

**GEORGIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
COMMISSION MINUTES**

Monroe, GA
June 7, 2016

Participating were Chairman Garland Thompson, Vice-Chairman Harold Fallin, and Board members Bob Martin, Drew Echols, and Jason Winters. Participating from the Commission were Executive Director Brent Dykes, Urban Program Manager Ben Ruzowicz, and Admin Assistant La Shawn Jennings. Also in attendance was GACD President Dan Bennett, NCRS State Conservationist Terrance Rudolph, Dekalb County Supervisor Tony Gobert, Kim Landers Representing Sugar Hill, and Alex Bradford, from GA Farm Bureau. Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order and asked Executive Director Dykes to give an invocation.

The Board called for discussion on past meeting minutes; on a motion by Bob Martin and second by Drew Echols, the board approved the minutes for the May 3rd meeting.

On a motion by Harold Fallin and second by Drew Echols, the Board unanimously approved the nominees put forth in the June Appointment Report; there was also a motion to approve Supervisor Resignations by Drew Echols and second by Harold Fallin. (see attached). The board also discussed possible changes to the Appointed Supervisor process; there was no action at this time.

The Board next called on Mr. Dykes to give the Executive Director's report. He began with the Personnel Report. Mr. Dykes reported that the Commission has an open position in Statesboro; interviews will be held on June 16th to fill that position.

Mr. Dykes next presented the Board with the Agency Strategic Plan. After discussion and minor modification to the plan, Mr. Harold Fallin moved to approve the plan with a second from Drew Echols. The plan was approved (see attached.)

Next, Mr. Dykes discussed FY17 State Fund Allotments to Conservation Districts. Mr. Dykes suggested sending all funding to districts at the beginning of the FY. The funding formula for FY17 will be the same as FY16 and was approved on a motion by Bob Martin with a second by Harold Fallin. The time of the allocation and distribution of funds was approved on a motion by Drew Echols with a second by Bob Martin. Mr. Dykes presented a consideration for out of state travel approval for the Executive Director. This is specific to the SENACD meeting in North Carolina July 31st to August 2nd 2016, and the NASCA meeting in Missouri September 26th to 28th 2016. There was a motion to approve by Bob Martin and second by Drew Echols.

The Board next called on Ben Ruzowicz to discuss the MOA's for Paulding County and Sugar Hill. The two MOA's were approved on a motion by Harold Fallin with a second by Bob Martin.

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

June 7, 2016

Page 2

The NCRS update was given by Mr. Terrance Rudolph; the NRCS has filled 13 of 43 vacancies with the agency and is working to request additional funding for the EQIP program.

Mr. Dan Bennett presented the GACD update by discussing an upcoming strategic planning meeting in June; presented a PowerPoint on the Solar Panel Project at Walton EMC.

At this time, Chairman Thompson opened the floor for public comments; Alex Bradford with GFB and Tony Gobert, Dekalb County Supervisor both introduced themselves.

There was a proposal for the next Board Meeting to take place Friday August 26, 2016 at the Athens office. This is due to several scheduled events and training during the month of August. This meeting date was approved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned for a tour of the Walton EMC Solar Facility.

Respectfully submitted by:

La Shawn Jennings

Approved by:

GSWCC Chairman Date

GSWCC Executive Director Date

**NOMINEES FOR THE POSITION OF DISTRICT SUPERVISOR
TO BE APPOINTED BY GEORGIA SOIL and WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

REGION	DISTRICT	COUNTY	NAME	CITY	Attendance%	FUTURE TERM WILL EXPIRE
II	Broad River	Wilkes	1. Eric Holton	Tignall	NEW	02/27/18
			2. Herman Wheatley			
			3. Douglas Wheatley			
III	Brier Creek	Jefferson	1. Jerry Dowdy	Wrens	70%	10/12/17
			2. Sam Pennington			
			3. Randy Rhodes			
	Coastal	Bryan	1. Charles F. Warnell, Jr.	Richmond Hill	73%	10/30/17
			2. Gene Brodgon			
			3. Carlton Gill			
		Chatham	1. Edward H. Zipperer	Savannah	96%	10/30/17
			2. Dexter Shearouse			
			3. Herbert Keller			
	Ochoopee River	Wheeler	1. Lynn Johnson	Alamo	95%	01/24/18
			2. FrankThomas			
			3. Martin Wilcher			
V	Alapaha	Lowndes	1. Johnny Swilley	Valdosta	81%	12/02/17
			2. Tim Swilley			
			3. David Pike			
	Ocmulgee River	Taylor	1. Jack McGlaun	Butler	94%	01/24/18
			2. Chris Waller			
			3. Willie Payne			

GEORGIA SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

FY 2016 – FY 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN (FY 2017 UPDATE)--**DRAFT**

AGENCY MISSION:

The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission provides conservation education, planning, and financial assistance to land users in cooperation with local soil and water conservation districts to conserve and enhance soil and water resources.

