

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

July 30, 2019  
1:15 PM

VETERAN'S AUDITORIUM  
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. John Compton- Secretary/Treasurer  
Mr. Ed Yerger  
Dr. Tommy Vitrano  
Mr. David Daigle- LACD President  
Dr. Rogers Leonard, LSU AgCenter\_

Members absent:

Mr. Larry Sayes  
  
Southern University Agricultural Center  
Representative

A quorum was present.

Others Present:

Mr. Tim Landreneau, Acting NRCS State Conservationist  
Mr. Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC  
Mr. Brad Spicer, LDAF-OSWC/Executive Director SSWCC  
Ms. LaClasha "Clay" Alexander, LDAF-OSWC  
Ms. Wendy Gibson, LDAF-OSWC  
Mr. Theron Phillips, LDAF-OSWC

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or Commission members about the June 25, 2019 State Soil and Water Conservation Commission minutes and there were none. Chairman Skains called for a motion to approve the June 25, 2019 State Commission Meeting minutes.

**Motion:** Dr. Ernest Girouard made a motion to approve June 25, 2019 State Soil and Water Conservation 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 has approximately \$310,000 balance in the Farm Bill Agreement that ends September 30, 2019. He said the districts are well on the way to earning all the remaining funds. Mr. Landreneau said that he spoke with Mr. Scott Edwards last week about the 2020 budget and he said they hope to add approximately \$700,000 to the Farm Bill agreement. He said they do plan to do a separate agreement for the Targeted Watershed technicians that are currently funded under the Farm Bill agreement. He said they are also revising the agreements for the Program Support Specialists (PSS).

### **District Funding**

Chairman Skains said the next item on the agenda is *District Funding*. He asked Mr. Spicer if he had an update on district allocations. Mr. Spicer said he received the state funding figures for the districts for FY 19-20 this morning. He said the districts are funded at \$1,685,000 which is approximately \$5,000 less than FY 18-19. He said the districts' state fund figures will be sent out to the districts ASAP and pending the Commission's approval of the district allocation formula. He said this is the same formula that has been used in previous years. Chairman Skains asked for a motion to approve the proposed district allocation formula for state funds for FY 19-20.

**Motion:** Mr. David Daigle made a motion to approve current district allocation to allocate state general funds to the districts for FY 19-20. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Yerger and passed unanimously.

### **NACD South Central Region Meeting/NACD Summer Meeting**

Chairman Skains said the next item on the agenda is *NACD South Central Region Meeting/NACD Summer Meeting*. He asked Mr. Daigle and Mr. Spicer if they had any comments on this. Mr. Daigle said they held the NACD South Central Region Meeting in Oklahoma last week and the meeting was a huge success. He said it was great to have the chance to review Oklahoma's great conservation programs. He said they also got the chance to visit with Mr. Kevin Norton. He said on one of the field tours, they had the opportunity to visit a watershed rehabilitation project. Mr. Daigle said they also visited a recent prescribed burn site where one of Oklahoma's many prescribed burn specialist made a presentation. He said the Chickasaw Indian Tribe also gave a tour and presentation of their cultural center, and they served some great food. He said they were also able to meet the governor and participate in a listening session given by Mr. Keith Owens and Mr. Tim Palmer. Mr. Daigle said one of the key discussion points was NACD's partnership with the Noble Research Institute. He said the partnership presentation included working on payment for ecological services, water quality credits, carbon credits, and resource diversity credits. He said Mr. Palmer made the announcement that the 2021 NACD South Central Region Meeting will be the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and it will be held in New Orleans. He said they had an excellent presentation on pollinators by Mr. Jimmy Emmons, retired Oklahoma Association president, who teaches and practices soil health. Mr. Daigle said this was a great meeting and he came away with some great ideas to incorporate into Louisiana's conservation program.

Dr. Girouard said it was also announced the 2020 NACD South Central meeting would be in Arkansas. He said they are planning to have just as many field tours as this years' meeting in Oklahoma.

