

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

April 17, 2018  
12:45PM

LSU AG CENTER BOTANICAL GARDENS  
4560 ESSEN LANE  
BATON ROUGE, LA 70809

PROCEEDINGS/MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Skains called the regular monthly Commission Meeting to order at 12:45 P.M.

**ROLL CALL**

The roll was called by Mr. Joey Breaux.

Members and Alternate Members present: Mr. Reggie Skains; Chairman; Dr. Ernest Girouard, Vice Chairman; Mr. Randell Fletcher, Mr. David Daigle, LACD President; Mr. John Compton, Secretary/Treasurer and Mr. Chris Carter.

Members absent: Dr. Rogers Leonard, LSU AgCenter; Mr. Ed Yerger, and Southern University Agricultural Center Representative.

A quorum was present.

Others Present: Mr. Brad Spicer, LDAF-OSWC/Executive Director SSWCC; Mr. Claude Ross, Acting NRCS State Conservationist USDA-NRCS; Dr. Brian Leblanc, LSU AgCenter; Mr. Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC, and Mr. Ray Reich, LDAF-OSWC.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Chairman Skains asked for any comments from the public or Commission members about the March 27, 2018 State Commission minutes. Chairman Skains called for a motion to approve the March 27, 2018 State Commission Meeting minutes.

**Motion:** Mr. Fletcher made a motion to approve the March 27, 2018 State Commission Meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Daigle 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 said that at the last meeting, he mentioned that some of the districts were behind in earning their farm bill funds. He said that as of March, they have earned 45% of the Farm Bill funds. He said that this is a significant improvement and that they will continue to work with the districts to ensure they are accurately logging their work hours to the proper programs. Mr. Spicer asked if there were any questions and there were none.

### Legislative Regular Session/State Funding

Mr. Spicer said that he continues to follow the twenty plus Bills that deal with state water use and management and with coastal zone management. Dr. Girouard said that his district does have some concern regarding HB 391 which provides for public access to the navigable waters of the state flowing through private property. He said that he doesn't think that others have considered what damage this could cause to conservation practices implemented by landowners. He said that there are lobbyists supporting both sides of this issue. He said that we must contact our legislators as much as possible. He said that once we establish relationships with them that we would get quicker responses from them. Mr. Spicer said that he has had discussion with several individuals regarding HB 391 and that it is strongly supported by outdoor sportsmen of the state, but it also has considerable opposition.

### District Supervisor Election-June 9, 2018

Mr. Spicer said that he wanted to remind everyone that the supervisor nominating period ends on April 30<sup>th</sup>. He said that the districts needed to send their supervisor's original petitions to the OSWC. He said if a district has only one candidate, then there will be no need for an election. He said that we are pressing to meet the requirement that every district have at least one nomination petition submitted by April 30, 2018.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### NRCS State Conservationist Report

Chairman Skains said they would now take up New Business and asked Acting State Conservationist, Mr. Claude Ross to give the NRCS report. Mr. Ross said that he thanks the Commission again for giving him this opportunity. He said that he has not received any recent updates on Farm Bill from Mr. Norton. He said that he plans to keep us updated as information becomes available. He said that he wants to stress that all districts be diligent with submitting farm bill activities every month. Mr. Ross said the report given by Mr. Spicer earlier shows great improvement and we want to keep the momentum going.

Mr. Ross said that he would like the Commission to turn their attention to the *Conservation Update*. He said that the spotlight article is on Mr. Al Lanie who is a sugarcane farmer. He said that Mr. Lanie currently has acreage in Lafayette, St. Mary, and Vermillion parishes. He said that the article talks about how Mr. Lanie got some advice from his local soil and water conservation office that led him to researching ways to improve the soil health on his land.

Mr. Ross said there are a number of upcoming events covering a wide range of topics that are likely of interest to the Commission. He said they are:

- May 2, 2018- High Tunnel Workshop
- May 9-11, 2018- Louisiana GLC! Louisiana Farms Bus Tour
- May 17-19, 2018- Back to your Roots
- May 18, 2018- Timber Marketing Workshop
- May 22, 2018- LSU AgCenter Market Ready Workshop- Oak Grove
- May 24, 2018- LSU AgCenter Market Ready Workshop- Shreveport
- May 30- June 1, 2018- State of the Coast Conference
- June 4-6, 2018- 89<sup>th</sup> Louisiana FFA Association and Convention and Expo
- June 12, 2018- LSU AgCenter Market Ready Workshop- Alexandria
- June 13, 2018- LSU AgCenter Market Ready Workshop- Lafayette
- June 21-24, 2018- LSU Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention

Mr. Ross said if there are no questions or comments that concluded his report.

