

MINUTES OF THE
NEBRASKA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING
SEPTEMBER 24, 1996

Those in attendance were:

Robert Bell, Chair	Ken Noonan
Mike Shaughnessy, Member	Ron Milner
Glen Kroese, Member	June Bell
Wilbur Nelson, Member	John Turnbull
Richard Mercer, Member	Marlin Peterman
Robert Gifford, Member	Lynn Heng
Clifford Welsh, Member	Dayle Williamosn, Director
Don Roberts, Member	Jim Cook, Staff
Richard Jiskra, Member	Tom Pesek, Staff
Joseph Hergott, Member	Steve Gaul, Staff
Don Larson, Member	Gayle Starr, Staff
Vince Kramper, Member	
Roy Stewart, Member	
Frank Bartak, Member	
Wayne Davis, Member	

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Robert Bell at approximately 3:00 p.m. in the Hibiscus Room of the Holiday Inn in Kearney, Nebraska.

NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Notice of the meeting was placed in the LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR and the KEARNEY HUB on September 17, 1996, notifying the public of the meeting.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIAL

The following items of informational material were distributed during the course of the meeting and a copy of each is attached to the file copy of the minutes:

1. Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund - Request for Funds for the Todd Dam Site (Project 15-10-2W) from the Upper Big Blue NRD.
2. Soil and Water Conservation Fund Report.
3. Data Bank handout on Spatial/GIS Databases.
4. NRCS Report to the NRC and NARD.
5. Status of Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund.
6. Nebraska Resources Development Fund Present Financial Status.

MINUTES

Motion was made by Kramper and seconded by Stewart to approve the minutes of the August 15, 1996, Commission meeting as distributed. Motion carried.

Aye: Nelson, Mercer, Welsh, Gifford, Davis, Bartak, Kramper, Kroese, Stewart, Larson, Roberts, Hergott, Jiskra, Bell

Nay: None

Not Present: Shaughnessy, Watermeier

EXPENDITURES

Motion was made by Larson and seconded by Roberts to approve the expenditure report for July and August, 1996 as distributed.

Motion carried.

Aye: Mercer, Welsh, Gifford, Davis, Bartak, Kramper, Kroese, Stewart, Larson, Roberts, Hergott, Jiskra, Nelson, Bell

Nay: None

Not Present: Shaughnessy, Watermeier

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Williamson reported that Commission member, Dale Watermeier, had multiple surgeries very recently and was still in St. Elizabeth hospital in Lincoln.

Williamson noted that several additional NRDs are developing Internet capability and have worked with Commission staff in that effort. He also briefly noted that the federal rules on the new environmental quality improvement program should be released in the very near future.

ADVISOR'S COMMENTS

Ken Noonan, representing the Natural Resources Conservation Service, distributed a brief report and commented on the EQIP program, the CRP program, and the Wetlands Reserve program. He also responded to some questions regarding the district advisory groups.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

Richard Mercer, Vince Kramper, and Dayle Williamson each commented on the environmental trust meeting held on Monday. They noted that the Board had made preliminary approval of about 5.5 million dollars of grants. They explained that at their Board meeting in October in Lincoln they would have a hearing on the preliminary approvals and then take final action on the grants for the current year. They added that the applications for the next round of grants are due in November.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Steve Gaul and Dayle Williamson noted that the Lower Platte River Reconnaissance Study regarding flood control and habitat needs was nearing completion. They noted that the study identified several projects that could be feasible projects, but that if feasibility studies are to be completed, a non-federal sponsor will need to pick up 50% of the costs of those studies. Williamson added that the Lower Platte River Coalition will need to get together in the future to discuss this issue.

Gaul explained that the staff has been participating with the Bureau of Reclamation in a water supply study on community and small domestic supply projects. He added that Commission staff have completed most of their responsibilities and the next phase of the study is to be accomplished by the Bureau of Reclamation.

Gaul and Williamson noted that the Southeast Nebraska Stream Degradation Study had been utilized to help convince the Federal Emergency Management Agency to take a different approach on the use of their emergency funds to replace bridges so that they would cost-share on improved bridges to meet the current requirements rather than just paying for replacing bridges to their former standard.

Gaul distributed some informational material concerning Data Bank material that is available through the Internet and a map showing the status of the DOQ project.

LEGISLATIVE & BUDGET COMMITTEE

Jim Cook noted that there was nothing to report regarding interim legislative activity. He explained that none of the interim study resolutions that would be of interest to or affect the Commission or NRDs had been scheduled for any activity by the legislative committees.