Mr. Spicer said he wanted to also mention the 2019 Summer Conservation Forum & Tour taking place in Santé Fe, New Mexico on August 2-6, 2019. He said we received one travel request from St. Martin SWCD; Mr. John Girard. Chairman Skains called for a motion to approve the out of state travel request.

**Motion:** Mr. John Compton made a motion to approve the out of state travel for St. Martin SWCD, Mr. John Girard to attend to the 2019 Summer Conservation Forum & Tour in Santé Fe, New Mexico on August 2-6, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Yerger and passed unanimously.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **NRCS State Conservationist Report**

Chairman Skains said they would now take up New Business and asked NRCS Acting Asst. State Conservationist, Mr. Tim Landreneau to give the NRCS report. Mr. Landreneau said NRCS is currently working on closing out the FY. He said the field offices are working to finish EQIP, CSP, and other programs before September 30<sup>th</sup>. He said Louisiana EQIP's allocation is \$27.8 million of which 57% has been obligated with 457 contracts on 83,000 acres and 23% has been approved and they are waiting to finalize them with signatures. He said this puts EQIP at 80% with another 20% remaining to complete. He said they want to complete EQIP so they can focus on CSP. He said CSP received an initial allocation of \$7.6 million in General CSP funds and \$5.8 million for the Grassland Conservation Initiative program which was a special initiative added to this years' Farm Bill. Mr. Landreneau said the CSP funds are a little less than in the past due to the New Grassland Conservation Initiative. He said once they see the exact figures from the Grassland Conservation Initiative he believes more funds will be allocated to CSP.

Mr. Landreneau said Tropical Storm Berry swept through Louisiana causing a lot of crop damage across the state. He said NRCS will be available to provide technical assistance and also coordinate with FSA on potential Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) needs. He said NRCS is also assessing the need to request special EQIP disaster recovery funds as well. He said there have not been any requests for Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) assistance to date. Mr. Landreneau said NRCS continues to communicate with local sponsors as well as DOTD on potential need of EWP Assistance.

Mr. Landreneau said they are working on EWP projects not related to Tropical Storm Berry. He said there are repair projects going on in Livingston Parish as well as two Flood Plain Easement projects in Pointe Coupee Parish and another in the Gonzales area. He said there are also Watershed planning projects going on in Upper Delta SWCD and Grant SWCD.

Mr. Landreneau said many individuals have had the opportunity to work with Mr. Chris Coreil who is our Conservation Agronomist in Alexandria's State Office. He said Mr. Coreil has been tentatively selected for a new position as the Regional Erosion Agronomist at the Central National Technical Center in Fort Worth, TX. He said they will be advertising for the position in hopes to feel the shoes of Mr. Coreil. He said they recently filled a Soil Conservation Technician position in Oak Grove. Mr. Landreneau said they plan to advertise a technician position in Upper Delta SWCD and they anticipate 4 vacant positions being advertised in September.

Mr. Landreneau said in this month's edition of *The Conservation Update* features military veteran, Mr. Freddie and wife Patti Manes of Hornbeck, LA. He said after Mr. Manes retired from a career with the U.S. Marine corps, he and Mrs. Manes pursued their ambitions to take up gardening, which has grown into a small agriculture operation providing fresh vegetables to local markets. He said while working with NRCS and the Calcasieu SWCD the Mames' have utilized technical and financial assistance programs to expand and improve efficiency of their operation through the use of conservation practices and seasonal tunnels.

Mr. Landreneau said that concluded his report and Chairman Skains thanked him.

### **Supervisor Election Results/Resignations/Reappointments/Appointments**

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

Chairman Skains said there are seven resignations this month: Allen SWCD, Mr. William Eric Unkel, elected position; effective July 27 2019, Capital SWCD, Mr. John Compton, appointed position effective July 31, 2019, Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. Patrick Klein, elected position; effective July 16, 2019, Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. Henry Schumacher, elected position; effective July 16, 2019, Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. Larry McDaniel, appointed position; effective July 16, 2019, Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. W.A. Potts, elected position; effective July 16, 2019, and Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. Michael Smith, elected position; effective July 16, 2019.

