



1320 Research Park Drive  
Manhattan, Kansas 66502

## **MINUTES OF THE STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

1. The State Conservation Commission meeting was called to order by Rod Vorhees, Chairman and Area V Commissioner, at 9:03 a.m., Monday, March 14, 2016, at the Kansas Department of Agriculture, 1320 Research Park Drive, Manhattan, Kansas.

2. **ATTENDANCE:**

**Elected Commissioners:**

Ted Nighswonger, Area I Commissioner  
Andy Larson, Area II Commissioner  
Brad Shogren, Area III Commissioner  
John Wunder, Area IV Commissioner  
Rod Vorhees, Area V Commissioner

**Ex-Officio & Appointed Members:**

Dan Devlin, Director, Kansas Center for Agricultural Resources and the Environment (KCARE), K-State Research and Extension  
Peter Tomlinson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Extension Specialist for Environmental Quality Agronomy Department, Kansas State University (KSU)  
Terry Medley, P.E., Water Structures Program Manager, Division of Water Resources, Kansas Department of Agriculture

**Division of Conservation, Kansas Department of Agriculture Staff:**

Rob Reschke, Executive Director  
Megan Green, Conservation District Program Coordinator  
Katie Burke, Conservation District Program Coordinator  
Cathy Thompson, Program Consultant  
Cindy Woofter, Administrative Specialist

**Guests:**

Jackie McClaskey, Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) Susan Metzger, Assistant Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA)

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### 3. ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- a. No additions or corrections were made to the agenda.

**A motion was made by Brad Shogren to approve the agenda as presented or amended. The motion was seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried.**

### 4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

The retirement for McPherson County District Manager Brenda Peters was incorrectly listed as March 1, 2016; it is actually March 31, 2016.

The time that the January 20, 2016, meeting was reconvened back into normal session from Executive Session was incorrectly listed as 3:06 p.m.; it was actually 3:05 p.m.

**A motion was made by John Wunder to approve the January 20, 2016, minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Andy Larson. Motion carried.**

### 5. COMMENTS FROM GUESTS:

NONE

### 6. FINANCIAL REPORT:

NONE

### 7. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- a. Labette County – new District Manager – Lori Sears
- b. McPherson County – new District Manager – Susan Buffington
- c. Sheridan County – new District Manager – DeeAnn Schamberger

### 8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NONE

### 9. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Review and discuss Ellsworth County Rural Water District No. 1 cost-share assistance - Reschke (See Attachment A).

**A motion was made by Ted Nighswonger to approve the cost-share assistance in the amount of \$235,000, requested by Ellsworth County Rural Water District No. 1 to upgrade the raw water supply intake system, as stipulated in the District Letter of Intent dated February 5, 2016. The motion was seconded by Brad Shogren. Motion carried.**

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### 10. REPORTS:

#### a. Agency Reports:

- i. K-CARE – Dan Devlin – Dan reported that they have been working with the City of Wichita for several years on a pollution protection program. He offered to make the presentation to the Board if they are interested.
- ii. K-State Agronomy – Peter Tomlinson – Peter mentioned that they are working on a new project consisting of different nitrogen management practices. The first year there will be plot sites and the second year there will be strip trials performed.
- iii. KDA – Terry Medley – Terry reported that a public hearing was held on February 3 in Parsons regarding the merger of Tri-Creek Watershed Joint District #100 into Labette-Hackberry Creek Joint Watershed District #100. The hearing was held in response to the District's petitioning the chief engineer for the merger. No written or oral comments were received during the hearing. The order approving the merger was issued February 24.
- iv. NRCS – Eric Banks was not present but provided a report of NRCS highlights (see Attachment B).

#### b. Staff Reports:

- i. Megan Green, DOC – Megan reported that she has been working on spring workshop preparation.
- ii. Katie Burke – DOC – Katie reported that she has been working with Andy, KFS, and that there have been no other new projects.
- iii. Cindy Woofter - DOC – Cindy mentioned she has been keeping very busy with several different projects.
- iv. Cathy Thompson – DOC – Cathy has been working on compiling information for the Blue Ribbon Task Force for finances for 2013, 2014, and 2015.

#### c. Commissioner reports:

- i. Area I – Ted Nighswonger – Ted mentioned that the spring workshop in his area was very good and that he was told that the letter the supervisors received inviting them to the workshop was appreciated.
- ii. Area II – Andy Larson – Andy expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to attend the NACD convention in Reno, Nevada. He said there were good presentations. He also mentioned that the reason the supervisor attendance was low at his area spring workshop was because there was a scheduled conflict with another meeting.

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- iii. Area III – Brad Shogren – Brad reported that the WRAPS group in his area is working on a streambank proposal. He suggested that we work with WRAPS, not against them.
- iv. Area IV – John Wunder – John mentioned that the spring workshop in his area was different and very good. There is a lot of conservation work being done in his area in the form of terrace work.
- v. Area V – Rod Vorhees – Rod reported that there is a lot of burning being done in his area. He also commented that Megan did a great job at his area spring workshop.

