

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 8:44 a.m., Tuesday, April 5, 2022, at the K-State Southwest Research-Extension Center, 4500 E Mary St., Garden City, Kansas.

2. **ATTENDANCE:**

Elected Commissioners:

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

Ex-Officio & Appointed Members:

Dean Krehbiel, Acting State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Terry Medley, P.E., Water Structures Program Manager, Division of Water Resources, Kansas
Department of Agriculture
Peter Tomlinson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Extension Specialist for Environmental Quality
Agronomy Department, Kansas State University
Dan Devlin, Director, Kansas Center for Agricultural Resources and the Environment (KCARE), K-
State Research and Extension
Susan Metzger, Senior Executive Administrator to the Dean and Director of Ag Kansas State
University, Associate KCARE/KWRI Director

Division of Conservation, Kansas Department of Agriculture Staff:

Andrew Lyon, Executive Director
Dave Jones, Water Quality Program Manager
Kristin Kloft, Riparian & Wetland Program Manager
Hakim Saadi, Watershed Programs Manager
Cathy Thompson, Program Consultant
Marsha Setzkorn-Meyer, Conservation District Program Coordinator
Christy Koelzer, Administrative Specialist

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Guests:

Dan Meyerhoff, Executive Director, KACD

Amanda Scott, President, KACD-EO

Herb Graves, Executive Director, State Association of Kansas Watersheds (SAKW)

Bill Simshauser, Vice President, KACD Board of Directors

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A motion was made by Ted Nighswonger to approve the agenda as emailed. The motion was seconded by John Wunder. Motion carried.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

A motion was made by Ted Nighswonger to approve the January 31, 2022, minutes as emailed. The motion was seconded by Sam Sanders. Motion carried.

5. SCC SERVICE RECOGNITION:

- a. Andrew Lyon recognized Dan Devlin for his 27 years of service on the State Conservation Commission and presented a plaque on behalf of the Kansas Department of Agriculture and the State Conservation Commission.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a. Legislative/Budget Update – Lyon

- i. Andrew Lyon informed the commissioners that House Bill 2686 was submitted and heard by the House Appropriations Committee in February. Much of the original language was removed. Remaining language outlined reporting requirements for the Groundwater Management Districts and repurposing some existing sales tax for the Water Plan. It was passed out of the House but has not been heard by the Senate.
- ii. Andrew Lyon informed the commissioners that there has been support for the budget presented to the legislature. Aid to Conservation Districts was increased to \$2.47 million, which would allow DOC to match county funding 1:1.

b. Wildfire Initiative Update – Jones

- i. Dave Jones informed the commissioners that \$150,000 has been approved for Wildfire Initiative funding (Attachment A).

Break 9:50 to 9:56.

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7. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Irrigation Technology Update (Initiative and GMD #4 Partnership) – Lyon and Jones
 - i. Andrew Lyon informed the commissioners that the Irrigation Technology Initiative will open for sign up in April. Dave Jones reviewed the details of the initiative (Attachment B). Groundwater Management Districts provided recommendations for the initiative. In addition to a statewide initiative, there will be a GMD #4 specific initiative.

A motion was made by Ted Nighswonger to accept the Irrigation Technology Initiative. The motion was seconded by Sam Sanders. Motion carried.

- b. CREP/WTAP Update – Lyon
 - i. Andrew Lyon informed the commissioners that there continues to be progress on the CREP project agreement and one WTAP application is in the process of approval (Attachment C).
- c. Playa Restoration and Tamarisk Control Update – Kloft
 - i. Kristin Kloft informed the commissioners that they are focusing on playa work in Lane County and hope to branch out to other counties in the future. Kristin attended a Salt Cedar Workshop last week and will follow up with counties on that practice.
- d. Discussion on Cost-Share Contracts and Inflation/Encumbering Policy – Lyon
 - i. Andrew Lyon informed the commissioners that DOC has developed a cost-share contract inflation response recommendation (Attachment D).

A motion was made by John Wunder to approve the DOC recommendations for cost-share contracts and inflation/encumbering policy. The motion was seconded by Andy Larson. Motion carried.

