

**GEORGIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

Georgia Center for Continuing Education, Athens, GA  
December 13, 2012

Present were Chairman Garland Thompson, Vice-Chairman Dennis Brown, Commission Members Carl Brack, Hal Haddock, and David Hays. Participating from Commission staff were Executive Director Brent Dykes, Deputy Executive Director Dave Eigenberg, Administrative Operations Manager Niki Strain, Executive Manager for Water Policy Bob Hanner, Urban Water Resources Program Manager Lauren Zdunczyk, Regional Representatives John Loughridge, Robert Amos, Keegan Malone, Luke Crosson, and Rahn Milligan. Also present from the Commission were Region III E&SC Plan Reviewer Susan Castle, Resource Specialist Guerry Thomas, Region III Administrative Assistant Jenny Searl, Region I 319 Specialist Leigh Rush, Engineering Technician David Hall, E&SC Technical Specialist Ben Ruzowicz, and Administrative Assistant Cynthia Wilbur. Representing NRCS was State Conservationist James Tillman. Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order and asked Executive Director Dykes to give an invocation.

On a motion by Dennis Brown and second by Carl Brack, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the October 18, 2012 Board Meeting.

On a motion by David Hays and second by Hal Haddock, the Board approved the resignation of Oconee River district supervisor Balfour Hunnicutt. On a motion by Dennis Brown and second by Carl Brack, the Board approved the nominees set forth in the December Appointment Report (please see attached.)

At this time, Mrs. Wilbur gave a brief update on the 2012 District Supervisor Election Cycle. Mrs. Wilbur reported that the election had gone smoothly, and several vacant positions had been filled throughout the state. Mr. Dykes explained that districts still have the option to petition the Governor to appoint interim supervisors to fill elected vacancies, if they so choose.

The Board called on Ms. Niki Strain to give a report on the FY12 Financial Audit Results. Ms. Strain reported that aside from a difference of \$1.37 in the Ag Water Supplies Program expenditures, the agency budget was clean. Ms. Strain also updated the Board on the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act which went into effect in 2011, which requires recipients of all Government entitlements to be U.S. citizens or lawful alien residents. Ms. Strain explained that this will impact the Commission's Certification and Re-Certification Programs, as those designations are considered government-sponsored entitlements under the new law as well as cost-share agreements with landowners.

The Board next called on Mr. Dykes to give the Executive Director's Report. Mr. Dykes began by reporting on Action Items from the previous Board meeting. Currently, the Commission is still operating under the proposed 3% AFY2013 budget cut, as requested by the Governor. No additional cuts have been requested to-date.

The Commission has been working with the Department of Corrections on development of a water quality/quantity pilot project to begin January 2013 in the City of Douglas in Coffee County. Additionally, GEFA also has funds available to loan toward municipal and public works projects, while the Department of Community Affairs still have Community Development Block grants available to assist local governments.

The bond sale authorized by the Board at their October 2012 meeting was finalized as of December 12, 2012. The sale resulted in \$6 million in funding for watershed maintenance and rehabilitation.

Mr. Dykes next updated the Board on the December Personnel Report. Two new employees were hired by the Commission. Mr. Michael Wald began work as the Commission's new Communications and Information Resource Specialist on November 1, 2012. Also, Mr. Dustin Rushing began work as the Region VI Irrigation Technician in the Statesboro office on November 19, 2012.

At this time, Mr. Dykes asked the Board to consider setting the supervisor per diem rate for the upcoming NACD National Meeting to be held in San Antonio, Texas, from January 25-30, 2013. On a motion by David Hays and second by Carl Brack, the Board approved GSWCC per diem payment of four days at \$120 per day.

The Board asked Mr. Dykes to report on the proposed recommendation regarding the Region III Conyers office. Mr. Dykes presented the Board with a memo outlining plans to re-assign the current seven Region III districts to the Commission's Rome, Athens, and Milledgeville offices. Mr. Dykes explained that support and administration of all the metro-area districts from the State Office in Athens was not feasible, and that a plan to transition the districts out of Region III by June 30, 2013, would include the closure of the Conyers office by that same date. In light of these recommendations, Mr. Dykes met with the Conyers staff on November 29<sup>th</sup> to discuss. Chairman Thompson opened the floor for comments from the Region III staff in attendance. Ms. Castle stated that she had concerns regarding plan reviews and employee commutes. Mr. Dykes assured the Board that employee concerns would be addressed. On a motion by Carl Brack and second by Dennis Brown, the Board unanimously approved the recommendation to close the Conyers office effective June 30, 2013, and reassign the seven current Region III districts into the Rome, Athens, and Milledgeville regional offices. Staff currently assigned to the Conyers office will be considered for position transfer.