### Correspondence

Chairman Skains said the first article is "NASDA's 2018 Farm, Bill Analysis." Mr. Spicer said that this was an email he received from NASDA calling for congress through the Farm Bill to improve investments in American

agriculture by providing producers the tools they need to succeed and that includes strong and adequate programs for conservation and agriculture production.

Chairman Skains said the next article is "State Ag Officials Encouraged by First Steps on Farm Bill". Mr. Spicer said that the article supports efforts to make sure that Congress knows that a fully funded Farm Bill is more important than ever before for agriculture producers, the rural economy, and communities of every size. He said that NASDA's Farm Bill priorities include: Conservation, Trade Promotion, Specialty Crops, Invasive Species, Animal Diseases, Research, and Food Safety.

Chairman Skains said the next article is "Opinion: CRP: Ripe For Reform". Mr. Spicer said that this article by ex-NRCS chief, Bruce Knight, discusses ideas of what could happen to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in the new Farm Bill. He said the House will likely combine CSP and EQUIP programs and possibly cap CRP rental rates. Mr. Spicer said that this has already been discussed by the House Ag Committee.

Chairman Skains said the next article is "Will The New Farm Bill Be Terrible For Conservation: 6 Things to Know" which includes funding, conservation efforts in the Northwest, the controversies surrounding some of the programs and possible cuts in program funding.

Chairman Skains said the next item is a flyer is for the 2018 Wheat and Oat Field Day. He said that this event is scheduled Wednesday April 18, 2018 at the LSU AgCenter Tom H. Scott Research, Extension, and Education Center in Winnsboro, LA. He said that there will be some great topics discussed.

Chairman Skains said the next article is "True to our Roots: NRCS and Soil Conservation" that discusses the past, present and future of NRCS and soil conservation.

Chairman Skains said that the next article is "A Grass-Roots Movement For Healthy Soil Spreads Among Farmers". Mr. Spicer said that this article covers the thoughts of a Pleasant Dale, Nebraska farmer named Del Fickle. He said that Mr. Fickle talks about the different way he farms making sure protecting the soil is top priority. He said Mr. Fickle also believes that soil health practices are implemented throughout the farming community as a result of seeing the benefits their neighbors are having from incorporating soil health practices into their farming operation.

Chairman Skains said the next article is "Soil Health Practices for Mitigating Natural Disasters". He said that the article discusses the importance of investing in mitigation activities before the next disaster so that we can reduce the impacts with advanced planning.

Chairman Skains said the last article is "'Root' of the problem: Soil structure called vital to clean water". Mr. Spicer said Mr. James Hoorman, Soil Specialist, discusses the benefits of good soil particle structure including improving water quality. He said good soil structure reduces runoff by increasing water infiltration and water holding capacity that results in less of the applied nutrients leaving fields in runoff.

#### Supervisor Resignations/ Appointments and Reappointments

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

Chairman Skains said the first letter is from Tensas-Concordia SWCD requesting the State Commission to waive the sixty-six and two-thirds percent meeting attendance requirement for Mr. Andy Anders, whose appointed term expires April 24, 2018. He said that Mr. Anders has attended less than the sixty-six and two-thirds percent of the board meetings during his term due to his responsibilities as a State Representative, farmer, and local businessman. He said Mr. Anders is a very good board member and attends as many board meetings as possible and works with the district outside of the regular board meetings. Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or Commission members and there were none; he asked for a motion to approve the waiver request.

**Motion:** Dr. Girouard made a motion to waive the attendance requirements for Mr. Andy Anders, appointed position, Tensas-Concordia SWCD. The motion was seconded by Mr. David Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next letter is from DeSoto SWCD accepting the resignation of Mr. Jerry Gamble from his elected position. Chairman Skains asked for comments on Mr. Gamble's resignation from the public or Commission members and there were none; he asked for a motion to accept Mr. Gamble's resignation effective April 17, 2018.

**Motion:** Mr. Daigle made a motion to accept Mr. Gamble's resignation from his elected position on the DeSoto SWCD Board effective April 17, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fletcher and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next letter is from D'Arbonne SWCD accepting the resignation of Mr. David Manuel, elected position. Chairman Skains asked for comments on Mr. Manuel's resignation from the public or Commission members and there were none; he asked for a motion to accept Mr. Manuel's resignation effective April 17, 2018.

