

## MINUTES OF THE

# NEBRASKA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

SEPTEMBER 27, 2000

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### Those in attendance were:

Richard Jiskra, Chair	Beverly Donaldson, Member
Joe Hergott, Member	Don Larson, Member
Don Roberts, Member	Roger Korell, Member
Jim Van Marter, Member	Wayne Madsen, Member
Dick Mercer, Member	LeRoy Pieper, Member
Bob Hahn, Member	Glenn Johnson
Wayne Davis, Member	James Huntwork
Frank Bartak, Member	Dayle Williamson, Staff
Roy Stewart, Member	Jim Cook, Staff
Vince Kramper, Member	Tom Pesek, Staff
	Gayle Starr, Staff

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Richard Jiskra, in the Executive meeting room of the Holiday Inn in Kearney, Nebraska, at approximately 8:00 a.m.

### NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Notice of the meeting was placed in the LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR and the KEARNEY HUB 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. Department of Natural Resources – Current Budget & Budget Request Summary.
2. Fiscal Year 1999-2000 Distributions by NRD.
3. Soil & Water Conservation Fund – Expenditures by Month 1993-2000.
4. Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Fund – Republican Basin Surface Water Meter Program Summary.
5. Water Well Commissioning Cash Fund.
6. Natural Resources Enhancement Fund Receipts.
7. Status of Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund.
8. Resources Development Fund Present Financial Status.
9. NRCS Report to the NRC and NARD.

## MINUTES

Gayle Starr noted that a correction to the minutes was included in Commission member's explanation paper. Motion was made by Kramper and seconded by Van Marter to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2000 Commission meeting with the correction. Motion carried.

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

Nay: None

Not Present: None

## EXPENDITURES

Gayle Starr explained that the expenditure report to the Commission members was different than the previous expenditure reports because of the merger. He explained that the expenditure report provided to Commission members included only the funds administered by the Commission and the department. Chairman Jiskra noted that the minutes should reflect that the report was received by the Commission members and placed on file with the Commission minutes.

## ADVISOR'S COMMENTS

James Huntwork, the District Conservationist at Grand Island representing the Natural Resources Conservation Service, distributed a report from State Conservationist Steve Chick. He briefly reviewed information relating to the Environmental Quality Incentive program, the Wetlands Reserve Program, Carbon Sequestration issues and recent NRCS staff changes.

## DEPARTMENT REPORT

Dayle Williamson indicated that Roger Patterson and Ann Bleed were in Denver meeting with Wyoming officials concerning the Wyoming-Nebraska negotiations.

He distributed copies of some information from the Lincoln paper concerning Dale Watermeier and a statement that Steve Chick had written and distributed to a number of people. He added that the pallbearers for Dale's funeral represented the conservation partnership, including the department, the NRDs, the state association and the NRCS.

Dayle noted that the department had hired David Vogler who is an attorney to assist Jim Cook with legal work. He added that David was previously employed by the Governor's Policy Research Office.

Dayle added that Roger and Ann are working hard on continuing negotiations with Wyoming to settle the Nebraska v. Wyoming lawsuit on the North Platte River. He noted that while there were a number of issues yet to be resolved, that they are confident they can be resolved before the December deadline. Dayle explained that the Governance Committee regarding the Platte River Cooperative Agreement is continuing to discuss the need for an extension of that agreement.

## PLATTE AND REPUBLICAN RIVER ACTIVITIES

Jim Cook explain that work is proceeding on the Cooperative Agreement but the progress in some areas has been slow. He added that while the CoHyst Study is nearing completion of its currently outlined work, there appears to be a need for additional work and funds are being requested from the Environmental Trust for that work.

With regard to the Republican River lawsuit, he explained that the parties to the lawsuit had filed memorandums with the special master suggesting their ideas of how the various aspects of the lawsuit should proceed and a time frame for that process. He noted that Nebraska is suggesting a longer time frame than Kansas is because Kansas has done more work on technical aspects and preparation.

## ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

Vince Kramper noted that the Trust had received 141 applications, some of those being repeat applications from last year, for a total of about \$41,000,000. He noted that the Trust Board would be receiving the preliminary decisions at their February 14 meeting and that the grants would be finalized at a later date.

Dick Mercer noted that the Trust has been working on establishing the Foundation that was authorized this past legislative session. He added that they are looking at seeking some large donors to help fund that Foundation and that only the interest from the assets on hand would be utilized for environmental trust grants. Mercer added that the eight-year total allocation from the lottery was approximately 132 Million Dollars for all recipients and that the Environmental Trust had received approximately 46 Million dollars of that total.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Robert Hahn indicated that the Comprehensive Planning Committee had met at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday evening and that all of the Commission members had been present. He noted that Steve Gaul had reviewed the annual report for the planning and review process with Commission members and had noted that this report previously needed Commission approval but that the merger bill changed that. He added that Steve Gaul asked for Commission members input and comments on the report. He added that Gaul had discussed a workload distribution chart for the Planning and Assistance Division with the committee and explained the efforts that were being made to receive input from NRDs and others and to work toward providing assistance to local planning needs.

Hahn indicated that Dan Wiley, Manager of the Upper Niobrara White NRD, had appeared before the committee to discuss the efforts being made in his NRD and others in the panhandle to map weed infestation areas with GPS equipment. He added that Wiley asked that the department consider including this data as a database available on-line through the agency's Natural Resources Data Bank.

## PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Hergott indicated that the Program Committee had also met on Tuesday evening with all Commission members present. He explained that the Resources Development Fund status report had been reviewed and that Glenn Johnson, Manager of the Lower Platte South NRD, had advised the committee that the NRD had suspended activity regarding Weeping Water Site 7g and had returned the \$590,499 that the Commission had obligated for land rights for Site 7g. It was noted that no Commission action was necessary since the NRD had returned the funds.

Hergott noted that Lynn Heng, Manager of the Nemaha NRD, had appeared at the committee meeting to discuss the changes involving Upper Little Nemaha, Site 31 and the need to delete that structure and replace it with two upstream structures. Motion was made by Hergott and seconded by Kramper to approve the Nemaha NRD's request for an increased allocation of \$20,000 for component 10 increasing the total project approval from \$3,391,003.31 to \$3,411,003.34. Motion carried.

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

Nay: None

Not Present: None

Hergott noted that Mike Onnen, Manager of the Little Blue NRD, had presented information to the committee concerning groundwater recharge benefits received on two structures built in the Big Sandy Creek Watershed with assistance from the Resources Development Fund.

Hergott explained that the committee had received status reports on the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund, Soil & Water Conservation Fund, Republican Basin Ground and Surface Water Meter program, the Natural Resources Enhancement Fund and the Water Well Decommissioning Fund. He added that there had been some discussion on an amendment to the irrigation water management practice of the Water Conservation Fund to add subsurface drip irrigation systems to that practice. He noted that the Tri-Basin NRD had made this request and that action on the request would be scheduled for the next Commission meeting.

#### LOWER PLATTE RIVER BASIN CAUCUS

Gayle Starr explained that with the death of Dale Watermeier it would be necessary to fill that vacancy by conducting a caucus within 30 days. He noted that the Commission needed to establish a time and a place for that caucus and he asked that the Commission take action to delegate responsibility for establishing the time and place to the staff, working in cooperation with the two NRDs primarily involved. Motion was made by Bartak and seconded by Van Marter to delegate responsibility for establishing the caucus for the Lower Platte River Basin to select a replacement for Dale Watermeier on the Commission to the staff. Motion carried.

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

Nay: None

Not Present: None

#### NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Commission will be October 25& 26 in Lincoln at the Lower Platte South NRD. Williamson noted that the department would be holding an open house after the Commission meeting and Governor Johanns planned to be present. He hoped that all Commission members would be able to stay for the open house.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15 a.m.