

NORTH CAROLINA SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES January 9, 2011

Grove Park Inn
 Grand Ballroom C
 290 Macon Avenue
 Asheville, NC 28804

Commission Members	Others Present		
Manly West	Pat Harris	Larry West	Ronnie Bennett
Richard Smith	David Williams	Leonard Killian	Claude Shew, Sr.
Craig Frazier	Shelly Baird	Tommy Porter	Tracy Warren
Vicky Porter	Julie Henshaw	Robert White	Jeff Harris
Bobby Stanley	Natalie Woolard	Angela Little	Jonathan Wallin
James Ferguson	Ralston James	Scott Sheffield	John McDonald
William Pickett, Jr.	Donnarie Hales	Kristina Fischer	Don Barker
	Kelly Ibrahim	Chester Lowder	Donald Heath
	Mike Sugg	Vernon Cox	Kara M. Cassels
	Carol Litchfield	Ben Knox	Bill Yarborough
	Mike Whitmire	Tommy Houser	Jimmy Mason
	Steve Sutton	James Hardin	Jerry Raynor
	Pam Hawkins	Mamie Caison	Cathy Winstead
	Jennifer Brooks	Lisa Marochak	Janie Woodle
	Bryan Evans	Linda Hash	Bobby Evans
	Danielle Adams	Jennifer Wadsworth	Wayne Mason
	Tommy Cutts	Teresa Hice	Charles Bass
	Wayne Short	Brian Short	Tom Ellis
	Dick Fowler	J.B.Martin	Renee Melvin
	Jerry Dorsett	Kate Peragine	

Chairman Manly West called the meeting to order 3:00 p.m. and charged the commission members to declare any conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest that may exist for agenda items to be considered by the commission as mandated by the State Ethics Act. None was noted. Chairman West requested the Board of Commissioners introduce themselves to the attendees.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Commissioner Craig Frazier made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vicki Porter. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the Commission Meeting held on November 10th, 2010 were presented. Commissioner Craig Frazier moved to approve the minutes after the corrections were made as stated. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bill Pickett. Motion carried.

The Commission held a teleconference on December 6th, 2011. Commissioner Craig Frazier made a motion to approve the minutes of the teleconference per the corrections. The motion was seconded by

Commissioner Richard Smith and the motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Division Report

Mrs. Pat Harris, Division Director for Soil and Water Conservation, began her division report by addressing the budget issues that North Carolina is facing, and the steps that the Division of Soil and Water Conservation was taking to address these issues.

Appropriations have declined over the last ten years and may continue to decrease. The division has tried to protect the agriculture cost share technical assistance funds at all cost. The staff is working with districts to set more attainable goals for both the Agriculture Cost Share Program (ACSP) and Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP) for their counties. The state of North Carolina is facing a \$3.7 billion budget gap next year.

On September 9, 2010 the division was asked to revert 1% of their current budget. The result was a 1.64% reduction in ACSP funds and 1% of the matching funds, resulting in a \$40 reduction from each district's matching funds appropriations. A 2.5% reduction was submitted on January 4, 2011 totaling \$293,542, for a reversion of 0.5% of the ACSP funds and the lapse salary funds generated by vacancies.

The division is under state spending restrictions including limited travel and a hiring freeze. District supervisor travel funds for district board meetings are not restricted at this time. Mrs. Harris believes that spring meetings could be in jeopardy, but advises districts to continue planning as usual and wait for updates concerning travel.

The Division was asked to identify 5%, 10%, and 15% permanent reductions to its FY2011-2013 budget. The proposed 15% budget cut would reduce the ACSP assistance by 26.83%, reduce funding for soil surveys and interpretations and eliminate four positions, eliminate the Animal Waste Inspection Pilot Program and one position, reduce supervisor subsistence by 10%, reduce matching funds by 10%, and reduce various operating accounts in the division and result in the loss of two additional positions.

The Division will be introducing a new process for districts to request division engineering assistance. Division engineers have been assigned to districts and will serve as the division contact for engineering assistance. The division will also host a series of engineering workshops for district employees to gain more training and hands on experience.

Comments & Suggestions from Commission Members: None

2. Association Report

Commissioner James Ferguson, President, NCASWCD and Mr. Dick Fowler, Executive Director presented the following:

Mr. Dick Fowler reported to the Commission that the Association has made Supervisor training an important focus in the coming year. Seventeen supervisors completed the Leadership Initiative training which was funded by an Altria grant. The remaining grant money will be used to continue the leadership program in 2011. A flyer containing an application for this training will be placed on the tables for the

Supervisor's Breakfast at the annual meeting to inform and encourage new participants to sign up. The 2011 Leadership Initiative will be carried out earlier in the year due to the grant being closed out by September. The registration information for the leadership training will be posted on the listserv as well.