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 Allen SWCD, Mr. William Eric Unkel, elected position; effective July 27 2019, Capital SWCD, Mr. John Compton, appointed position effective July 31, 2019, Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. Patrick Klein, elected position; effective July 16, 2019, Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. Henry Schumacher, elected position; effective July 16, 2019, Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. Larry McDaniel, appointed position; effective July 16, 2019, Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. W.A. Potts, elected position; effective July 16, 2019, and Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. Michael Smith, elected position; effective July 16, 2019.

**Motion:** Mr. David Daigle made a motion to accept the resignations of Allen SWCD, Mr. William Eric Unkel, elected position; effective July 27 2019, Capital SWCD, Mr. John Compton, appointed position, effective July 31, 2019, Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. Patrick Klein, elected position; effective July 16, 2019, Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. Henry Schumacher, elected position; effective July 16, 2019, Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. Larry McDaniel, appointed position; effective July 16, 2019, Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. W.A. Potts, elected position; effective July 16, 2019, and Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD, Mr. Michael Smith, elected position; effective July 16, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Yerger and passed unanimously.

Dr. Girouard said that Mr. Compton has been a true leader for Agriculture and Forestry and we are very thankful for his contribution. He said we all understand and respect his wishes to resign but it is not easy to accept.

Mr. Spicer said Mr. John Compton started serving on the State Soil and Water Conservation Committee in 1980 while Mr. Bob Odom was serving as the Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry. Mr. Spicer said after Mr. Compton retired from LDAF, he became a member of the Capital SWCD board and was elected to serve as the Area representative after Mr. Lee Allee of Lower Delta SWCD resigned from the Commission. Mr. Spicer said he has worked with Mr. Compton since 1980 in his position as LDAF Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry and on the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

Chairman Skains said congratulations to Mr. Compton. He said he has worked with Mr. Compton for 25 years and he has been a perfect gentleman to work with. He said he was very instrumental to a lot of the projects that have taken place over the years. He said he could not have asked for a better guy to work with over the years.

Chairman Skains called for a motion to send Mr. Compton a thank you letter on behalf of the Commission for his many years of service to the Commission.

**Motion:** Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to send Mr. Compton a thank you letter on behalf of the Commission for his many years of service to the Commission. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said there is one reappointment:

Calcasieu SWCD, Mr. Jacob Marceaux, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term will began July 27, 2019 and end July 27, 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 this reappointment.

**Motion:** Dr. Ernest Girouard made a motion to approve the reappointment of Calcasieu SWCD, Mr. Jacob Marceaux, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term will begin July 27, 2019 and end July 27, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said there are six appointments and the first appointment request is from Allen SWCD requesting Mr. Charles Istre to fill the appointed position formerly held by Mr. Eric Unkel. Term to begin July 30, 2019 and expire July 27, 2022. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve this appointment.

**Motion:** Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to approve the appointment from Allen SWCD requesting Mr. Charles Istre to fill the appointed position formerly held by Mr. Eric Unkel. Term will begin July 30, 2019 and expire July 27, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dave Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next appointment request is from Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD requesting Mr. Patrick Klein to fill the appointed position formerly held by Mr. W.A. Potts. Term to begin July 30, 2019 and expire May 25, 2020. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve this appointment.

**Motion:** Mr. David Daigle made a motion to approve the appointment from Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD requesting Mr. Patrick Klein to fill the appointed position formerly held by Mr. W.A. Potts. Term to begin July 30, 2019 and expire May 25, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. John Compton and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next appointment request is from Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD requesting Mr. Hank Schumacher to fill the appointed position formerly held by Mr. Larry McDaniel. Term to begin July 30, 2019 and expire May 24, 2021. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve this appointment.