AGENCY VISION:

Informed Georgians benefitting from abundant soil and water resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN/CHALLENGES:

STRENGTHS:

- Non-regulatory approach
- Customer-service oriented
- Established local communication network through districts and regional offices

WEAKNESSES:

- Lack of unified public image
- Over-extended staff
- Overly-dependent conservation districts

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Improved efficiency through technology
- Internal/external education to help increase conservation knowledge
- New customer growth due to district involvement in locally-grown food movement

THREATS:

- Staffing turn-over
- Loss of essential funding
- Uninformed supervisors

GOAL 1 SUMMARY: EFFICIENCY

Increased operational efficiency for internal/external customers.

Measurable Objective 1: By 2020, reduce staff time necessary to complete tasks.

Strategy 1: Digitize info and make it more accessible to both employees and external customers.

Strategy detail: Review Ag Water Metering and Urban Water Resources programs and identify areas of improvement through digitization. Other agency programs will also be reviewed as needed.

Budget Impact: No increased funding needed

Workforce Impact: No increase in current workforce anticipated

ESA Involvement: N/A

Strategy 2: Fully implement new supervisor database agency-wide.

Strategy detail: Converting and upgrading the existing supervisor database will store conservation district meeting information digitally, eliminating the spreadsheets that all regional offices must currently complete and forward to the State Office for processing. The converted database will give each regional office the ability to access Supervisor information locally in real-time as needed instead of requesting the information from the state office staff, resulting in a more efficient managing of district meeting agendas.

Budget Impact: No increased funding needed

Workforce Impact: No increase in current workforce anticipated

ESA Involvement: N/A

GOAL 2 SUMMARY: EMPOWERMENT

Empower soil and water conservation districts to be more effective.

Measurable Objective 2: By FY2020, increase soil and water conservation district independence and sustainability.

Strategy 3: Provide direct funding to soil and water conservation districts to implement their Plans of Work.

Strategy detail: In FY16, conservation districts received an increase in funding in an amount of \$151,000. GSWCC assisted districts with managing these funds in FY16. In future fiscal years, this funding will be directly released to conservation districts at the

beginning of the fiscal year for their use, and a report of expenditures and projects will be due at year-end.

Budget Impact: No increased funding needed

Workforce Impact: No increase in current workforce anticipated

ESA Involvement: OPB and Office of the State Treasury will need to be involved in coordinating the initial transfer of district funds at the beginning of the relevant fiscal year.

Strategy 4: Develop and implement a new training module for newly elected and appointed supervisors.

Strategy detail: Past training has focused on all supervisors. Targeting new supervisors allows GSWCC to ensure these individuals are empowered to fulfill their responsibilities.

Budget Impact: No increased funding needed

Workforce Impact: No increase in current workforce anticipated; contract with UGA-Carl Vinson Institute of Government

ESA: N/A

Strategy 5: Implement a new district supervisor appointment process with state board oversight.

Strategy detail: The current soil and water conservation district supervisor appointment process has existed for many years. In order to increase participation of supervisors, a new appointment process related to fulfillment of responsibilities will be developed to gauge supervisor involvement.

Budget Impact: No increased funding needed

Workforce Impact: No increase in current workforce anticipated

ESA: N/A

GOAL 3 SUMMARY: EDUCATION

Provide and promote educational opportunities for Georgia's citizens.

Measurable Objective 3: By FY2020, expand the agency's audience through new informative outreach.

Strategy 6: Provide new employee orientation and leadership training to GSWCC employees.

Strategy detail: GSWCC currently provides limited training to new employees and no formal leadership training is offered to existing employees. GSWCC will create an orientation program and contract with an outside entity to provide leadership training.

Budget Impact: No increased funding needed

Workforce Impact: No increase in current workforce anticipated; contract with UGA-Carl Vinson Institute of Government

ESA: N/A

Strategy 7: Hire a new agency Public Outreach coordinator to develop a unified agency message.

Strategy detail: GSWCC previously employed a part-time, grant-funded public outreach position. That position has been unfunded and vacant for nearly two years. Currently, agency staff must develop their own materials, resulting in an un-unified agency message.

Budget Impact: Increase of \$60,000 in state funding

Workforce Impact: Filling of one currently vacant position

ESA: N/A

Strategy 8: Use innovative technology to communicate with customers.

Strategy detail: Utilize social media and services for mass e-mail communications to communicate and expand the current Erosion and Sediment Control mailing list, as well as add new mailing lists for the Agricultural Metering Program, district supervisors, and Local Issuing Authorities (LIA's).

Budget Impact: Contingent on hiring of PR Coordinator

Workforce Impact: Filling of one currently vacant position

ESA: Possible GTA support

Create App

ADDITIONAL PLAN INFORMATION:

CONTACT INFORMATION:

BRENT L. DYKES, GSWCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

bdykes@gaswcc.org/

706-552-4470