

**MINUTES OF THE
NEBRASKA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING
March 20, 2008
Lincoln, Nebraska**

Those in attendance were:

Clint Johannes, Chair	Leroy Stokes, NRCS	Rex Gittins, NDNR
Dick Hadenfeldt, Vice Chair	Ron Case, LPSNRD Chair	Ron Theis, NDNR
Jim Van Marter, Member	Scott Sobotka, LBBNRD	Jill Richters, NDNR
Roger Korell, Member	Lorrie Benson, UN-L	Karen Best, NDNR
Larry Moore, Member		Kent Zimmerman, NDNR
David Kadlecek, Member		
Ladd Reeves, Member		
Vince Kramper, Member		
Joseph Hergott, Member		
Keith Rexroth, Member		
Garry Anderson, Member		
Myron Lembke, Member		
Dan Watermeier, Member		

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chairman Clint Johannes in the 9th Floor Conference Room, Hardin Hall, East Campus, Lincoln, Nebraska, at 8:32 a.m.

NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Notice of the meeting was published in the LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR on March 9, 2008. Public meeting statutes were available for review at the back of the room.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIAL

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

1. Commission Meeting Agenda
2. DNR Fund Expenditures for February, 2008
3. NRCS March 2008 Report to the NRC/NARD
 - Invasive Species Control Summit
4. UNL – IANR School of Natural Resources Undergraduate Majors
 - Fifth Annual Water Law, Policy and Science Conference
5. Letter to Senator Loudon from Clint Johannes, Chair NRC
6. Nebraska Resources Development Fund (NRDF):
 - Status Report
 - Quarterly Report
 - Buck & Duck Creek Watershed Project Proposal
 - Lower Turkey Creek Project
 - Site #4 Construction Costs
 - Real Estate Auction Flyer
 - Annual Revisions of the NRDF Guideline

7. Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund Status Report
8. Soil & Water Conservation Fund Status Report
9. Interrelated Water Management Plan Program Fund Status Report
10. Information on Selected Agenda Items (previously mailed to Commission Members)
11. Collection of Water Related News Articles

MINUTES

Motion was made by Kramper and seconded by Van Marter:

To approve the minutes of the February 6, 2008, Legislative and Budget Committee meeting; Program Committee meeting; and the Natural Resources Commission meeting.

No discussion. Motion carried.

Aye: Hadenfeldt, Kadlec, Lembke, Hergott, Kramper, Moore, Reeves, Watermeier, Anderson, Johannes, Rexroth, Van Marter and Korell

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Not Present: Donaldson, Madsen, and Burkholder

EXPENDITURES REPORT

The expenditures report for the various funds for the month of February 2008 had been distributed to Commission members. Extra copies were available. Gittins reported there were no unusual expenditures and most changes from the previous report were due to interest payments and in some cases income contributions from permit fees that support the funds. Gittins also reminded Commissioners that the budget does not reflect the amount available to spend in some cases.

ADVISOR'S COMMENTS

NRCS

LeRoy Stokes, NRCS, distributed and reviewed a summary for March 2008, entitled "Natural Resources Conservation Service Report to the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission and Nebraska Association of Resources Districts" and a brochure for an "Invasive Species Control Summit" to be held May 6, 7 & 8, 2008 in Gering, Nebraska. Both are attached to the official copy of these Minutes and are available for review in the Department.

Stokes extended special thanks from Steve Chick and all NRCS employees in Nebraska to all NRD Managers who attended the NARD Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. for their support of a strong conservation title and of additional technical assistance for NRCS in the Farm Bill. He also thanked Glenn Johnson, LPSNRD Manager, for his remarks to Congressional delegates at the Nebraska Breakfast.