**BREAK 9:51 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.**

### **11. RECESS INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS OF NON-ELECTED PERSONNEL:**

**A motion was made by Ted Nighswonger to recess into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters of non-elected personnel to review the duties and responsibilities of each staff member of the DOC. Time to recess was 10:00 a.m. Time to reconvene was 12:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by John Wunder. Motion carried. At 10:00 am. the Commissioners, Jackie McClaskey, Susan Metzger, Rob Reschke, Dan Devlin, and Peter Tomlinson went into Executive Session. Time reconvened was 12:00 p.m.**

**LUNCH BREAK 12:00 p.m. to 12:50 p.m.**

**A motion was made by Ted Nighswonger to recess back into Executive Session from 12:50 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. John Wunder seconded the motion. Motion carried. At 12:50 p.m. the Commissioners, Rob Reschke, Dan Devlin, and Peter Tomlinson went back into Executive Session. Time reconvened was 2:00 p.m.**

At 2:07 p.m. Cindy Woofter entered back into the meeting.

### **12. ADJOURNMENT:**

The next scheduled SCC meeting will be April 25, 2016, at 8:00 a.m., at the Kansas Department of Agriculture, 1320 Research Park Drive, Manhattan, KS.

**A motion was made by Andy Larson to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Dan Devlin. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.**



Rob Reschke  
Executive Director

## Background:

- Ellsworth County Rural Water District No.1 aka Post Rock Rural Water District submitted a Letter of Interest (LoI), on December 21, 2015, seeking cost-share assistance under the Water Supply Restoration Program.
- As required by KAR 11-6-3, the LoI was reviewed by the DOC (staff in consultation with Interim Executive Director) and KWO to determine the project eligibility for funding consideration. KWO had no objections and is in support of the project.
- Sponsor submitted the Letter of Intent on February 5, 2016 requesting \$235,000.
- DOC placed Letter of Intent on a 30-day Public Notice (ECA) on Feb 8, 2016.
- If no objections, DOC recommends SCC approval of funding, provided funding is available, as in this case we have FY \$258,000.
- After SCC approval, DOC notifies the sponsor of the approval. Then DOC sends the state cost-share contract to the sponsor obligating the funding.

The District draws approximately 1 MGD from the Kanopolis reservoir. The service area includes 1,500 rural water meters and nine other public water supplies (seven towns and two rural water districts) for a population of about 8,300 people.

The present location of the intake is silting in. Sediment removal has been an ongoing maintenance issue and costly.

The District proposes to upgrade and replace the raw water intake and extend the intake screen and manifold from the lake shore into deeper water.

The total project cost has been estimated to be \$635,000.




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**NRCS HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES  
for the  
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MANHATTAN, KANSAS  
March 14, 2016**

**OPERATIONS**

- The following personnel changes have been made within the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) supervisory positions:
  - Larry Meili, District Conservationist, Phillipsburg, retired effective 2/1/16
  - Teresa Harrington, GIS Specialist, State Office, transferred to Fort Collins, Colorado, effective 2/7/16
- We continue to work at filling our vacant positions. We also recently advertised for four student intern positions through our Pathways program.

**PROGRAMS**

- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) rollout trainings have been completed in all the NRCS administrative areas.
- The deadline for new and renewal Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications is March 31, 2016.
- Funding decisions for eligible EQIP application will be completed by May 13, 2016.
- Local Work Group meetings will be taking place by the end of May.
- The Nature Conservancy's RCPP proposal (Native Grazing Lands Protection in the Great Plains) was approved—contains over \$3.6 million in financial and technical assistance. Anticipate a late summer or early fall rollout training for staff and partners.

**Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**

- Received six new fiscal year (FY) 2016 eligible Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) applications for a total acreage of 670 acres.
- Six Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) easements have been closed since January 2016. We expect to close on the three remaining FRPP easements within the next 60 days.

**Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)**

NRCS maintains one eligible non-exigency project on the National Headquarters EWP Waitlist for future funding: City of Sedgwick, Sand Creek streambank stabilization and debris removal.

### **Watershed Rehabilitation Program Activities**

Rehabilitation planning for five watershed dams in Butler County continues to progress well. Public meetings have been conducted and alternatives have been developed and are being presented to the local sponsors. If a federal alternative is selected, then NRCS will pursue federal funding for design.

### **Watershed Operations**

- NRCS field office staff are currently working with local watershed districts to complete Annual Dam Safety Inspections on federally assisted structures. A total of 651 dams will need to be inspected this calendar year.
- The Kansas Watershed Partnership, which includes the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Conservation and Division of Water Resources, the State Association of Kansas Watersheds, and NRCS, have scheduled a series of three operation and maintenance (O&M) workshops. The workshops will be held:
  - April 20 at Circleville, Kansas
  - April 21 at Fredonia, Kansas
  - April 22 at Abilene, Kansas

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Engineering**

The State Office Engineering Staff is developing soil mechanics training which will be given to some newer NRCS employees in Area 1 (Hays) this summer. The hope is to offer this 2-day training to all newer NRCS and NRCS/DOC employees in all the areas throughout the coming year.

## **OUTREACH**

- Assisting with Envirothon on April 27, 2016 (e.g., pictures)
- Sponsoring a booth at Salina Mid America Farm Expo on March 29, 30, and 31
- Push to get public service announcements on soil health created by national NRCS office playtime on Kansas TV stations
- News Releases

**USDA Commits \$20 Million to Innovative Conservation Projects**  
**\$8.1 Million in Assistance to Plant Trees, Protect Streams and Fields**  
**NRCS Announces Deadline for CSP Funding in Kansas**