

MINUTES OF THE

NEBRASKA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

OCTOBER 26, 2000

Those in attendance were:

Richard Jiskra, Chair
Joseph Hergott, Member
Don Larson, Member
Vince Kramper, Member
Beverly Donaldson, Member
Roy Stewart, Member
Wayne Davis, Member
LeRoy Pieper, Member
Robert Hahn, Member
Richard Mercer, Member
Don Roberts, Member
Jim Van Marter, Member

Roger Korrell, Member
Wayne Madsen, Member
Frank Bartak, Member
Rich Torpin
Dennis Schueth
Stan Staab
Bobbie Kruz-Wickham
Dayle Williamson, Staff
Jim Cook, Staff
Tom Pesek, Staff
Gayle Starr, Staff

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Richard Jiskra, at approximately 10:00 a.m. in the meeting room of the Lower Platte South NRD in Lincoln.

NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Notice was placed in the LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR on OCTOBER 18, 2000, 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. Natural Resources Conservation Service Report to the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission and Nebraska Association of Resources Districts, Oct. 2000.
2. Soil & Water Conservation Fund Report.
3. Semi-Annual Review of NRDF Projects.
4. Nebraska Resources Development Fund Present Financial Status Report
5. Status of Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund
6. Natural Resources Enhancement Fund Receipts.
7. Water Well Decommissioning Cash Fund.

8. Minutes of the Program Committee Meeting.
9. DNR – NE Soil and Water Conservation Fund – Republican Basin Surface Water Meter Program
10. Memo of File on Summary of Auctioneer Bids for FY 2001 Sale.

MINUTES

Motion was made by Kramper and seconded by Roberts to approve the minutes of the September 27, 2000, Commission meeting as distributed. Motion carried.

Aye: Madsen, Van Marter, Stewart, Hahn, Roberts, Hergott, Davis, Donaldson, Mercer, Pieper, Bartak, Larson, Kramper, Korell, Jiskra

Nay: None

Not Present: Johannes

EXPENDITURES

An expenditure report concerning the various funds administered by the Commission was made available to Commission members and was made a part of the record of these minutes.

AGENCY REPORT

Dayle Williamson reported that Roger Patterson and Ann Bleed had spent a significant amount of time on the Nebraska-Wyoming negotiations and they will become very time-consuming as the December deadline nears. Williamson also discussed the carbon sequestration issue and the on-going efforts on the Cooperative Agreement and that a two-year extension is being considered at the present time. Dayle also reviewed the schedule for the agency open house to be held in the afternoon. He noted that the Commission members would be meeting with Governor Johann's in the Agriculture Department conference room at 1:30 and that the agency open house would be from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

ADVISOR'S COMMENTS

Rich Torpin, representing the Natural Resources Conservation Service, distributed a report and briefly commented on the NRCS budget situation, the drought situation, the Emergency Watershed Protection Program, and the Environmental Quality Improvement Program.

Dennis Schueth, Manager of the Upper Elkhorn NRD and the current chair of the Manager's Committee, briefly reviewed several issues that the managers will be addressing at their November 1 meeting in O'Neill.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

Vince Kramper and Richard Mercer briefly reported on Environmental Trust activities and indicated that the Application Review Committee would be starting their work in the very near future and that the money available would be able to fund only a small portion of the applications. Mercer indicated that Mary Harding, the Trust Director, was beginning work on the Foundation that was authorized by the last session of the Legislature.

PLATTE RIVER ISSUES

Jim Cook briefly reviewed the recent cooperative agreement activities and noted that Dayle Williamson was chairing the committee working on an extension of the Cooperative Agreement activities.

REPUBLICAN BASIN ISSUES

Jim Cook briefly reviewed the decisions recently handed down by the Special Master. He explained that the significant decisions were that the Special Master had indicated that the trial should be in about two and half years instead of the five to six years that Nebraska desired, that all groundwater that impacted streamflow was covered by the compact and that the parties that had requested to be Amici (friends of the court) would not be allowed to be direct parties to the

lawsuit. He added that one significant question to be answered was what groundwater wells actually impact the streamflow and that it might require a technical study similar to the CoHyst Study currently underway in the Platte River Basin.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Robert Hahn indicated that the committee had met earlier this morning and that Rich Torpin of NRCS had provided a presentation on the Carbon Sequestration issue and the activities that NRCS is involved with on that issue. He also indicated that Steve Gaul had provided an update on Planning and Assistance activities and Mahendra Bansal had discussed Data Bank activities including some information technology developments that are likely to take place over the next several years. He added that as a result of Dan Wiley's request at the last Commission meeting the staff would be working with him and county weed officials in the Panhandle to see if the weed infestation areas can be added as a GIS layer.

Rich Kern briefed the committee on the progress being made on the CoHyst Study. Kern indicated that as a result of the group's work they had discovered that there were additional areas that needed further study and that the group was working on those additional study areas and had submitted a request to the Environmental Trust for additional funding.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Joe Hergott indicated that the committee had met yesterday afternoon and had reviewed the Resources Development Fund status and a semi-annual review of projects as well as a status report on the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund.

He explained that the staff had solicited bids for the auctioning of two properties in the Swan Creek Watershed in January and had received three bids that the committee had reviewed. Motion was made by Hergott and seconded by Madsen to accept the bid of Don Vrana (1.49 percent of the sale price if the high bid is accepted and 0 dollars if the high bid is rejected) for the auction of the Homolka tract (154.4 acres) at Swan Creek Site 9 and the Deke tract (160 acres) at Swan Creek Site 31. Motion carried.

Aye: Van Marter, Stewart, Hahn, Roberts, Hergott, Davis, Donaldson, Mercer, Pieper, Bartak, Larson, Kramper, Korell, Madsen, Jiskra

Nay: None

Not Present: Johannes

Hergott explained that John Thorburn, Manager of the Tri-Basin NRD, had appeared before the committee to discuss their NRD's request to add sub-surface drip irrigation to the Soil and Water Conservation Fund irrigation water management practice. He indicated that the committee had discussed the proposal at some length and had asked Thorburn to provide additional information to the committee at the next meeting and to ask an irrigation specialist from UNL to attend the next meeting to provide the Commission with additional information.

Hergott said that Gayle Starr had distributed status reports for the Soil & Water Conservation Fund, Republican Basin Water Meter fund, the Natural Resources Enhancement Fund and the Water Well Decommissioning Fund.

Jim Cook explained that he had attended a hearing of the Natural Resources Committee in Grand Island on November 18 and had testified on the Water Banking and Leasing proposals. He added that it appeared as though the committee would not be taking any action on these topics during the next legislative session. Cook also indicated that the agency had submitted seven separate legislative proposals to the Governor's office for their review. He added that the proposals were primarily related to water rights issues and were primarily dealing with minor corrective type issues.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Commission will be December 6 & 7, 2000 in Lincoln.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:10 a.m.

Chairman

Director of Natural Resources