Mr. Fowler informed the Commission of the very important election that will be taking place at the NCASWCD Annual Meeting this year. The outcome of the election will have immediate impacts on the Commission makeup and will also influence the makeup of the Commission in the future. Informative promotional flyers will be placed at the tables for the Supervisor's Breakfast to help Annual Meeting participants know more about the candidates. The candidates will also have an opportunity to address the audience to further inform every one of their qualifications.

School of Government Training: February 15-16, 2011. Richard Whisnant, workshop coordinator, will discuss the training opportunity during the New Supervisor Orientation at the Annual Meeting. Information cards will be displayed around the Annual Meeting that contains the School of Government website and information about the training. A large class is expected due to the recent election.

Annual Meeting: Due to the weather conditions forecasted for the week, the agenda has become very flexible due to speakers being unable to travel into the meeting. The patience of the supervisors and staff will be greatly appreciated. New breakout sessions will be introduced this year to engage supervisors and to encourage them to find new avenues and ideas that may be relevant to their districts. Mr. Fowler encouraged supervisors and staff to divide and attend the various sessions to bring back the most information to their districts. The breakout sessions will cover the following topics: New Supervisor Orientation, 2011 Executive Committee Orientation, Budget & Fiscal Responsibility, Working Lands Opportunities, Ins & Outs of Advocacy, Building Local Programs thru the Locally-Led Process, and Conservation Education.

Comments & Suggestions from Commission Members: None

3. NRCS Report

Mr. J.B. Martin addressed the budget issues that NRCS is facing, just like many organizations. Travel has played a large factor in the budget and NRCS has become aware that travel restrictions are needed. Mr. Martin acknowledges that travel is necessary to be effective in a technical job, but reductions will need to be made.

Mr. Martin expressed his support of the partnership between the division, districts, and NRCS, and stated that the objective is to achieve shared conservation goals. Working collectively will allow the partnership to address the short comings that agencies face as separate entities.

Six District Conservationist positions have been posted due to retirement or shifts in positions. The six positions are located in the following counties: Johnston, Bladen, Sampson, Rutherford, Pitt, and Caswell. Mr. Martin is looking to hire the best qualified employees for these positions and find the best ways to continue offering the services expected by landowners..

In his closing comments, he addressed the board with his plan to visit every Commission member in the near future and wants to continue to stay in tune with what is going on in the agricultural community.

Comments & Suggestions from Commission Members:

Chairman Manly West thanked Mr. Martin for his continued support.

4. Agriculture Cost Share Program

Mrs. Julie Henshaw presented the Agriculture Cost Share Program PY 2010 Annual Report. In 2010 the Agriculture Cost Share Program had total appropriations of \$4,676,566. When taking into account earmarks, canceled or expired contracts, and the state reversion the program had a total BMP funding of \$6,449,334. Technical assistance funding total appropriations equaled \$2,448,778 for the 116 full time district employees.

The Commission also earmarked Agriculture Cost Share Program funds to support implementation of best management practices in conjunction with CREP, Drought and Impaired/Impacted Streams Initiative. The ACSP also was used to administer funds for grants through the following partners: EPA, CWMTF, N.C. Ecosystem Enhancement Program, USDA Conservation Innovation Grant, Swine Buyout Program, Lagoon Conversion Program, and Innovative Poultry Waste Management.

The PY 2010 funding led to the completion of 1,359 contracts affecting nearly 110,000 acres. The best management practices planned for these contracts will lead to the reduction of 98,795 tons of soil, 436,705 pounds of nitrogen and 83,081 pounds of phosphorus. The management of animal waste through this contracting cycle will result in over 2 million pounds of nitrogen and 2.5 million pounds of phosphorus being managed properly.

The contracts for PY2010 have encumbered \$7,696,893 with a total of \$3,248,357 already expended during the program year. Mrs. Henshaw reported that active cost share contracts to date total 12,013 which led to 1,161 of those being spot checked by District employees and Supervisors. Over 92% of the spot checks were compliant, with only 4.7% needing repairs and 2.5% out of compliance.

The cumulative benefits, from 1984-2010, described by Mrs. Henshaw shows the impact that the Agriculture Cost Share Program has had in North Carolina. A total of 53,740 contracts, affecting over 2 million acres, has led to the reduction of over 7.2 million tons of soil, over 20 million pounds of nitrogen, nearly 6 million pounds of phosphorus, and the management of 92.7 million pounds of nitrogen and 72.8 million pounds of phosphorus from animal waste.