- e. Local Working Group Meetings Update – Meyerhoff
 - i. Dan Meyerhoff informed the commissioners that the local work group meetings facilitated by KACD have been very positive. There has been good virtual attendance, meetings have been recorded, and minutes have been taken at each meeting. Dan will compile a report to share with the partnership.

8. UPDATES:

- a. Comments from Guests:

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- i. Dan Meyerhoff (KACD) informed the commissioners that the KACD Training Agreement with NRCS is allowing retired NRCS staff to provide training to new staff. A three-day training for district managers will be held in August with two sessions provided. KACD would like to cover the cost of the training for district managers. A second round of supervisor training will be provided this fall. ATV/UTV safety training is being provided through an NRCS agreement. There is still funding available for outreach events. Following a meeting with Laura Munsch in April, KACD will put together a proposal for increasing social media presence. A proposal has been submitted for a grant to provide funding to districts for farmer-to-farmer networks. Plans are underway for the KACD Convention.
 - ii. Amanda Scott (KACD-EO) informed the commissioners that she will express the importance of communicating with the District Conservationist on cost-share status in future district manager trainings. Envirothons are taking place in April. The EO is preparing for the statewide EO meeting in May. Area V district managers are planning a supervisor meeting on Saturday, June 25 to encourage supervisor engagement and allow district managers to showcase education and outreach in a family friendly setting.
 - iii. Bill Simshauser (KACD) informed the commissioners that the KACD board attended a fly-in and visited with local legislators. A Farm Bill Task Force will review NACD policy and share with the Farm Bill Committee. The Department of the Interior asked someone from NACD to be on the Invasive Species Council. Bill was nominated and his application is being reviewed. A Bottom-Line Conference will be held at the Lakin Fairgrounds August 24 and 25.
- b. Agency Updates:
- i. Terry Medley (KDA, DWR) provided a written update (Attachment E).
 - ii. Dean Krehbiel (USDA, NRCS) informed the commissioners that NRCS is highly appreciative that the local work group meetings are focusing on priority resource concerns. Wildfire emergency funding focused on livestock mortality and fencing. The Grassland Initiative is available again this year with a sign-up deadline of April 15. Conservation Stewardship applications are due May 6. NRCS Staff are providing technical services for CRP. Watershed plans and designs are in progress and additional funding has been requested for 13 dams. 95 staffing vacancies have been filled. 26 recent grad positions are being advertised, including soil conservationists and natural resource specialists. CCGA's and Conservation Innovation Grants will be offered again this year. The National Fish & Wildlife Federation will have funding opportunities. There will be more RCCP funding opportunities in the future. Climate smart commodities is another funding opportunity to be offered in the future.
- c. DOC Staff Updates:

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- i. Andy Lyon informed the commissioners that DOC continues to have dialogue with SAKW regarding the infrastructure bill for watershed dams to be sure watershed districts are able take advantage of funding.
 - ii. Marsha Setzkorn-Meyer provided a written update (Attachment F).
- d. Elected Commissioner Area Updates:
- i. Ted Nighswonger (Area 1) informed the commissioners that he attended his local work group meeting.
 - ii. Andy Larson (Area II) informed the commissioners that he appreciated all the calls and emails when he was sick with COVID.
 - iii. Sam Sanders (Area III) informed the commissioners that he attended his local work group meeting. There was one death and 31 homes lost in the Reno County wildfire last month.
 - iv. John Wunder (Area IV) informed the commissioners that there have been terraces built and they've had several controlled burns and three inches of rain in his area. John congratulated Dan Devlin on his retirement. John commended the DOC staff on the cost-share inflation/encumbrance recommendation and on the tweet about the tour of the research and extension center.
 - v. Rod Vorhees (Area V) thanked Amanda Scott, the EO, and other Area V district managers for planning a supervisor event in Area V. Rod thanked Dan Devlin for hosting the tour and the meeting.

