



Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

322 E Front St, Suite 560 • Boise Idaho 83702
Telephone: 208-332-1790 • Fax: 208-332-1799

IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING & TELECONFERENCE

Date and Time:

Thursday, November 5, 2020
10:08 AM – 12:54 PM MT

Location:

322 E. Front St., Suite 560
Boise, Idaho 83702

MINUTES

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Norman Wright (Chair) (Zoom)	Cathy Roemer (Vice-Chair) (teleconference)
Erik Olson (Secretary) (teleconference)	Jerry Trebesch (teleconference)
Wendy Pratt (Zoom)	

COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT:

Teri Murrison	Crystal Rosen
Brenda Charles	Rachel Misnick
Delwyne Trefz (Zoom)	Delwyne Trefz (Zoom)
Bill Lillibridge (teleconference)	Terry Hoebelheinrich (teleconference)
Brad Shelton (Zoom)	Rob Sharpnack (Zoom)
Loretta Strickland (Zoom)	George Hitz (Zoom)
Carolyn Firth (Zoom)	

PARTNERS AND GUESTS PRESENT:

Mike Sommerville, IASCD (Zoom)	Curtis Elke, NRCS (Zoom)
Wendy Green, Adams SWCD (Zoom)	Karen Sharpnack, Wood River SWCD (Zoom)
LeAnn Daman, Benewah SWCD (Zoom)	Durena Farr, Valley SWCD (Zoom)
Art Troutner, Valley SWCD (Zoom)	Paul Kleint, Valley SWCD (Zoom)
Sherry Maupin, Valley County Commissioner (Zoom)	
Clinton Aston, Franklin SWCD (teleconference)	
Bob Flagor, Kootenai-Shoshone SWCD (teleconference)	
Chris Simons, Balanced Rock/North Side/Twin Falls SWCDs (Zoom)	
Shantel Chapple Knowlton, Office of the Attorney General (Zoom)	

ITEM #1: WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Wright called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

Roll call: Chairman Norman Wright, Commissioners Cathy Roemer, Jerry Trebesch, Erik Olson, and Wendy Pratt were present.

ITEM #2: PARTNER REPORTS

Action: None taken

ITEM #3: AGENDA REVIEW

Action: None taken.

ITEM #4: LISTENING SESSION

Art Toutner, Valley SWCD (as personal opinion.): "I just wanted to say how much we, as a District, depend on Technical Assistance from the Commission; without it we would be mostly dead in the water in the last couple of years. I want to stress that it's very important. I read a letter from the Kootenai-Shoshone District Supervisor there that pretty much mirrors my opinion of this fracas that we're having between IASCD and the Commission. I really don't understand it one little bit and am adamantly opposed to doing away with the Commission at this point in time. Thank you."

Duerna Farr, Valley SWCD added to Mr. Troutner's statement: "I started with the District in 2017. So, all my training came from the Commission, I would say. Without the support of Delwyne, and I did do quite a bit of work with Maria, and then I've successfully applied for and acquired 319 grants with the help of Loretta and huge input from Bill Lillibridge. From my vantage I don't know how it works any other way without the Commission. I can't imagine not having those services. We greatly appreciate the work that we've been able to do within our District with the Commission's assistance."

Wendy Green, Adams SWCD: "I want to echo what Art said. I also am speaking from a personal standpoint. Our November district meeting is the 18th, and we will at that point talk about what's going on with the proposed options. We are another small district that depends very heavily on the services that the Commission provides, and I don't know how our little district would survive if those services weren't there for us."

D. Farr: "One other quick comment. I think it also goes back to the relationship with NRCS also because -Adams County I don't want to speak for you. But I know our District where we're not in the close vicinity of an NRCS office it just makes the Commission all the more important to our ability to do our projects; get our projects on the ground with 319 grants."

Curtis Elke, NRCS: "I want to put a shout out to the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and a 'Thank You' to each of them that are on the call today for the signing of the MOAs and the supplemental addendum that was sent out as that was sent out to each of the Conservation Districts on us working together. I'm looking forward to continuing this

great partnership that we have in place and looking for ways we can make it even stronger. So, thank you everyone."

- During a pause in comments from districts and partners there was a brief side discussion about filling the vacant WQRC position. For more information regarding the side discussion please reach out to Commission staff.

Chairman Wright: "Anyone else? This is your time."

D. Farr: "Not to use more than my fair share but I do need to also add that funding continues to be an issue for our District. Even though we are able to do great work with 319 grants it's difficult. Just want that on the record."

Chairman Wright: "I understand your comment very well, Durena! Anyone else? Mrs. Murrison do you have any comments to go along with this or do we need to move on?"

Teri Murrison, SWCC: "Just simply to say that the Board and the staff will certainly miss convening with the Districts at the Conference this year. It's always better to do this in person, but every bit of input that they have for us is greatly appreciated and we take it to heart. The Board figures out how to kind of make folks happy to the extent that they can. So, thank you for this input."

Chairman Wright: "Just to carry that forward we as Commissioners do not work in a vacuum. We do listen to other people and their comments. So, if you have any comments or questions please email us, call us, just don't sit on those questions. There might be a really good comment to your question, or it might be a really good idea. We don't profess to have all the ideas and some of them aren't very good sometimes we've been told. So, please, Districts and employees make sure that you keep giving us some feedback. If you don't think we took your question seriously the first time, ask again. But we would really appreciate that continued flow of information."