Comments & Suggestions from Commission Members: None

5. Community Conservation Assistance Program

Mrs. Shelly Baird addressed the Commission on the North Carolina Community Conservation Assistance Program PY 2010 Annual Report. She provided an overview of the purpose of the program and the available best management practices that the program offers to alleviate nonpoint source pollution from urban, suburban, and rural lands.

2010 was the third program year for CCAP and there was a total allocation of \$835,175 that consisted of state appropriations as well as grant funding through 68 districts. The need for stormwater treatment has continued to increase in urban areas over the years, justifying the funding request of \$2.5 million to implement these best management practices offered through the Community Conservation Assistance Program.

Mrs. Baird reported, in PY 2010 alone, there have been over 4 acres of wetlands, 17 acres of critical area planting, 36 cisterns, over 2,000 feet of stream protection, and 41 abandoned well closures contracts written through CCAP. Funds for rain gardens, riparian buffers, and pet waste receptacles have also been encumbered this program year.

As CCAP funding increases, the need for technical assistance in districts grows. As a result of this, 44 employees from 31 districts have received some form of CCAP job approval authority.

Mrs. Baird informed the Commission of the \$1,162,483 that has been expended since the Community Conservation Assistance Program started in 2008. As of January 5, 2011, there have been 433 projects contracted. Completed projects have treated over 593 acres of impervious surface which affects the surrounding waters of approximately one million people. Mrs. Baird recently completed a CCAP presentation to the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Virginia is interested in creating a similar program and had requested information on the program's history, partnership, legislation, funding, and more.

Comments & Suggestions from Commission Members: None

6. Recognition of Service

Chairman West deviated from the agenda to present recognition plaques to Commissioners Richard Smith and Bill Pickett. Chairman West expressed his appreciation for the Commissioners outstanding leadership and dedicated service to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and thanked them for their efforts in this important role with our state.

V. Action Items

7. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Craig Frazier made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bobby Stanley and the motion passed unanimously.

The following items were approved as part of the consent agenda:

A. Nomination of Supervisors for Reappointment

- Harold Rainey, Alamance SWCD, was reappointed to fill the term expiring on December 1st, 2014.
- Nikki Toedtman, Jackson SWCD, was reappointed to fill the term expiring on December 1st, 2014.

B. Nomination of Supervisors for Appointment

- Michael Entrekin, Mecklenburg SWCD, was appointed to fill the expired term of Shannon Binns
 - Eugene Mellette, Martin SWCD, was appointed to fill the expired term of Tupper Perry
 - Donald Sweeting, Onslow SWCD, was appointed to fill the vacant seat previously held by Marion Howard.
 - Thomas Cherry, Edgecombe SWCD, was appointed to fill a vacant seat
- C. Approval of NCACSP supervisor contracts
- D. CCAP Job Approval Authority
- Jennifer Brooks, Durham SWCD, received Job Approval Authority for backyard rain gardens.
 - Mike Dupree, Durham SWCD, received Job Approval Authority for backyard rain gardens and cisterns (3,000 gallons or less).

Comments & Suggestions from Commission Members: None

8. District Issues

A. Request for ACSP Contract on Government-Owned Property:

- Kate Peragine, Catawba SWCD, explained that the property is used as a teaching farm and is connected to a local high school. The natural erosion problems occurring are due to the high school encroachment and the farming activities. The contract would aid in the installation of BMP's to alleviate the erosion issues. Supervisor James Hardin also represented the district for its request. Commissioner Richard Smith made a motion to approve the cost share contract, Commissioner Vicky Porter seconded, and the motion carried.

B. Extension Request for Contract 07-09-720-13 Agricultural Pond Restoration/Repair

- Tracy Warren, Beaufort SWCD Supervisor, addressed the Commission members stating his concerns of the slow process that this contract is taking. The permit approval for the project alone has taken close to a year. Beaufort SWCD wanted to be proactive by asking for the extension instead of waiting until the last minute. Commissioner Craig Frazier made a motion to grant the contract a one year extension, Commissioner Bobby Stanley seconded and the motion carried.

Comments & Suggestions from Commission Members: None

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further items to discuss the meeting adjourned at 4:11pm, the motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Richard Smith. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Craig Frazier. Motion carried. The next Commission meeting is scheduled for March 16th, 2011 at 9am in the Archdale main floor conference room.

Patricia K. Harris

Patricia K. Harris, Director

Donnarie Hales

Donnarie Hales, Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved, with corrections, by the North Carolina Soil & Water Conservation Commission on March 16, 2011.

Patricia K. Harris

Patricia K. Harris, Director