**Motion:** Dr. Ernest Girouard made a motion to approve the appointment from Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD requesting Patrick Klein to fill the appointed position formerly held by Mr. Larry McDaniel. Term to begin July 30, 2019 and expire May 25, 2021. The motion was seconded by Mr. John Compton and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next appointment request is from Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD requesting Ms. Carolyn Falgout to fill the elected position formerly held by Mr. Michael Smith. Term to begin July 30, 2019 and expire June 30, 2021. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve this appointment.

**Motion:** Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to approve the appointment from Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD requesting Ms. Carolyn Falgout to fill the elected position formerly held by Mr. Michael Smith. Term to begin July 30, 2019 and expire June 30, 2021. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next appointment request is from Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD requesting Mr. Kent Blades to fill the elected position formerly held by Mr. Patrick Klein. Term to begin July 30, 2019 and expire June 30, 2020. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve this appointment.

**Motion:** Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to approve the appointment from Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD requesting Mr. Kent Blades to fill the elected position formerly held by Mr. Patrick Klein. Term to begin July 30, 2019 and expire June 30, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next appointment request is from Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD requesting Mr. Hubert Yarborough to fill the elected position formerly held by Mr. Hank Schumacher. Term to begin July 30, 2019 and expire June 30, 2022. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve this appointment.

**Motion:** Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to approve the appointment from Tangipahoa-St. Helena SWCD requesting Mr. Kent Blades to fill the elected position formerly held by Mr. Patrick Klein. Term to begin July 30, 2019 and expire June 30, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

#### Correspondence

Chairman Skains said the first item is an article titled *Louisiana Districts Take the Lead in Longleaf Pine Pastureland Efforts*. He asked Mr. Breaux if he had any comments. Mr. Breaux said this was sent out national through the Conservation Clips. He said this article was the first one on this issue. He said it is great to see Mr. Daigle being a leader in Conservation. He said the article mentions that parts of it being excerpts of another article

that was written. Mr. Daigle said the article take excerpts from another article that he partly wrote part of in the *Longleaf Leader*. He said the one

Chairman Skains said the next article covers *LSU AgCenter receiving \$1.4 million from Patrick F. Taylor Foundation for nutrient runoff research*. He asked Dr. Leonard if he had any comments on this. Dr. Leonard said he mentioned this to us at the last Commission meeting and that LSU was very fortunate to be given this opportunity. He said they are moving forward with two model farms, one in north Louisiana and one in south Louisiana. He said they have already begun planning for field days at the two farms. Dr. Leonard said the North Louisiana model farm is the Hardwick Planting Company in Milton, LA. He said Dr. Jay Hardwick, member of the Tensas-Concordia SWCD board, with his sons operates this farm and they plan to assist the AgCenter. Dr. Leonard said the one in South Louisiana is the Keith Ducote Farm. He said Mr. Ducote has been working with the AgCenter for several years and has been one of Louisiana's primary sugarcane farm sites to visit. Dr. Leonard said the AgCenter has been working at Mr. Ducote's farm and hopes to expand training throughout the state and also plans to invite representatives from other states to participate in the program.

Chairman Skains said the next article is *With Help From TA Grants, Louisiana Districts Expand Irrigation Monitoring*. He asked Mr. Breaux if he had any comments on this. Mr. Breaux said two districts, Morehouse SWCD and Acadia SWCD, have received technical assistance (TA) grants for 2018 receiving two technicians each. He said Acadia SWCD shares one of their NACD technicians with St. Landry SWCD. He said these funds originated with NRCS to help NACD carryout priority conservation activities. He said there are plans for these grants to be renewed in 2019. Mr. Breaux said he believes NACD wants to get more reporting details from the states level. He said Mr. Keith Owens, NACD South Central Representative, and some of his aids will make a trip to Louisiana soon to meet with a few districts and their technicians.

Mr. Landreneau said there was a little bit of confusing with districts differentiating how to use the technical and CSP coding. He said they are working to clarify it and this is a good opportunity for districts. He said the TA grants can be used by districts wanting to add additional members.

