

Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission

July 9, 2015 – Union County Agricultural Services Center

Marysville, OH

Approved Meeting Summary

Call to Order (8:30 a.m.)

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call Commission Members Present

Chairman Tom Price	Bill Knapke
Vice-Chairman Fred Cash	Bill Tom
Etta Reed	Larry Vance

Ex-Officio Members Present

Kevin Elder	Kris Swartz
Russ Gibson	Mike Bailey
Scott Shearer	

Additional Attendees

Dorothy Farris (ODNR-DSWR); Rob Hamilton (ODNR-DSWR); Bill Conklin (Union SWCD); Mike Terry (Champaign SWCD); Liz Cline (ODNR-DSWR); Jeff Ankney (ODNR-DSWR); Greg Nageotte (ODNR-DSWR); Lisa Syx (ODNR-DSWR); Brandi Koehler (FSA); Sarah Fullenkamp (FSA); John Schlichter (ODA); Kirk Hines (ODNR-DSWR); Jennifer Fish (Franklin SWCD); Steve Hawkins (OFSWCD Area 5); Martin Joyce (ODNR-DSWR); Ronda Tipton (ODNR-DSWR); Steve Stolte (Union County Commission)

Welcome to Union County – Steve Stolte, Union County Commissioner

County Commissioner Steve Stolte welcomed the group with hope that everyone enjoys their time in Union County. He conveyed pride in Union County industry including Scotts and Honda of America among others. Agriculture is recognized as the county's number one industry, and the commissioners are proud of the Union SWCD Board and staff, and appreciate all the assistance the SWCD provides.

Agenda and Minutes

Chairman Price called the meeting to order and asked if there were any additions or changes to the day's meeting agenda as presented.

Action: Fred Cash moved to accept the July 9, 2015 meeting agenda as presented. Etta Reed seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Price then asked if there any additions or corrections to the April 22, 2015 draft meeting minutes, as presented.

Action: Larry Vance moved to approve the April 22, 2015 meeting minutes as presented. Scott Shearer seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commission Member Reports

Chairman Price introduced new OSWCC member, Mr. Bill Tom.

Bill Tom: Conveyed his pleasure to serve the commission and Governor and provided some background: prior to his current position as vice president of risk management/customer solutions for Trupointe Cooperative, Inc. he was with Cargill AgHorizons as the General Manager and Farm Service Group leader for the greater Ohio region. Tom was raised on a beef farm in southeastern Ohio and currently resides in Spring Valley, Ohio. A graduate of The Ohio State University with an animal science degree, Tom has extensive experience in the beef industry, animal nutrition and general agriculture. Also, he is Beef Department Director at the Ohio State Fair.

Bill Knapke: Attended a meeting in Des Moines, Iowa where Iowa DNR shared innovative ways to reduce nutrients. Many others are dealing with the issue.

Larry Vance: He reminded the commission and audience that during the upcoming Ag Hall of Fame breakfast at the Ohio State Fair many of the inductees have longtime and strong ties to soil and water conservation here in Ohio.

Etta Reed: Need topics for monthly NACD webinars or anyone from SWCDs can present.

Russ Gibson: Overseeing 4 Areas of Concern on Lake Erie: Maumee, Black, Cuyahoga, and Ashtabula. Ashtabula is closer to delisting – the only thing left to address is fish habitat. Good examples of success despite high profile issues.

Fred Cash had nothing to report

Scott Shearer had nothing to report

Kevin Elder had nothing to report

Recognition of Guests and Public Comment

Chairman Price opened the floor to anyone who would like to provide public comment.

Steve Robinson reported as Chair of the National Conservation Foundation (NCF), which is a 501(c) 3 affiliated with NACD. The NCF Board is comprised of 18 regional representatives approved by the NACD Executive Board. The NCF adopted the National Envirothon, a 25-year program reaching over 500,000 high school students nationally. The national contest is in Springfield, MO with 57 teams attending. Smithfield Foods, which does business in 25 states, is providing funds and 44,000 volunteers for National Envirothon. NCF is currently focused on fundraising. Funds could go back to SWCDs or NACD as grants if fundraising is successful. Larry Vance asked about honoring NACD past presidents. Steve reporting they're considering a "Wall of Presidents," which would include 4 from Ohio.

