

MINUTES OF THE NEBRASKA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 29, 1998

Those in attendance were:

Vince Kramper, Chair	Tom Moser
Donald Roberts, Member	Jim Wortman
Joseph Hergott, Member	Dick Grosvenor
Dale Watermeier, Member	Steve Chick
Beverly Donaldson, Member	DeLynn Hay
Frank Bartak, Member	Stan Staab
Roy Stewart, Member	Mike Jess
Wayne Davis, Member	Dayle Williamson, Director
Richard Mercer, Member	Jim Cook, Staff
LeRoy Pieper, Member	Josh Lear, Staff
Mike Shaughnessy, Member	Steve Gaul, Staff
Clifford Welsh, Member	Tom Pesek, Staff
Richard Jiskra, Member	

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Vince Kramper, in the Board Room of the Ramada Inn in Kearney, Nebraska at approximately 2:30 p.m. Kramper noted that Wilbur Nelson's son, Ron Nelson, has been appointed by the Governor to fill his term as the surface water irrigators representative.

NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Notice of the meeting was placed in the LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR and the KEARNEY HUB on September 22, 1998, informing 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. Natural Resources Conservation Service Report to the Nebraska Natural Resources
2. Commission and Nebraska Association of Resources Districts, September 1998.
3. Soil and Water Conservation Fund Expenditures Report, September 1998.
4. Soil & Water Conservation Fund Report, September 24, 1998.
5. Nebraska Resources Development Fund Present Financial Status Report, September 28, 1998.
6. Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund, Status of Fund Report, September 28, 1998.
7. USDA/EPA Draft Unified National Strategy for Animal Funding Operations, September 11, 1998
8. NACD "Conservation Bits", September 25, 1998.
9. LB 1085 Report - Errata Sheet.
10. 1998 Nebraska Resources Development Fund Biennial Report.
11. Natural Resources Enhancement Fund Distribution - September 1998.
12. Rough Estimate of Comprehensive Planning Section Time Allocations - 1998.

MINUTES

Motion was made by Davis and seconded by Jiskra to approve the minutes of the August 20, 1998, Commission meeting as distributed. Motion carried.

Aye: Shaughnessy, Stewart, Roberts, Hergott, Jiskra, Watermeier, Mercer, Welsh, Davis, Donaldson, Pieper, Bartak, Kramper
Nay: None
Not Present: Larson, Kroese, Nelson

EXPENDITURES

Motion was made by Roberts and seconded by Stewart to approve the expenditures for July and August, 1998, as distributed Motion carried.

Aye: Stewart, Roberts, Hergott, Jiskra, Watermeier, Mercer, Welsh, Davis, Donaldson, Pieper, Bartak, Shaughnessy, Kramper
Nay: None
Not Present: Larson, Kroese, Nelson

ADVISOR'S COMMENTS

Steve Chick commented that he felt the NARD conference was excellent and reviewed the NRCS Report to the Commission. He reported on the upcoming Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) sign-up, funding for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), the Clean Water Action Plan, and the P.L. 566 Watershed Program. He noted that a construction contract has been let for Aowa Creek Site 43- 9A and that a construction contract for Middle Big Nemaha Site 12 will be let in October. In regard to the Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D), he reported that six RC&Ds have been approved and funded in Nebraska and there are pending applications for two others (Nebraska Loess Hills and Trail Blazer). He also noted current personnel vacancies and positions that were filled in FY 1998.

Mike Jess reported that in October the U.S. Supreme Court will decide whether it will hear the lawsuit between Kansas and Nebraska on the Republican River. If it decides a lawsuit can proceed, the court would later appoint a special water master for the case.

Stan Staab thanked the Commission for its assistance with the Pender Flood Control Project. He reported that the project is about 50% complete and that the contractor has been doing excellent work and is cooperating well with the community.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

Dick Mercer reported that 166 applications have been received and are being reviewed by the technical advisors. The applications total \$50,000,000 in requested funds versus the \$12,000,00 available. Projects will be selected for funding in February 1999.

PLATTE & REPUBLICAN RIVER ACTIVITIES

Dayle Williamson reported that the Land Committee's progress has been impeded by an opposing group and the misunderstanding of some counties. Jim Cook noted that he recently participated in a KRVN radio discussion regarding Platte River issues. He also affirmed Mike Jess's report on the status of the Republican River lawsuit at the U.S. Supreme Court.