Following Stokes' report, ***Van Marter made a motion, seconded by Rexroth:***

To congratulate Steve Chick on his award "the Chiefs Cup" and thank him for all of the work he does for NRC.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

UN-L

Lorrie Benson, Deputy Program Manager, Water Resources Research Initiative, handed out an IANR brochure and discussed the Fifth Annual Water Law, Policy, and Science Conference to be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Lincoln, NE April 22-23, 2008. She also mentioned the summer Water Tour scheduled for June 3-5 in the Republican basin. Benson then introduced Dr. Ayse Irmak who presented a summary of the latest research on evapotranspiration. A copy of Irmak's presentation is attached to the official copy of these minutes. Rexroth commented that, as a board member with the South Platte NRD, he appreciated her work and would like to see more of this kind of research conducted to provide information for use in setting allocations for effective water management. Moore also added that UNL researchers have been easy to work with, can explain research and results in a way that laypeople can understand, and produce valuable information.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT & UPDATE ON PLATTE/REPUBLICAN ACTIVITIES

Director Bleed was unable to attend as she was required to participate in a meeting of all agency directors with the Governor. Gittins asked if there were any Department-related questions. Hearing none, no further report was given.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

Kramper said that recommendations have been made, and awards will be presented at the next Environmental Trust meeting in a couple of weeks. \$14 million dollars of grants will be funded out of requests totaling \$27 million dollars. The trust will resume funding mini-grants this fall.

LEGISLATIVE & BUDGET COMMITTEE

Rexroth briefly described the Committee meeting which took place the day before. Rexroth stated that the Committee was disappointed with LB 1150 being tabled, but recognized that it was a victim of the gloomy revenue forecast. The Committee recommended that the Commission continue its efforts to increase Development Fund and to continue Interrelated Water Management Plan Program Fund appropriations next year. Rexroth plans to send letters of thanks to those Senators who supported the bill in the interest of keeping those doors open. Moore suggested that this was a good learning experience, adding that it is also important to contact the new Senators as they come into office and keep them up to speed on Commission related activities. Johannes thanked all Commissioners who participated in planning, testifying, and making contacts.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Nebraska Resources Development Fund (NRDF)

Chair Watermeier reported that the Program Committee met at 2:07 p.m. March 19th and he was bringing forward two motions for recommended action.

Winslow Levee Project

Motion by Watermeier, seconded by Van Marter:

To approve the request from the Lower Elkhorn NRD to transfer the remaining \$23,093.31 from Components No. 4 & 5 into Components No. 1 (\$3,000.01), 2 (\$12,489.75) and 3 (\$7,603.55) for the Winslow project.

There was no discussion. Motion carried.

Aye: Van Marter, Watermeier, Moore, Lembke, Reeves, Kramper, Kadlecek, Korell, Johannes, Hadenfeldt, Rexroth and Hergott

Nay: None

Abstain: Anderson

Absent: Burkholder, Madsen and Donaldson

Motion by Watermeier, seconded by Korell:

To approve the request from the Lower Big Blue NRD to authorize NRD staff to perform work “in house” and receive cost-share for the Lower Turkey Creek Watershed project for tree clearing and grubbing, fence removal and replacement, and installation of a grass filter strip around the lake.

There was no further discussion. Motion carried.

Aye: Kadlecek, Korell, Johannes, Kramper, Hergott, Van Marter, Watermeier, Lembke, Reeves, Hadenfeldt, Rexroth and Anderson

Nay: None

Abstain: Moore

Absent: Madsen, Burkholder and Donaldson

All other reports were discussed during the Program Committee meeting and had no unusual business to report. Gittins mentioned the enabling legislation for the IWMPP includes a sunset clause and the Fiscal Year 2008–09 appropriation will be the last appropriation for this fund unless action is taken by the legislature.

SEPARATE MEETING HIGHLIGHTS PAPER

Kadlecek led discussion on the request for staff to prepare a one page summary of the Commission meetings. He stated that Commissioners could use these for updating NRD boards and, if NRD Managers included this in their board members packets, board members would be more likely to read them. A statement should be included on the summary that a copy of the full minutes is available at the DNR web site.

Motion by Kadlecek, seconded by Moore:

To take from the table the motion of Rexroth, seconded by Burkholder, to distribute a one-page summary of the Commission meeting to Commissioners and NRD board Chairs and Managers along with the complete minutes.