OSWCC Appointments

Request to appoint Josh Williams to fill expired term of Christopher Smalley on the Jackson SWCD Board of Supervisors.

Action: A motion was made by Larry Vance to approve the appointment of Josh Williams to fill expired term of Christopher Smalley on the Jackson SWCD Board of Supervisors. Kris Swartz seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Joint Boards

No joint board requests

Legislative Updates – HB 64 “Budget Bill”

Mike Bailey provided background on HB 64, which was signed by the Governor on June 30, 2015. There were no cuts to the DSWR budget. \$10.9 million is available State Fiscal Year 2016. \$350,000 per year was added for Lake Erie SB1 implementation including hiring and training staff. \$1 million per year is budgeted for Clean Lakes Program implementation and monitoring.

Mike Bailey provided a brief history of the Division of Soil and Water Resources. HB 64 creates a new Division of Soil and Water Conservation with Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA). ODNR retains Division of Water. This will essentially divide programs based on pre-2010 organization. DSWR storm water program will be transferred to Ohio EPA, and silviculture assistance will move to ODNR Division of Forestry. The change is to be effective January 1, 2016. Agency directors and the Governor’s Office are committed to a smooth transition with minimum disruption to assistance. Department of Administrative Services will coordinate transition logistics.

Chairman Price invited members to comment on the transition.

Kevin Elder offered no comment.

Russ Gibson conveyed that Ohio EPA is anxious to bring on the DSWR storm water program and committed to making the transition as smooth as possible. The nonpoint source program is also committed to continuing working relationship with the division and SWCDs.

Scott Shearer said OSU Extension is willing to work with appropriate organizations and looking forward to future interaction.

Kris Swartz said OFSWCD wants to help ensure that SWCDs retain all current authorities.

Etta Reed expressed the need to maintain urban programs, and she will make herself available.

Larry Vance expressed concern with how the next budget for the division and SWCDs will be formulated including the status of revenue streams from Solid Waste tipping fees and Scrap tire fees. Mr. Vance recommends consideration of how these sources are maintained or replaced.

Bill Knapke noted there will be unforeseen challenges, but confident that all will work through this. Other observed reorganizations usually turn out to benefit everyone.

Bill Tom requested that people are looked after and talent is retained, and maintain urban SWCD programs.

Fred Cash expressed concern that SWCD urban programs will not be lost, and he appreciated Larry Vance's comments regarding the budget.

John Schlichter, Deputy Director, ODA, conveyed Director Daniel's and ODA's commitment to making the transition work. Rural and urban programs can fit together. It's recognized that SWCDs provide "boots on the ground, and first responders."

Kris Swartz commented that he had positive interaction with ODA Director and OFSWCD concerns were listened to. He believes ODA is aware of the urban program concerns and will not allow them to be diminished.

Action: Fred Cash moved to support the reorganization. Scott Shearer seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Legislative Updates – SB1

Mike Bailey provided an overview of SB1, which prohibits manure application on frozen or saturated ground within the Western Lake Erie Basin. Rules are under development in coordination with Department of Agriculture.

Joint Board Task Force Survey

Dorothy Farris provided an overview of survey results. The survey was distributed to SWCDs regarding the Joint Board Task Force (JBTF) recommendations. (Attachments). Discussion followed. Larry Vance noted survey comments regarding concerns of merging SWCDs. Kris Swartz clarified that the number one goal of the JBTF was to not set up a means to combine districts. Kevin Elder asked whether Joint Boards would be able to hire given that Joint Boards have authorities of an SWCD. Dorothy Farris clarified that JBTF recommends Joint Boards have a select subset of authorities of SWCDs, and be able to contract but not hire directly. Fred Cash said JBTF members heard all reasons why Joint Boards may be formed and asked whether these policies fit each situation, while noting the need for adequate oversight.

Action: Fred Cash moved to accept the Joint Board Task Force recommendations. Larry Vance seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Conservation Assistance Grant Program

Dorothy Farris provided an overview of recent Conservation Assistance Grant Program final grant reports. (Attachment) Mike Bailey commended staff for facilitating a process that results in proposals that are less than the maximum amount. Dorothy Farris described program eligibility. Chad Amos, Jeff Ankney, and Rob Hamilton each provided status/progress of applicant SWCDs - Morgan, Lucas, Jackson and Vinton respectively.