**Motion:** Mr. Fletcher made a motion to accept Mr. Manuel's resignation from his elected position on the D'Arbonne SWCD Board effective April 17, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Daigle and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the Dugdemona SWCD is requesting Mr. Billy Gaines be reappointed to fill his vacant appointed term. Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or Commission members and there were none; he asked for a motion to approve the reappointment of Mr. Billy Gaines to his appointed position on the Dugdemona SWCD board of supervisors effective March 25, 2018 and expires on March 24, 2021.

**Motion:** Mr. Daigle made a motion to approve the reappointment of Mr. Billy Gaines to his appointed position on the St. Martin SWCD board of supervisors effective March 25, 2018 and expires on March 24, 2021. The motion was seconded Mr. Daigle and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the Boeuf River SWCD is requesting Mr. Dustin Morris be reappointed to fill his vacant appointed term. Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or Commission members and there were none; he asked for a motion to approve the reappointment of Mr. Dustin Morris to his appointed position on the Boeuf River SWCD board of supervisors effective May 1, 2018 and expires on April 30, 2021.

**Motion:** Mr. Compton made a motion to approve the reappointment of Mr. Billy Gaines to his appointed position on the Boeuf River SWCD board of supervisors effective May 1, 2018 and expires on April 30, 2021. The motion was seconded Mr. Daigle and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the Tensas-Concordia SWCD is requesting Mr. Andy Anders be reappointed to fill his vacant appointed term. Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or Commission members and there were none; he asked for a motion to approve the reappointment of Mr. Andy Anders to his appointed position on the Tensas-Concordia SWCD board of supervisors effective April 24, 2018 and expires on April 23, 2021.

**Motion:** Mr. Fletcher made a motion to approve the reappointment of Mr. Andy Anders to his appointed position on the Tensas-Concordia SWCD board of supervisors effective April 24, 2018 and expires on April 23, 2021. The motion was seconded Dr. Girouard and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said D'Arbonne SWCD is requesting Mr. David Manuel be appointed to fill the vacant appointed position formerly held by Mr. Cliff Richardson. Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public

or Commission members and there were none; he asked for a motion to approve the appointment of Mr. David Manuel to the D'Arbonne SWCD board of supervisors effective April 17, 2018 and expires November 18, 2018.

**Motion:** Mr. Daigle made a motion to appoint Mr. David Manuel to fill the vacant appointed position formerly held by Mr. Cliff Richardson. Term to begin April 17, 2018 and will expire November 18, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fletcher and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said D'Arbonne SWCD is requesting Mr. Kenneth Halley be appointed to fill the vacant elected position formerly held by Mr. David Manuel. Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or Commission members and there were none; he asked for a motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Kenneth Halley to the D'Arbonne SWCD board of supervisors effective April 17, 2018 and expires June 30, 2018.

**Motion:** Mr. Daigle made a motion to appoint Mr. David Manuel to fill the vacant appointed position formerly held by Mr. Cliff Richardson. Term to begin April 17, 2018 and will expire November 18, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fletcher and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said Catahoula SWCD is requesting Mr. Christopher Freeman be appointed to fill the vacant elected position formerly held by Mr. Terry Smith. Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or Commission members and there were none; he asked for a motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Christopher Freeman to the Catahoula SWCD board of supervisors effective April 17, 2018 and expires June 30, 2018.

**Motion:** Mr. Compton made a motion to appoint Mr. Christopher Freeman to fill the vacant elected position formerly held by Mr. Terry Smith. Term to begin April 17, 2018 and will expire June 30, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fletcher and passed unanimously.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairman Skains asked the public and the Commission members if they had any comments. Mr. Spicer said that he wanted to remind everyone that supervisors must turn in their Financial Disclosure forms by May 15<sup>th</sup> or face the possibility of huge fines. He said that supervisors should talk with their district secretaries if they have questions or concerns. He said that these forms go directly to the Louisiana Ethics Commission. He said that you should also make sure that you take care of your yearly Ethics training before December 31<sup>st</sup>. The Ethics training can be done online and we also offered this on the last day of LACD to paid attendees. Dr. Girouard said the Ethics training was relatively easy and painless and is done in a few of our neighboring states.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Chairman Skains said the next State Commission Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, May 22, 2018 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. Compton made a motion to adjourn at 2:00 P.M. The motion was seconded by Dr. Girouard and passed unanimously.



Reggie Skains, Chairman  
State Soil and Water Conservation Commission