There was no discussion. Motion carried.

Aye: Rexroth, Hergott, Kadlecek, Lembke, Reeves, Moore, Kramper, Watermeier, Anderson, Johannes, Hadenfeldt, Korell and Van Marter

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Donaldson, Madsen and Burkholder

Anderson requested the one page summary be e-mailed as well as mailing the hard copy. Gittins noted that a lot of details were omitted from the example prepared for Commissioners, and asked for guidance on limiting content to one page. Kadlecek stated his desire for this to be prepared by staff with staff's interpretation of the important items covered in the Commission meeting. Kadlecek reiterated that he would like to maintain the one page limit and said simple statements for non-routine business (like additional money available for NRD Managers to claim) would be sufficient. Anderson stated that comments about NRCS and UNL advisor reports should be omitted as similar reports are presented at NRD board meetings. It was agreed, however, that the advisors present at the meeting should be identified.

Rexroth made a motion, Burkholder seconded:

To ask that the Director send a one page summary of the Commission meeting to Commissioners and NRD board Chairs and Managers along with the complete minutes.

There was no additional discussion. Motion carried.

Aye: Korell, Rexroth, Kramper, Anderson, Van Marter, Hergott, Hadenfeldt, Lembke, Watermeier, Reeves, Moore, Kadlecek and Johannes

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Burkholder, Donaldson and Madsen

ANNOUNCEMENTS, FUTURE MEETINGS, AGENDA ITEMS

Johannes mentioned that the IWRB plan was sent out to NRD Managers after the February Commission meeting. No comments were received.

Johannes reminded Commissioners they must turn in their *Statement of Financial Interest* by April 1st if they have not already done so.

Anderson stated that after discussion with other Commissioners, most were in favor of continuing to hold Commission meetings in conjunction with the two NARD conferences. Johannes noted that this helps to hold down travel costs and saves time. He also stated a preference for holding full Committee meetings the day before the conference if significant work needs to be done. He added that these meetings should be held at times that do not take away from the NARD meetings.

Zimmerman questioned whether Commissioners would want to be away from home that long. Johannes responded that he would prefer spending an extra day instead of making a separate trip,

but added that a decision could be made after the July meeting based on the volume of business to be addressed.

Moore suggested that the longer Committee meeting could be held on the first evening of NARD conferences, with the shorter meeting slotted into an open period during the day. Korell stated that without Committee meetings, everyone is confused and short-fused. Anderson questioned whether deadlines could be modified to lessen the amount of business required at these meetings. Gittins responded that deadlines had recently been modified with the new ranking and application review schedule for the Resources Development Fund. May and July are now the critical meetings.

Johannes asked whether the Commission desired to continue to have a 15 minute educational presentation like the one today by Ayse Irmak, adding that LPSNRD has presentations like this and finds them beneficial. The Commissioners generally agreed, but requested that topics be pertinent to the Commission and that speakers from across the state be asked to participate. Some suggestions included Gary Hergert from the Panhandle Research & Extension Station and Suat Irmak.

Johannes noted that limitations in NRDF funding compared to requests were discussed at one of the Commission meetings last year where it was suggested that options to deal with this be proposed. He will assign this task to the Executive Committee to develop ideas which will be passed on to the Program Committee where these can be further examined with the intention of presenting recommended actions to the full Commission for approval.

Johannes and Hadenfeldt described the plans for holding the July meeting in Ord, Nebraska at the Lower Loup NRD office. Rexroth announced that he had discussed holding the July meeting in North Platte with Kent Miller, and that since the decision has been made to go to Ord, they would extend the invitation to hold the July meeting at Twin Platte NRD in North Platte next year.

<u>Meeting Dates</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Notes</u>
May 14-15	Lincoln	Annual Obligation
July 16-17	Ord	Summer Tour
September 29-30	Kearney	NARD Conf.
November 19-20	Lincoln	Christmas Party
January 28, 2009	Lincoln	NARD Conf.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:03 a.m.

Natural Resources Commission Chair

Director of Natural Resources