Action: Larry Vance moved to award Conservation Assistance grants for FY 2016 as proposed: Morgan SWCD - \$21,250, Lucas SWCD - \$25,000, Jackson SWCD - \$6,250, Vinton SWCD - \$1337. Bill Tom seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Non-point Source Education Grants

Dorothy Farris provided an overview of 2015 proposals. (Attachments)

Action: Larry Vance moved to allocate \$20,000 to the Non-point Source Education Grant Program for FY 2016. Bill Tom seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Grand Lake St. Marys Technical Support

Mike Bailey reported on progress at Grand Lake St. Marys as a “distressed watershed.” Planning and storage complete. Plans need to be maintained. Only one enforcement action is needed. Bill Knapke noted that the relationship between SWCDs and producers has grown with better communication. SWCD is working on a \$3.5 million EQIP application for on-farm composters.

Action: Bill Knapke moved to allocate \$70,000 to Mercer SWCD for Grand Lake St. Marys technical assistance for FY 2016. Kris Swartz seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agricultural Pollution Abatement

Mike Bailey described that \$5,000 to \$15,000 cost-share projects are offered to address verified agricultural pollution incidents.

Action: Fred Cash moved to approve \$150,000 for Agricultural Pollution Abatement Program cost-share for FY2016. Second by Bill Knapke. The motion carried unanimously.

Watershed Coordinator Grant Program

Greg Nageotte provided an update and overview of the Ohio Watershed Coordinator Grant Program noting that ODNR divisions of Wildlife and Mineral Resources Management both continue to support the program. The request of \$175,000 will enable DSWR to meet current grant obligations and award 3 additional or renewed grants this fiscal year. The focus for new or renewed grants will be on Western Basin Lake Erie watersheds. The SFY 2014 and previous program reports are available on the DSWR Web site.

Action: Bill Tom moved to allocate \$175,000 for FY2016 to the Ohio Watershed Coordinator Grant Program. Etta Reed seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Soil and Water Information Management System (SWIMS)

Martin Joyce provided an update on the need to replace or abandon SWIMS. The program is outdated. A function analysis of SWIMS was completed. Three replacement programs are under review. All are “off the shelf” but will require some customization. \$140,000 is requested, of which \$40,000 will be use to maintain current program, and \$100,000 for new program development. Maintenance on the current program is “pay as you go,” therefore the entire \$40,000 may not be necessary. Any remaining will be added to the \$100,000 allocation requested for new program development. Cost on a new program is unknown at this time. Dorothy Farris noted that ballpark estimates are encouraging, as well as general SWCD support for SWIMS.

Fred Cash asked whether vendors understand our program and expectations. Will they address our needs, such as use of mobile devices? Martin Joyce clarified that the results of the functional analysis will be part of the development process. SWCDs will be involved in every step, including any customization. Bill Knapke asked whether other states were using programs. Martin Joyce said the 2 currently being assessed are being used in other states and SWCDs, and users will be contacted for references.

Action: Bill Tom moved to allocate \$140,000 for FY2016 for SWIMS maintenance and program development. Bill Knapke seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Farmland Preservation Monitoring Grants

Mike Bailey provided an overview and status. SWCDs were surveyed to ensure funds provided are sufficient, which was confirmed. Mike Bailey described the process for accessing funds.

SWCDs receive \$100/easement. Discussion with Denise King, ODA, confirmed continued support.

Action: Etta Reed moved to allocate \$13,200 for FY2016 for Farmland Preservation Monitoring Grants. Larry Vance seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

SFY 2016 State Match Appropriation

Lisa Syx provided an overview of revenue noting that tipping fees have been consistent. The new distribution formula was described. (Attachment)

Fred Cash noted an apparent trend of reductions of match to urban SWCD, and requested such a trend be monitored.

Larry Vance noted that half of the 88 SWCDs receive increases in SFY 2015, while the other half receives decreases. He emphasized the importance of maintaining a base level of support for all SWCDs.

Chairman Price requested that Dorothy Farris investigate and report on any commonality between SWCDs receiving decreases.

Lisa Syx speculated that the decreases are due to a combination of using the new distribution formula and lower local appropriation.