Vince Kramper noted that Commission Chair Bell had appointed him to chair a two member committee to develop a budget strategy for the Commission and that he had asked Bob Gifford to serve with him on that committee.

Gayle Starr reported that the director had submitted the Commission's budget request to the Governor's office on September 15 and that the request was basically a continuation request. He distributed a handout that itemized the general fund appropriation for the Resources Development Fund, Soil & Water Conservation Fund, and Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund in recent years.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Tom Pesek distributed the Resources Development Fund Financial Status Report and reviewed that report as well as the Quarterly Report which had been sent to Commission members earlier.

Pesek noted that the Director's recommendation on the Enders Dam project had been sent to Commission members. He noted that the recommendation covered only the irrigation benefits portion of the costs for which the Director is recommending a 90 percent loan. He added that there are on-going negotiations as to whether the irrigation district will be required to pay any of the non-irrigation portion of the costs and when that issue is resolved the director may want to reconsider or amend his recommendation for Commission consideration. Kramper noted that consideration of the Director's recommendation would be on the agenda for the next Commission meeting.

The Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund status report was distributed and Tom Pesek explained that all funds allocated for easement acquisition had been either expended or committed and that he was recommending that the unassigned funds be assigned to the easement fund so that current commitments could be paid. Motion was made by Roberts and seconded by Kroese to transfer \$14,793.42 in unassigned funds to the Easement Fund. Motion carried.

Aye: Welsh, Gifford, Davis, Bartak, Kramper, Shaughnessy, Kroese, Stewart, Larson, Roberts, Hergott, Jiskra, Nelson, Mercer, Bell

Nay: None

Not Present: Watermeier

Lynn Heng of the Nemaha NRD briefed the Commission on the NRD's plans for public use of 46.8 acres associated with South Branch Little Nemaha Site 27. He noted that the NRD wished to acquire 46.8 acres of the 160 acre tract that had been purchased with Small Watersheds Flood Control funds at the appraised value of \$20,400. Motion was made by Kramper and seconded by Jiskra to sell 46.8 acres in the N 1/2, NE 1/4, Section 32-6N-11E associated with South Branch Little Nemaha Site 27 to the Nemaha NRD for the appraised value of \$20,400. Motion carried.

Aye: Gifford, Davis, Bartak, Kramper, Shaughnessy, Kroese, Stewart, Larson, Roberts, Hergott, Jiskra, Nelson, Mercer, Welsh, Bell

Nay: None

Not Present: Watermeier

Pesek reminded the Commission that at the last meeting the Commission had taken action to cost-share on easements and fee titles with the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund at 50 percent of the appraised value because of the lack of funds. He added that a Commission member had requested that item be placed on the agenda to consider changing the policy for fee title acquisitions so that the Commission would cost-share 100 percent on those acquisitions. Don Larson indicated that he had requested this agenda item because he felt that sharing at 100 percent on fee title acquisitions would

encourage sponsors to acquire fee title and therefore help the revolving nature of the fund. Motion was made by Larson and seconded by Jiskra to reinstate, effective immediately, the cost-share on fee title tracts to 100%, provided the subject tract is expected to have a resale value of at least 50% of its purchase price. Motion carried.

Aye: Bartak, Kramper, Shaughnessy, Kroese, Stewart, Larson, Hergott, Jiskra, Nelson, Welsh, Bell

Nay: Davis, Roberts, Mercer, Gifford

Not Present: Watermeier

John Turnbull, Manager of the Upper Big Blue NRD, explained two appraisals on the Todd Dam Site in their NRD for which they are requesting Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund assistance. Motion was made by Bartak and seconded by Jiskra to declare these two easements as being of a high priority and to approve the appraisals on (1) the Smith property (19.74 acres) and commit 50% of \$15,435 for easement; and (2) the Board of Educational Lands and Funds property (12.22 acres) and commit 50% of \$4,800 for easement, both at the Todd Dam Site - Project 15-10-2W. Motion carried.

Aye: Bartak, Kramper, Shaughnessy, Kroese, Stewart, Larson, Roberts, Hergott, Jiskra, Nelson, Mercer, Welsh, Gifford, Davis, Bell

Nay: None

Not Present: Watermeier

Gayle Starr noted that the Soil and Water Conservation Fund Status Report had been distributed to Commission members.

PLATTE AND REPUBLICAN RIVER BASIN ISSUES

Jim Cook briefed the Commission on the status of the various issues involving the Platte and Republican River Basins and noted that there had been little change in any of the issues since the last Commission meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Commission will be October 30 & 31, 1996 in Lincoln.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30 p.m.

Chairman

Director of Natural Resources