9. NEXT SCC MEETING DISCUSSION:

- a. Andrew Lyon suggested attending the Symphony of the Flint Hills on June 11 in Chase County in conjunction with the next SCC meeting and requested the commissioners forward other event ideas to him soon so plans for the next meeting can begin.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

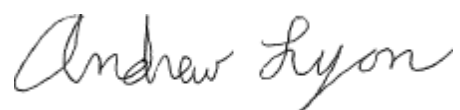
A motion was made by Andy Larson to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Lyon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrew Lyon
Executive Director

Wildfire Initiative Applications

Timestamp	Email Address	County	Landowner Name	Practice	Cost Share Funds Requested(\$8,000 limit per lando	County	Total Approved
3/8/2022 1	daniel.moore@ks.nacdnet.net	Graham	Robert Dinkel	Temporary Electric Fencing (Code 382t) (\$1.5	\$8,000.00	Russell	\$100,336.40
3/8/2022 1	daniel.moore@ks.nacdnet.net	Graham	Frank Brungardt	Temporary Electric Fencing (Code 382t) (\$1.5	\$8,000.00	Graham	\$36,110.75
3/8/2022 1	daniel.moore@ks.nacdnet.net	Graham	Brungardt Farms	Temporary Electric Fencing (Code 382t) (\$1.5	\$8,000.00	Trego	\$8,000.00
3/8/2022 1	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Truan Farms	Water Well (Code 642)	\$910.00	Rooks	\$5,552.85
3/8/2022 1	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Truan Farms	Pumping Plant for Water Supply (Code 533)	\$4,270.00		
3/8/2022 1	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Brad Polson	Pumping Plant for Water Supply (Code 533)	\$4,270.00		
3/8/2022 1	daniel.moore@ks.nacdnet.net	Graham	Knoll Circle K Farms, LLC	Temporary Electric Fencing (Code 382t) (\$1.5	\$8,000.00		
3/8/2022 1	daniel.moore@ks.nacdnet.net	Graham	Knoll County Line Farms	Temporary Electric Fencing (Code 382t) (\$1.5	\$700.35	Total:	\$150,000.00
3/9/2022 1	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Box S Ranch LLC	Fencing (Cross Fencing)	\$8,000.00		
3/9/2022 1	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Jason Krug	Pumping Plant for Water Supply (Code 533)	\$4,270.00	Approved	
3/9/2022 1	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Robert Zweifel	Range Planting (Code 550)	\$6,745.20		
3/9/2022 1	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Kathy Jo Zweifel	Range Planting (Code 550)	\$6,267.80		
3/10/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Ted Miller	Fencing (Cross Fencing)	\$8,000.00		
3/10/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Sandee Miller	Watering Facility (Code 614)	\$1,554.00		
3/10/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Sandee Miller	Pumping Plant for Water Supply (Code 533)	\$4,270.00		
3/10/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Derreck Brown	Fencing (Cross Fencing)	\$8,000.00		
3/10/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Amy Miller	Watering Facility (Code 614)	\$1,554.00		
3/10/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Lawrence Brad Miller	Cover Crop (Code 340) (\$50 per acre)	\$5,365.00		
3/10/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Thompson Tr	Watering Facility (Code 614)	\$2,268.00		
3/11/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Thompson tr	Pumping Plant for Water Supply (Code 533)	\$4,270.00		
3/11/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Jonathan Ulrich	Cover Crop (Code 340) (\$50 per acre)	\$7,517.50		
3/11/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	David Ulrich	Cover Crop (Code 340) (\$50 per acre)	\$5,883.50		
3/11/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Jason Rathbun	Watering Facility Replacement (Code 614r)	\$1,079.40		
3/11/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Jason Rathbun	Pumping Plant for Water Supply (Code 533)	\$4,270.00		
3/11/2022	daniel.moore@ks.nacdnet.net	Graham	Diana Hobbs -Knoll Farm	Temporary Electric Fencing (Code 382t) (\$1.5	\$3,410.40		
3/11/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Thompson Tr	Watering Facility (Code 614)	\$3,388.00		
3/11/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Bar S Ranch	Cover Crop (Code 340) (\$50 per acre)	\$6,000.00		
3/11/2022	donna.fay.major@ks.nacdnet.net	Russell	Ben Howe II	Water Well (Code 642)	\$2,184.00		
3/15/2022	dustin.becker@ks.nacdnet.net	Trego	Duane Keller	Cover Crop (Code 340) (\$50 per acre)	\$8,000.00		
3/29/2022	janel.odle@ks.nacdnet.net	Rooks	Chris Ruder	Water Well (Code 642)	\$5,552.85		

Memorandum

To: Kansas Conservation Districts

From: Andy Lyon, Executive Director

Date: April 6, 2022

Re: FY 2022 Irrigation Technology Initiative

The Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Conservation is pleased to announce the availability of funds in the form of incentive payments to assist landowners with irrigation efficiency technology. This initiative is designed to promote irrigation efficiency by providing cost-share assistance to landowners for automated soil moisture probes, mobile drip irrigation systems, autonomous pivot systems, TAPPH2O Subscriptions, bubbler nozzle packages and remote monitoring systems.