At this time, the Board called on Mr. Dave Eigenberg to give the Deputy Director's Report. Mr. Eigenberg began by updating on current cooperative projects between the Commission, the USGS, and Albany State University. All data gathered by Albany State will be sent at the first of the year to the USGS for co-review. All USGS analysis will be reviewed by ASU before being published.

The Board asked Mr. Eigenberg about the response caused by the recent suspension of new permits in the Flint River basin. Mr. Eigenberg responded that in light of the suspension, the number of permit applications throughout the rest of the state increased exponentially.

Mr. Eigenberg next discussed the new 319-grants received by the Commission. Region V will be working on implementation of a Watershed Improvement plan for Cedar Creek and Folsom Creek in

Wilcox County. A local steering committee will be organized to help oversee and inform the improvement plan implementation. The Commission also received funding for implementation of pilot Multi-Phased Nutrient Management Planning Initiatives in the Altamaha River Basin in parts of Appling, Glynn, Jeff Davis, Long, McIntosh, Montgomery, Tattnall, Toombs, and Wayne counties, as well as the Settingdown Creek watershed in Cherokee, Dawson, Forsyth, and Pickens Counties. Once the pilot program is in place, the Commission will begin rolling out the program statewide.

Lastly, Mr. Eigenberg updated the Board on Meter Data Acquisition. The Commission has starting manually reading 90 sites on a monthly basis. Considerations are still being made to incorporate reports from landowners and producers who would volunteer to self-read meters. The process still faces some challenges, but a form of self-reporting will be available starting March 1, 2013, to coincide with the start of the growing season.

At this time, the Board called on Mrs. Zdunczyk to give the Urban Program Update. The Technical Advisory Committee is continuing with the progress on updates to the Green Book, with the final push for updates and revisions taking place in Spring of 2013. Mrs. Zdunczyk explained that she, Mr. Ruzowicz, and Mr. Thomas were all active in assisting the TAC with their work.

Next, Mrs. Zdunczyk updated the Board on recent site visits. Commission representatives have made multiple visits to the Baxter site, adhering to a two-week visitation schedule. Everything thus far has been in order, with no major violations to report. The site will be in construction and development through 2018. Mrs. Zdunczyk also reported that EPD is currently in the process of drafting a memo regarding site stabilization, specifically the ability to handle certain stabilization concerns with consent orders.

At this time, Mr. Tillman gave the NRCS Update. Mr. Tillman reported that in FY12, Georgia received \$71 million in NRCS funding through various conservation programs and initiatives. He also reported that Georgia NRCS has yet to receive any news regarding actions taken on the 2012 Farm Bill in Washington. NRCS Chief Dave White will be retiring, and former Georgia NRCS employee Jimmy Bramblett, who is currently stationed at the NRCS Headquarters in Washington, D.C., has been named the new State Conservationist for Wisconsin.

Mr. Dykes gave a brief update on recent GACDS activities. The Commission is working to finalize staff assignments for the upcoming GACDS Annual Meeting in Atlanta. Mr. Dykes encouraged the Board to make plans to attend the meeting, which will be held at the Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center February 1-3, 2013.

At this time, Chairman Thompson opened up the floor for public comments.

Mr. Dykes reminded the Board that their next meeting was scheduled for Friday, February 1, 2013, to coincide with the GACDS Annual Meeting.

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

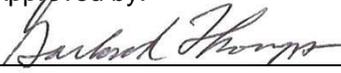
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Respectfully submitted by:

Cynthia Wilbur

Approved by:

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GSWCC Chairman

Date

 \_\_\_\_\_ 2/1/13

GSWCC Executive Director

Date

November 28, 2012

Garland Thomson  
PO Box 2703  
Douglas GA 31534

Dear Chairman Thomson:

It is with great sadness that I must resign my appointed position as a Clarke County supervisor on the Oconee River SWCD. For the last thirty-nine years I have enjoyed working with the individuals in the community and the Conservation Commission to promote sound conservation practices. Unfortunately due to my health I will be unable to continue.

I wish the Commission and the District all the best.

Sincerely,

*Balfour Hunnicutt*

