

**GEORGIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

Blue Ridge, GA  
August 21, 2009

Present were Chairman Garland Thompson, Vice Chairman Steve Singletary, and Commission Members Carl Brack, Dennis Brown, and David Hays. Present from Commission staff were Executive Director Brent Dykes, Deputy Director Dave Eigenberg, Urban Program Manager Lauren Zdunczyk, Rural Water Resources Manager Bob Fulmer, Regional Representatives Russell Tanning, Robert Amos, Keegan Malone, Ben Mosely, and Rahn Milligan, E&SC Technical Specialist Ben Ruzowicz, and Administrative Assistant Cynthia Wilbur. Present from NRCS was James Tillman. Present on behalf of Walton County was Mike Martin and Charna Parker, and Bob Cowan. Present from Precision Planning was Todd Parker. Guests included Gwinnett County Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors Mark Brock and Ellis Lamme, and Walton County Soil and Water Conservation District Chairman John Redding, and Crista Carrell with GACDS.

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order and asked Executive Director Dykes to give an invocation.

On a motion by Steve Singletary and second by Carl Brack, the Board approved the minutes of the July 16, 2009 board meeting.

On a motion by Dennis Brown and second by David Hays, the board unanimously approved the reappointment of Cobb County Supervisor Jim Lanier, Henry County Supervisor Hugh Simpson, Rockdale County Supervisor Ken Fonda, Altamaha Supervisors J.M. Vaughn and Travis Cook, Brier Creek Supervisors Charles McGregor, Calvin McCoy, P. Austin Rheney and Arthur Rider, Ogeechee River Supervisor Cornelius Garrison, and Satilla River Supervisors Walter C. Thomas and William R. Alexander.

At this time, the Board called on Mr. Dykes to give the Executive Director's report. Mr. Dykes began by giving the Personnel Report. There were no new employees hired since the last Board meeting. Student Josh Hall completed his internship with the Commission on August 13<sup>th</sup> to return to class for fall semester. Chris Conner in the Region V office has been promoted to Senior Irrigation Technician, and Andy Dyar will now be working out of the State office as the Watershed Dams Technician. Mr. Dykes went on to report that the Commission is still in the midst of a state-mandated hiring freeze, and as such both the Irrigation Specialist and the Erosion Control Specialist positions will remain open.

Next, Mr. Dykes continued by discussing Elected District Supervisor vacancies. The Commission is moving forward with a provision in state law that allows the Governor to fill these positions. This is the first time that this measure has been taken since the inception of the

Commission. Applications from the nominees have been collected and will be sent to the Governor's office by the end of August as recommended by the local Soil and Water Conservation districts.

Mr. Dykes next discussed the amended FY2010 and FY2011 budgets. A 5% allotment reduction has already been taken from the amended FY2010 budget. The Commission has been able to manage a 14% reduction in state funding by off-setting those funds with outside sources. In the amended FY10 Plan, we will also reduce technology upgrades and agricultural water contracts with USGS if necessary; there will also be less analysis of any data that is currently being collected. The total dollar amount of cut funds will range from the 5% cut of \$157, 142 to an 8% cut of 251, 427. If the 8% cut is required, it will constitute a 17% cumulative total cut, and will mean managing normal 12-month Commission operations with only 11 months worth of funding. FY 2011 proposed cuts range from a 4% total cut of \$126, 620 to another 8% cut totaling \$253,241. The cuts taken will be permanent, and the more severe cuts will require a possible reduction in personnel hours. At this time, Mr. Redding asked the Board whether they might consider a cut in supervisor per diem rather than a reduction to Commission staff. Mr. Dykes explained that cutting per diem would still not create a large enough total savings to off-set the largest potential cuts. On a motion by Carl Brack and second by David Hays, the Board unanimously approved the proposed budgets for AFY2010 and FY2011.

Next, Mr. Dykes reported on the status of the Department of Corrections Cooperative Projects. On August 6<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Dykes talked with Commission Chairman Thompson and Mr. Bob Plemons with the Department of Corrections. The DOC will have a 12-member work team ready to start on Commission watershed-related projects by early October. Bob Fulmer, assisted by Andy Dyar, will identify and target the most likely project areas. Additionally, USDA-NRCS East Regional Conservationist Leonard Jordan will be in Georgia in September, and Mr. Dykes is planning to discuss possible DOC projects with him. Mr. Singletary inquired whether the DOC team could do meter maintenance. Mr. Eigenberg replied that since meter maintenance is done in-field and on-site, most typically on private property, that the personnel cost associated with convict labor is prohibitive. However, the DOC might be able to help with major meter repairs off-site.

