservation Techniques despite Lower Enrollment in Federal Programs*. He said the article discusses the recently released 2017 Census of Agriculture data and the effects of technology on agriculture in the last ten years that has increased the farmers’ implementation of conservation measures without receiving any financial assistance.

Chairman Skains said the next article is titled: *Strain: Prepare Livestock for Possible Opening of Morganza Spillway*. He asked Mr. Spicer did he have any comments on this. He said this was sent out to LDAF

employees and the farming community as a precaution to livestock and crop farmers in the Morganza Floodway to move livestock and equipment out of the Spillway before they open the structure.

Supervisor Resignations/Reappointments/Appointments

Chairman Skains said they would now take up resignations, reappointments, and appointments of supervisors.

Chairman Skains said there are three resignations this month: Tangipahoa-St Helena SWCD, Ms. Carolyn Falgout, elected position; effective May 9, 2019 and Lower Delta SWCD, Mr. Chris Mattingly, elected position; effective May 4, 2019, and St. Mary SWCD, Mr. Edward Peyton, elected position.

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 Tangipahoa-St Helena SWCD, Ms. Carolyn Falgout, elected position; effective May 9, 2019 and Lower Delta SWCD, Mr. Chris Mattingly, elected position; and St. Mary SWCD, Mr. Edward Peyton, elected position effective May 23, 2019.

Motion: Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to accept the resignations Tangipahoa-St Helena SWCD, Ms. Carolyn Falgout, elected position; effective May 9, 2019 and Lower Delta SWCD, Mr. Chris Mattingly, elected position; and St. Mary SWCD, Mr. Edward Peyton, elected position effective May 23, 2019. The motion was seconded by Dr. Ernest Girouard and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said there are five reappointments:

Acadia SWCD, Mr. Earl Garber, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term will began June 12, 2019 and end June 12, 2022.

Crescent SWCD, Dr. Thomas Vitrano, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term will begin June 21, 2019 and end June 21, 2022.

Gulf Coast SWCD, Mr. Bruce Watts, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term will begin June 11, 2019 and end June 11, 2022.

Natchitoches SWCD, Mr. Sidney B. Evans III, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term will begin June 26, 2019 and end June 26, 2022.

St. Mary SWCD, Ms. Chandra Chauvin, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term will begin June 25, 2019 and end June 25, 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 these reappointments.

Motion: Dr. Ernest Girouard made a motion to approve the reappointments of Acadia SWCD, Mr. Earl Garber, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term will began June 12, 2019 and end June 12, 2022; Crescent SWCD, Dr. Thomas Vitrano, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Tem will begin June 21, 2019 and end June 21, 2022; Gulf Coast SWCD, Mr. Bruce Watts, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term will begin June 11, 2019 and end June 11, 2022; Natchitoches SWCD, Mr. Sidney B. Evans III, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term will begin June 26, 2019 and end June 26, 2022; and St. Mary SWCD, Ms. Chandra Chauvin, reappointed to fill her appointed position. Term will begin June 25, 2019 and end June 25, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Yerger and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said there is one appointment:

Lower Delta SWCD is requesting Mr. Chris Mattingly be appointed to fill the appointed position formerly held by Mr. Eugene Woods. Term will begin May 4, 2019 and will expire May 4, 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 Lower Delta SWCD's appointment.

Motion: Dr. Ernest Girouard made motion to approve the appointment of Lower Delta SWCD, Mr. Chris Mattingly to the appointed position formerly held by Mr. Eugene Woods. Term will begin May 4, 2019 and will expire May 4, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Skains said they would now take up Other Business. He said we have a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement from Vermillion SWCD. He asked Dr. Ernest Girouard if he had any comments on this. Dr. Ernest said that the agreement is between Vermillion SWCD and the LSU AgCenter, Vermillion Parish 4-H. He said the agreement would allow Vermillion SWCD to retain ownership of the Conservation Classroom and to be used by LSU and the district. He said the district would provide annual liability insurance and LSU would be responsible for maintaining the classroom in its current condition. Dr. Girouard said the agreement will be automatically renewed each year unless terminated by either party in writing. He said this is a great opportunity for Vermillion SWCD and LSU and they requested the Commission approve the agreement. Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or the Commission members and there were none. Chairman Skains called for a motion to approve the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between Vermillion SWCD and The LSU AgCenter, Vermillion Parish 4-H.

Motion: Mr. David Daigle made a motion to approve the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the Vermillion SWCD and the LSU AgCenter, Vermillion Parish 4-H. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Yerger and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains asked Dr. Brian Leblanc if he had a report from the LSU AgCenter. Dr. Leblanc said that he wanted to remind the Commission of three important dates.

- June 25-26, 2019- Master Farmer Rice Field Day- Crowley, LA
- June 27, 2019- 2nd Annual Agricultural Field Day expo at Dean Lee Research Station-Alexandria, LA
- July 17, 2019- Sugarcane Field Day, Sugar Research Station-St. Gabriel, LA

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Skains said the next State Commission Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 25, 2019 at 1:15 P.M. in the Veterans Auditorium, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806.

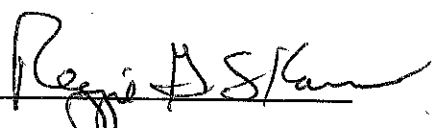
PUBLIC COMMENTS

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. Ed Yerger made a motion to adjourn at 2:45 P.M. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

sign here /s/ Reggie Skains 

Reggie Skains, Chairman State Soil and Water Conservation Commission