Following is additional program guidance on the FY 2022 Irrigation Technology Initiative:

- Applications will be approved on a first come first serve basis.
- Applications will be accepted thru April 29, 2022 or until all funds have been allocated.
- Incentive payments for TAPPH2O subscriptions will be made at the rate of \$50 per meter.
- All other eligible practices will be paid at a 50% cost share rate.
- The landowner limit for this initiative will be \$5,000.00.
- Invoices for the lease or purchase of eligible irrigation technology must be provided to the conservation district prior to any cost-share payment being made.
- Invoices for the subscription to TAPPH2O must be provided to the conservation district prior to any cost-share payment being made.
- Equipment purchases and TAPPH2O subscriptions made before application approval by the DOC are not eligible for this initiative.
- Only land located within Kansas groundwater management districts 1 thru 5 will be eligible for this initiative.

- The DOC does not guarantee adequate funds will be available to fund all eligible applications.

Please submit project applications to the DOC via the following link:

<https://forms.gle/o4Qv2byEc78uCSj8A>

If you have any questions regarding the FY 2022 Irrigation Technology Initiative, contact Dave Jones with our office at 785-564-6623.

RR: daj

cc: NRCS State Office

NRCS Area Offices

SCC Commissioners

Mike Beam, Secretary

DRAFT

**Assistant Director
Programs & Activity Update**

Steve Frost

Current activities and major tasks ahead for the April – June quarter:

- Since the retirement of Scott Carlson in December, I have been assisting program manager Christy Koelzer with field visits to producers needing reclamation visits and helping with other site issues needing coordination / resolution.
- March 30 designates the end of a semi-annual performance period for 33 DOC contract employees which are locally staffed in conservation districts. This date initiates significant grant reporting activities during April. Seven additional conservation technicians are still being funded through NACD / DOC agreements.
- DOC's involvement in High Plains Journal's 2022 'Soil Health U' is off to a great start. A sponsorship of \$5,000 is highlighting conservation district efforts in soil health activities through development of a series of information / education podcasts. Local conservation district members representing geographic areas of the state will be interviewed over the course of the next two months, with the possibility of more district-related interviews and topics to follow.
- One WTAP application from the Fall, 2021 enrollment period is now in the approval process. Three water rights authorizing 853 acre-feet of annual irrigation on 420 acres (HCWU = 113.9 ac-ft) in the Tribune target area will be voluntarily dismissed at a bid price of \$227,870. At this time, it appears likely that the WTAP stature will be extended by the legislature.
- DOC and FSA now have a projected date of June 1 to begin accepting offers again under the updated CREP project agreement which includes the Rattlesnake Creek sub-basin. With assistance from Dr. Mykel Taylor, the national FSA office is reconsidering the irrigated rental rate figures which were finally provided in late February. Re-training for local FSA offices will be conducted for the refreshed rollout, and DOC will provide a directed mailing to all of the eligible water right owners during May.
- Continuing program / personnel duties and administrative / fiscal operations, as usual. June 30 denotes the end of the state's 2022 fiscal year, which necessitates closing program funds beginning in late April and beginning the next year's FY2023/24 budget preparations.

Kansas Department of Agriculture
Division of Conservation
State Conservation Commission Meeting
April 5th, 2022

Cost-Share Contract Inflation Response Recommendation

- SFY 2020 encumbered contracts expire in mid May 2022 – Recommend no action be taken

- SFY 2021 encumbered contracts expire in mid May 2023 – Recommend that a SFY 2023 Contract be created that corresponds with SFY21 contract to provide \$1,000 dollar inflation adjustment. Funding for SFY23 contract would come from County SFY23 allocation.