Action: Bill Knapke moved to appropriate the SFY 2016 State Match to SWCDs as presented. Bill Tom seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agency Reports

OSU – Steve Shearer: The Hypoxia Task Force meeting was held in Columbus during the week of May 18. NOAA developed a weather based runoff risk model for Wisconsin as a pilot project, and may develop for Ohio. The model will provide producers with a tool to estimate nutrient runoff. NOAA is complimentary of Ohio organizations cooperating to deal with issues. Vice President, Bruce McPheron, conveyed commitment for universities working together.

NRCS - Mark Smith: 9 Special Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) projects awarded this year. A total decrease of funds is an outcome of the new farm bill. Although long-term funding outlook is down, NRCS is looking for additional funds for Lake Erie. The Tri-State Western Lake Erie Basin Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) sign-up will run until July 17. A lot of public information is being disseminated. The agency is anticipating applications for animal waste facilities due to demand created by SB1. Many of the eligible Conservation Security Program applications were not funded - 68 of 438 were funded. The agency is awaiting \$1.3 million of Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding. A state technical meeting is scheduled for Aug 13 in Celina. This will include a tour of projects installed and evaluate funds spent in the Grand Lake St. Marys watershed. The 4R certification program has resulted in 1.6 million acres certified through dealers and following tristate fertility guide and other criteria. A Conservation Planning course was held for SWCDs in Findlay for non-certified Nutrient Management Plan planners.

FSA – Brandi Koehler: This is the 30th anniversary of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which began under the Reagan administration. Although over 269,000 acres have been approved, enrollment is down 11,000 acres. 26,000 acres under CRP will be expiring this federal fiscal year. This is the 15-anniversary for the Lake Erie Conservation Reserve

Enhancement Program (CREP), and 2600 additional acres have been awarded. The Scioto River CREP has been successful with nearly all of the 70,000 acre goal achieved. Updates were also provided regarding Highly Erodible Land Initiative, CP33 - Habitat for Upland Birds, CP38 - State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement, and CP42 – Pollinator Habitat. General sign-ups will be offered December 1, 2015 through February 26, 2016.

Ohio EPA - Russ Gibson The agency has been fielding questions about storm water personnel moving from ODNR, and Karl Gebhardt wants to assure everyone that there will be no changes to the program. Ohio EPA is excited to be able to implement the Maumee Sediment Reduction program. Projects will include 2-stage channel, 200 acres of wetlands restoration, and stream restoration. The Section 319 nonpoint source grant program is accepting proposals through August 14. Ohio EPA is required by federal guidelines to award half of Ohio's allotment of approximately \$4.5 million to fund on-the-ground projects.

Ohio Department of Agriculture - Kevin Elder: The Livestock and Environmental Permitting Program now includes 212 Facilities. The agency settled 4 violations during the last few months. These were involving winter applications on fields that shouldn't have had applications. Penalties of a few thousand dollars were collected from all 4. The agency is working with DSWR and Animal Health regarding catastrophic animal mortality contingencies given risk of an avian influenza outbreak.

John Schlichter: ODA is working on runoff risk program, and employing a coordinator to work with Wisconsin and NOAA. ODA is also coordinating implementation of SB1 requirements. Over 7000 operators have gone through fertilizer application certification process.

OFSWCD - Mindy Bankey: Preparing for Summer Supervisor School, July 20-21.

Ohio Association of SWCD Employees - Kris Swartz: The organization has new leadership and will be more active.

ODNR - Mike Bailey: ODNR is involved in a national collaboration to adopt 40% P reduction for Lake Erie. Preparations are being finalized for the upcoming state fair, of which the ODNR Natural Resources Park is a big draw. A new animatronic Smokey Bear will be introduced this year. Other exhibits will include a new state park camper and kayak simulator. Also preparing for Farm Science Review, during which Farm Family of the Year will be awarded on Sept. 24. Thanks go out to Delaware, Union, and Franklin SWCDs as well as DSWR staff.

2016 Meetings

Mr. Bailey and Chairman Price asked the OSWCC member about setting dates for the 2016 meetings. It was agreed by consensus that the 2016 OSWCC quarterly meeting would be scheduled for: February 24; April 20; July 20 and November 9. The location of the meetings will be held at the Dept. of Agriculture.

Being no further business before the commission, Larry Vance moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:00 a.m. Fred Cash seconded. Motion carried unanimously.