At this time, Mr. Dykes concluded his update by reporting on his recent trip to Washington D.C. to attend the NACD Legislative Conference. Mr. Dykes reported that the group from Georgia met the new NRCS Chief and the FSA Administrator. Additionally, they met with Congressmen Marshall, Kingston, and Bishop, and made office visits to the other Georgia congressional members. PR Intern Bud Whitmire prepared a special edition of the Commission newsletter to be handed out at all congressional visits. Also of interest, Senator Chambliss' new aide, Bridges Sinyard, will be touring South Georgia project sites on August 31<sup>st</sup>, at which time Mr. Dykes and others from the Commission will meet with him.

At this time the Board called on Mr. Eigenberg to give the Deputy Executive Director's report. Mr. Eigenberg began his report by updating the Board on the August Pond Sign-Up, which runs

through the end of the month. The work from last year is coming to a close, and the cycle will begin again come this fall. Mr. Eigenberg went on to note that the Regional Representatives are working to allocate Partners for Fish and Wildlife contracts with landowners.

Mr. Eigenberg continued his report by discussing the new Commission newsletter that is being internally produced and distributed monthly by Commission PR Intern Bud Whitmire. At this time, Chairman Thompson inquired after the renovations to the Dawson office. Mr. Eigenberg replied that some termite damage was found, but that the project over-all is going well.

The Board next called on Ms. Zdunczyk to give the Urban Program Report. Ms. Zdunczyk began by presenting a list of Level I trainers for the Board's review. On a motion by Steve Singletary and second by David Hays, the Board approved the Level I trainers as attached. Next, Ms. Zdunczyk updated the Board on the proposed new Erosion and Sediment Control Overview process as developed by Gwinnett County. There has been a 100% participation rate with Gwinnett County and individual cities at the monthly overview meetings, which has helped to stimulate and foster dialogue amongst these entities. During the month of July, the Commission received positive feedback from the participating municipalities. At this time, Chairman Thompson thanked Ms. Zdunczyk and the Gwinnett County district for their work and efforts in achieving this goal and sharing the insights gained from the process. Supervisors Brock and Lamme thanked the Board, the Commission, and Regional Representative Russell Toning for their dedication to this process, and expressed optimism at future results. On a motion by David Hays and second by Dennis Brown, the Board unanimously approved the new overview process as proposed.

At this time, Ms. Zdunczyk asked Mr. Ben Ruzowicz to present information regarding the Commission's Memorandum of Agreement with Walton County, the Walton County district, and the City of Social Circle. Mr. Ruzowicz explained that there were issues regarding a 100-acre site located in the City of Social Circle being developed by General Mills. Mr. Ruzowicz stated that the Commission had received a complaint about the site, and visited the site on July 15, 2009. Upon site review, Mr. Ruzowicz reported evidence of buffer encroachment on a springhead, as evidenced by a defined channel, hydrolic soils and water that were present at the construction site. There were also down-drain deficiencies. Mr. Ruzowicz explained that the Commission found no copy of the final E&SC plans on-site. No Stop-Work-Order has been issued by Walton County, and the Commission has received no copy of the finalized revised plans to date.

Mr. Redding, Chairman of the Walton County district, stated that at the last Walton County District meeting, held on August 11, 2009, representatives from Walton County government were present. Mr. Redding went on to explain that upon review, the streamhead was mislabeled on the original work plans, and that additional information will need to be gathered from EPD. At that time, the Walton County district voted to limit the MOA reviewing authority in question to less than 50

acres. Mr. Redding stressed that the district wishes to keep its good working relationship with Walton County government intact.

Mr. Mike Martin, with Walton County government, replied that Precision Planning, the engineering firm for the site, located the springhead in February 2009 and took all appropriate actions according to the original approved plans. According to Mr. Martin, by the time that Mr. Ruzowicz visited the site in July, previously unseen water was in place. Mr. Martin further explained that EPD verbally approved a mitigation plan, and that according to those plans, no violation has been made.

Mr. Parker, with Precision Planning, stated that he had participated in a preliminary on-site walk in January 2009, and at that time noted the possibility of state waters. As a result, a 50-foot buffer was put in place in February 2009. After this work, a second consultation was held with Register-Nelson and final plans were approved. These plans included 40-feet of backfill. Between February 2009 and July 2009, at the time of Mr. Ruzowicz's site visit, the springhead apparently moved up 25 to 30 feet, placing it clearly within the disturbed zone. Mr. Parker stated that the construction firm in charge of the project, the Rockefeller Group, and Walton County both asked for a mitigation plan to be developed. Mr. Parker stated that this plan was developed and finally approved by the County; however, these plans have not yet been put in place due to landscaping concerns. He assured those present that the mitigation plans would be installed by the end of August, in spite of irrigation needs. Mr. Parker went on to explain that due to the large nature of this site, plans are being reviewed as quickly as possible, and action has been taken to ensure that no sediment has been lost off-site or as run-off into state waters.