LB 1085 REPORT

Steve Gaul noted that the 1085 report has been mailed out. He also pointed out some minor omissions in the report and explained the corrections that have been made. He noted that Commissioners had received two "stick on" items to make corrections and that a corrected Appendix C was available.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Tom Pesek distributed the Soil and Water Conservation Status Report and briefly reviewed it.

Cliff Welsh explained that the Special Commission Committee was formed to review the original intent of the program and the issue of NRI accuracy. The committee will also look at past funding adjustments when it meets during the October Commission meeting.

Tom Pesek discussed the Resources Development Fund Status Report. Jim Cook explained that the amendments to the NRDF rules and regulations basically deal with how funds are obligated to approved projects. He recommended that the Commission schedule a public hearing on the amendments to the rules and regulations to be held at the December Commission meeting. Motion was made by Bartak and seconded by Roberts to hold a public hearing regarding the amendments to the rules and regulations on the Annual Priority Process at the December 9-10, 1998, Commission meeting. Motion carried.

Aye: Roberts, Hergott, Jiskra, Watermeier, Mercer, Welsh, Davis, Donaldson, Pieper, Bartak, Shaughnessy, Stewart, and Kramper

Nay: None

Not Present: Larson, Kroese, Nelson

Pesek reviewed the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund Status Report and noted that the Game and Parks Commission has submitted a request to purchase the 194.2 acre tract of land at Middle Big Nemaha Site 46. The Nemaha NRD had used \$94,672.50 in program funds to purchase the tract in 1995. The Game and Parks Commission has approved purchase at the appraised market value of \$135,000. Bruce Sackett of the Game and Parks Commission explained the public uses that would be made of the tract as a Wildlife Management Area and noted that the tract is adjacent to the existing Hickory Ridge Wildlife Management Area. In response to a question he explained that Game and Parks will pay local property taxes each year based on the tract's assessed valuation. No permits are needed for the public to use wildlife management areas which are partially funded with Habitat Stamp revenue. Motion was made by Bartak and seconded by Mercer to approve the sale of the 194.2 acre Schmidt tract at Middle Big Nemaha Site 46 to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission at the appraised value of \$135,000.00.

Aye: Hergott, Jiskra, Watermeier, Mercer, Welsh, Davis, Donaldson, Pieper, Bartak, Shaughnessy, Stewart, Roberts and Kramper

Nay: None

Not Present: Larson, Kroese, Nelson

Tom Pesek briefly reviewed the status report for the Natural Resources Enhancement Fund.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Steve Gaul reported on Comprehensive Planning and Data Bank activities and distributed and reviewed an estimate of Comprehensive Planning Section staff time allocations. He indicated that the staff would be examining the Comprehensive Planning Section's role and potential future activity in one or more brainstorming sessions over the next few months.

Josh Lear gave a presentation regarding SSURGO Soils and reviewed the status of that work including the five year schedule.

Gaul gave an update on other planning activities including the Nitrate and Rural/Small Community Water Supply Study being done with the Bureau of Reclamation. In regard to Commission questions on updating the Policy Issue Studies, Gaul said the staff would like to look at this in the next few months and then make a recommendation to the Commission. Mike Jess suggested it would be useful for the staff to review the Policy Issue Studies for the Commission. Cliff Welsh said he is interested in seeing how we can better manage our existing information and make it more accessible to the public. Mike Shaughnessy suggested entering the Policy Issue Study reports on CD-ROM. Vince Kramper concluded discussion by directing the staff to determine the best course of action to follow and report back to the Commission.

Gaul indicated that an Ad Hoc Data Bank Advisory Committee was being formed to assist the Data Bank on issues related to development and improvement of a number of natural resources data bases. Gaul mentioned each data base and noted that some of them were also discussed in the white papers presented in the previous Commission meeting.

COMMISSION RETREAT

Dayle Williamson suggested that this needs to be considered after the first of the new year but the Commission set no date for the retreat.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Commission will be held October 28-29, 1998, in Lincoln. Jim Cook commented that a hearing will be held in South Sioux City on October 16, 1998, regarding the merger of Drainage District #5 with the Papio-Missouri River NRD. Dale Watermeier asked that Amendment 413 be placed on the agenda for the October meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:10 p.m.

Chairman

Director of Natural Resources