- SFY 2022 contracts – Recommend not to encumber SFY22 contracts which means all contracts would be cancelled mid May 2022. Funding allocated to SFY22 contracts would be returned to counties in SFY23 allocation dollar for dollar. Ranking question would be created to give max points to SFY22 contract holder applying for same practice in SFY23. Increase in contract amount would come from County SFY23 allocation.

- Recommend all counties update County Average Cost to account for recent inflation. If County Average Cost can not be updated then recommend utilizing NRCS Payment Rate to account for recent inflation.

- Recommend all counties increase practice limits to at least \$5,000.

- Recommend all counties increase landowner limits to at least \$10,000.

National Levee Safety Program: FEMA and the USACE are holding a series of stakeholder engagement webinars. The discussions included what the federal agencies need to do to help states start a levee safety program, what should be required in the program and resources needed for states. Kansas is better positioned for the program than most states since it already has the levee law, K.S.A. 24-126. Nominations for the national levee safety committee has been extended until May 1.

Risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning (MAP) Open Houses: Risk MAP open houses for Barber and Harper Counties were held 2-3 March. The open house is used to share information with the public regarding the proposed Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM).

Risk MAP Discovery Meeting: Risk MAP discovery meeting for the Lower Republican Watershed was held 15 March in Concordia. At the Discovery meeting DWR reviewed the initial floodplain mapping results from the Base Level Engineering (BLE) modeling efforts. The Discovery process is important to collecting current and historic flood related data in order to get a complete picture of the flood risk in the area.

Nemaha County Letter of Final Determination (LFD): The Nemaha County Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) LFDs were issued 29 March. This means that the new FIRM for Nemaha County will have an effective date of 29 September.

2022 State Dam Safety Program Performance Questionnaire: The State Dam Safety Program Performance Questionnaire for the calendar year 2021 was submitted to the USACE and ASDSO on 30 March. The questionnaire has questions related to the following categories: authorities, inspections, emergency action plans, remediation, failures/incidents, budget, staffing, state statistics, security, compliance and community.

Annual Water Use Reporting: This year, just over 90% of the required reports were filed online. This amounts to 33,377 water rights authorizing 46,025 points of diversion.

Staffing: The stream team has 1 vacant engineering position. The submitted agency enhancement package would include restored funding for 1 stream team engineer and 3 dam safety engineers.

**Conservation District Program Coordinator
SCC Commission Meeting • Garden City
04/06/2022**

New Hires –**New District Managers**

<u>Area</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
2	Rawlins	Yose' Vanderben-Dickman	03/01/2022
1	Phillips	Austyn Werner	03/28/2022
3	Jewell	Sherry Koster	04/04/2022

Leaving Conservation District

Danielle Emerson, Stafford County

Brooke Germann, Clay County - went to FSA

Cindy Shaul, Rawlins County

Barbara Rush, McPherson County, End date 08/01/2022

Barbara Smith, Allen County, End date 04/08/2022 – going to FSA

Joan Menzie, Haskell County, End date 04/28/2022

Vacant -

Stafford

Clay

The last week of March/first of April I travelled to train district managers in SW Kansas, who have been in the position less than one year. Stops were in: Ellis, Lane, Scott, Stevens, Stanton, Grant, Kearny, and Ford Counties.

New district managers are trained via Teams with an initial three training sessions. I have presented eleven training sessions with new managers since the last SCC meeting. In addition, Cathy has presented six *initial* CSIMS training sessions to new DMs.

Dave and I presented a Cost Share 101 Zoom webinar, covering the beginning of the cost share process including CS2s, County Average Cost, ranking worksheets, filing, and PII. Forty-eight district managers attended.

A comprehensive, three-day District Manager training meeting is scheduled for August. I am on the planning committee with Troy Munsch, and staff from KACD, NRCS, and KACD-EO to plan the sessions.

The Conservation District Handbook has been updated and is uploaded into CSIMS.

The Supervisor Handbook has been updated and uploaded to the DOC website. In addition, Christy has mailed it to all new supervisors and updated the handbook in CSIMS.

Looking ahead:

Regional and State Envirothon Contests in April

KACD-EO Conference, where I will be presenting a session with Amanda Scott, in May

Cost Share 201 webinar with Dave planned for June

Scheduling other visits with new DMs throughout the state beginning in April