At this time, Mr. Dykes expressed his concern regarding the County's response time with this site. He stated that the County is only delivering key information to the Commission at the last minute, which is resulting in poor communications. Mr. Dykes explained that the Commission cannot issue a Stop-Work-Order on land disturbance sites; however, the current MOA with the County, the District, and the City of Social Circle could be changed such that the County would be limited to less-than-50 acre site reviews. Mr. Hays stated his concern by noting that the Commission has been experiencing re-occurring problems with Walton County for the past three years. In response, Mr. Martin again stressed that no state waters have been impacted on-site. Mr. Martin thanked the Board for their time.

Chairman Thompson concluded the discussion by expressing his desire that all laws be obeyed in regards to the General Mills site. On a motion by David Hays and second by Dennis Brown, the Board unanimously voted to retract the MOA with Walton County, the Walton County Soil and Water Conservation District and the City of Social Circle; to send a letter to Dr. Carol Couch, Director of EPD (copying to all individuals that had been privy to previous communication by Walton

County to the Commission) explaining the Commission Board's actions; and to send a letter to Walton County explaining the 60 days written notice of termination of the MOA and outlining new procedures to be taken.

At this time, the Board called on Mr. James Tillman to give the NRCS report. Mr. Tillman reported that the CSP sign-up began August 10<sup>th</sup> and that there are two funding units in Georgia, one in the northern part of the state and the other in the south. He explained that both units are equally diversified. Mr. Tillman reported that USDA-NRCS has also received \$2.5million in AWEP funding for FY2010. He also stated that the number of applicants for EQIP funding has increased dramatically from previous years (there were 2600 applicants last year, and there have been 4100 for this year). Mr. Tillman also stated that much of the stimulus funding that NRCS has been fortunate enough to receive has been in large part due to NRCS' partnership with the Commission.

Next, the Board called on Ms. Crista Carrell to give the GACDS Report. Ms. Carrell congratulated the two new NACD Southeast Hall-of-Fame inductees from Georgia—Commission Board Member Carl Brack and Upper Chattahoochee River District Supervisor Edsel Nix. Ms. Carrell took this opportunity to remind those present that GACDS awards are coming up, and to turn in all nominations. Ms. Carrell went on to report that GACDS was expecting a full schedule for the Supervisor Training, including a Trout Supper prepared with the help of NRCS District Conservationist Doug Towery and GSWCC Resource Specialist John Loughridge. The GACDS Raffle Drawing will be held Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>. The GACDS 2010 Annual Meeting is scheduled for January 22-24, 2010, in Athens at the Classic Center. Ms. Carrell ended her report by encouraging all those attending the supervisor training to sit in on the Farm Bill Training being hosted by the Chestatee-Chastatee RC&D, and thanked the Blue Ridge district and the Georgia Peanut Commission for providing refreshments.

At this time, Chairman Thompson opened the floor to guests for their comments. Mr. Redding thanked the Board for supporting Mr. Dykes travel to Washington, D.C. Mr. Dykes thanked the Commission staff for their support and cooperation. Mr. Amos thanked his staff for their work in applying for and receiving AWEP funding. Mr. Fulmer reported that the Commission is in the process of contracting out maintenance and upgrade work on up to five watershed structures. He stated that the contracts should be signed by the end of August and that the Commission will be receiving the contract funds in November. Mr. Mosely thanked the Board, Mr. Dykes and the Commission's financial team for their hard work. Mr. Tillman reported that Mr. Jimmy Bramblett with NRCS had been promoted to Assistant State Conservationist for Programs.

Mr. Dykes reminded the Board and those present that District Annual Plans of Work are due for review. The next Board meeting will be conducted via conference call on Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, if necessary. Mr. Dykes stated that the next in-person Board meeting will take place on Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>. There being no further business, on a motion by Dennis Brown and second by David Hays, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Cynthia Wilbur

Approved by:

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GSWCC Chairman

Date

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GSWCC Executive Director

Date

**Trainers to be approved by  
The Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission Board  
and Stakeholder Advisory Board**

**Trainer Level I**

**Martin Smith**—BS in Political Science from State University of West Georgia. Mr. Smith is currently employed by the Georgia Utility Contractors Association (GUCA) as the Director of Public Relations and Marketing. He provides erosion control assistance to GUCA members and works as liaison with regulatory agencies. Prior to his employment with GUCA, he worked as the Business Development/Project Manager for Creek Contracting LLC. Mr. Smith was responsible for managing projects on a per client basis, including the supervision of erosion control services. He also worked for Gibbs Landscaping, where he managed erosion control measures for the grading crew.

**Vickie Waites**—Ms. Waites has over 10 years experience in the field of erosion and sediment control. She has worked as an Erosion Inspector for Gordy Engineering and Associates from 1998-2007. She was responsible for inspecting clients' sites for the proper installation and maintenance of BMP's according to the plans, retrieving and analyzing the turbidity of samples as well as preparing inspection reports for the LIA's and EPD. In 2007, Ms. Waites started her own company, Waites Soil Erosion Evaluation where she continues to provide erosion and sediment inspection services to her clients.