T. Murrison: "Mr Chair, I guess maybe it's an appropriate time to mention the Board's plan, Covid permitting, as soon as possible to get board members and Delwyne and myself out either to every District meeting or to regional district meetings to really hear about the concerns that have been expressed about the Matching Funds and to try to work with districts to come up with a restructuring so that it can work better for everybody. Just wanted to commend the Board for that and we're really looking forward to getting out and hearing in a less intimidating forum what Districts are thinking."

Karen Sharpnack, Wood River SWCD: "You're talking about Matching Funds. Is the Matching Funds in statute or is this something that your Commission just can make happen after you talk with all of the districts and have their feedback?"

T. Murrison: "I can start by responding to that and kind of kick it to Delwyne because that's his purview. But yeah they are in statute and to make any changes it will be necessary for statute to change and rule. So, it's not something that can be done this legislative session but we fully anticipate this robust outreach to districts to begin as soon as possible and carry through when new legislative language is due in to the Governor's Office for approval. So that's something we will be working on pretty intensely. Either by Zoom if Covid doesn't go away or in person as we go forward after the holidays."

K. Sharpnack: "Thanks, Teri. So, it sounds like it's in statute so it wouldn't be looked at until after some thought process, talking, and coming back in 2021. Would that be the same thing for reporting? And I'm not speaking for Wood River because we're okay with the reporting but for others we've heard that the reporting mechanism might be a little too intense and they would like to have it maybe zipped back a bit. Is that also in statute or is that something you guys could also work on this year?"

T. Murrison: "Well actually, and Delwyne I'll give you a chance to talk in a second. But it's in rule that we 'may require certain reports' so we looked at that and we have the latitude to change what we ask for and how we ask for it. So that will be a big part of what we'll also be working on with districts after the holidays. Delwyne, did you want to add anything to that? If I got something wrong please correct me."

Delwyne Trefz, SWCC: "No, I can't add anything to that. You covered it, Teri, that's correct. That's our understanding of statute and rule."

C. Elke: "There may be an opportunity for some additional funds for the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and/ or the Commission though some funding that I've set aside for some requests for proposals coming out. I've set aside \$800,000.00 to be exact for some area wide conservation planning. This money is no match money which is even better. So, it's just those who can help us out in getting some of these workload projects completed on the ground and implemented. So, there are some area wide conservation planning, micro-irrigation design work, irrigation water management projects, and CRP assistances are the four requests for proposals that we're going to be sending out statewide. You're the first that I've told about this and I just want make sure that you are aware of some potential opportunities to tap into some of this \$800,000.00 that I've set aside."

T.Murrison: "So to clarify, Curtis, that is actual funding not EQIP/ Farm Bill related?"

C. Elke: "All of this is Farm Bill program related. Everything that I've mentioned is attached to a program of sorts, but it doesn't need to be EQIP specific. It can be any program, or any Farm Bill related association. But it does have to be a Federal program."

Chairman Wright: "Further questions or comments before we move on?"

Bob Flagor: "I just wanted to share with our partners here. In the election we had 2 new people who were elected supervisors. One of them put a statement in the local newspaper saying kind of subjective to serving on our board that we should not accept grants from the Dept. of Agriculture nor the Federal Government. So, I think he doesn't really understand what organization he's getting into. But I just want to warn you that this could be coming to a town near you."

Chairman Wright: "Okay... Any other comments? Hearing none shall we move on, Teri?"

T. Murrison: "Yes, sir."

ITEM #5: ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Action: None taken

ITEM #6: REPORTS

Action: None taken

ITEM #7: MINUTES

Action: Commissioner Olson made a motion to *approve the October 1, 2020 Regular Meeting minutes as submitted*. Commissioner Trebesch seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

ITEM #8: FINANCIAL REPORTS

Action: Commissioner Pratt made a motion to *approve the Financial Reports for the month ended September 30, 2020*. Commissioner Olson seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

ITEM #9: FY 2022 BUDGET REQUEST

Action: Commissioner Trebesch made a motion to *approve the FY 2022 Budget Request Modifications as presented*. Commissioner Pratt seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

ITEM #10: DISTRICT MATCH ALLOCATIONS

Action: Commissioner Olson made a motion to *approve distribution of November match allocations as recommended by staff*. Commissioner Roemer seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

ITEM #11: OMNIBUS FEE RULE OF THE IDAHO STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION, DOCKET 60-0501-2000F

Action: Commissioner Olson made a motion to *adopt as pending and republish the Omnibus Fee Rule in the November 18, 2020 Administrative Bulletin under Docket 60-0501-2000F*. Commissioner Trebesch seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

ITEM #12: EXECUTIVE SESSION

Action: Commissioner Pratt made a motion to *enter Executive Session pursuant to Idaho Code § 74-206(1)(b) for employee review*. Commissioner Olson seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Executive Session commenced at 11:52 AM.

Executive Session ended at 12:59 PM

No action was taken.

ITEM #7: OPEN SESSION and ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 1:01 PM. The next Commission Meeting will be held in Boise, Idaho on December 17, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Erik Olson, Secretary