Chairman Skains said the next item is the new *Louisiana State Employees FY 2019-2020 Pocket Guide to Travel Regulations*. He asked Mr. Spicer did he have any comments on this. Mr. Spicer said this is the new guide that gives all the new travel reimbursement rates. He said he wanted the Commission and SWCD board members to know their mileage rate had increased from 0.54 cents to 0.58 cents for this FY.

Chairman Skains said the next item is *Soil Web App 2.0 for Android and IOS*. He asked Mr. Spicer did he have any comments on this article. He said this is a very useful app that brings soil survey information to your cell phones. He said it features soil profile sketches, soil taxonomy, soil properties, depth soil profiles, land classification ratings, hydraulic and erosion ratings, forest productivity, and soil suitability ratings. He said the app was developed by NRCS Soil Scientist, Dylan Beaudette.

Chairman Skains said the next article is *Soil Health Champions Network*. He asked Mr. Spicer did he have any comments on this article. Mr. Spicer said this is an effort to increase the adoption of soil health systems by farmers and other landowners nationwide. He said the network is made up of more than 240 farmers, ranchers, and woodland owners from across the nation who practice good soil health management on their operations and they also promote the use of soil health management systems in their communities.

Chairman Skains said the last article is *The Connection Between Flooding and Farming Methods*. He said this article also deals with soil health. Mr. Spicer said healthy soils can hold more water, meaning they are less likely to flood and washed away during wet years and it will hold more water during the drought years and may reduce the need to irrigate.

#### Feral Swine Reduction Proposal

Chairman Skains said the next item on the agenda is *Feral Swine Reduction Proposal*. He asked Mr. Breaux to comment on this. Mr. Breaux said he will soon submit a proposal in response to the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot program request for application (RFA). He said he is submitting this proposal on behalf of the

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#### Feral Swine Reduction Proposal

Chairman Skains said the next item on the agenda is *Feral Swine Reduction Proposal*. He asked Mr. Breaux to comment on this. Mr. Breaux said he will soon submit a proposal in response to the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot program request for application (RFA). He said he is submitting this proposal on behalf of the SWCD's priority areas. He said the districts in Priority area #1 include: Red River SWCD, Natchitoches SWCD, Dugdemona SWCD, Grant SWCD, Rapides SWCD. He said priority area #2 includes: Madison SWCD and Tensas-Concordia SWCD and priority area #3 includes Gulf Coast SWCD. He said is proposal including hiring four technicians among these priority areas.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Skains said they would now take up Other Business. He asked Dr. Rogers Leonard did he have any comments. Dr. Leonard said the AgCenter just finished a rolling crops tour last week. He said this is usually an opportunity to engage with other agencies such as Agriculture Forestry, NRCS, FSA, and other groups to share resources. He said this gives AgCenter an opportunity to speak with offices and help direct farmers to the person that can assist them.

Dr. Leonard said there is a poultry demonstration scheduled for September 26<sup>th</sup> at the LSU AgCenter Hill Farm Research Station. He said this reminded him that the AgCenter has the funding to build a poultry liter farm which is one of the issues near the Hill Farm Research Station in Homer, LA. He said he is pleased that this is happening and that it has been a long time coming. He said the LSU AgCenter Sweet Potato Field Day is scheduled for August 22<sup>nd</sup> at Black Gold Farms in Delhi, LA.

#### NEXT MEETING

Chairman Skains said the next State Commission Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 27, 2019 at 1:15 P.M. in the Veterans Auditorium, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

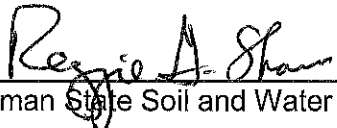
Chairman Skains asked if there were any other comments from the public or Commission members and there were none.

#### 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. John Compton made a motion to adjourn at 2:24 P.M. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

/s/ Reggie Skains



Reggie Skains, Chairman State Soil and Water Conservation Commission