

Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts

8:30am Saturday, May 09, 2015

Little Rock, AR

**Agenda** (Included in Binder)

**Meeting called to order by Rocky Harrell, President at 8:30am**

**Members** present:

Rocky Harrell, President	Charles Glover, Past President
Woody Ray, Sec/Treasurer	Neal Ward, SE Area
Steve Whitehead, SW Area	Martha Manley, 1 <sup>st</sup> President
Bill Bailey, 2 <sup>nd</sup> President	James Widner, NW Area
Steve Martin, Central Area	James Mitchell, WC Area

Debbie Moreland, AACD Program Administrator

**Guests:**

Dr. Mike Daniels, UACES	Jeanette Hale, AACDE President
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Mike Sullivan, NRCS State Conservation

Adrian Baber, ANRC	Edward Swaim, ANRC
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**1) Partnership Reports:**

**Adrian Baber, ANRC**

- Agreement #1 – Additional water resource technicians (3) in the NE Area due to the introduction of the poultry industry, PECO and construction of poultry houses; do conservation planning on farms
  - \$30,000/year
  - Deadline for CTA agreements is May 30, 2015
  - WQTs are expected to do 65 plans per year – they are paid by the year
- Agreement #2 – Assistance to levee and dam sponsors (PL566) thru a technician to inspect dams and prepare reports on dams regarding maintenance and operations concerns – two employees
- Agreement #3 – Create a diverse team of local, state and federal agency. Work with landowners, NRCS, etc. to address irrigation efficiency (3 team leaders)
- Agreement #4 – Water quality evaluation project – three positions in watersheds to develop a nine element watershed plan to make those areas eligible for EPA 319 funds (\$600,000)

- Agreement #5 – Hire staff to work with districts on improving their technical assistance capacity; conservation planning, engineering, job approval authority, etc. (1 person)
- \$1,245,000 to implement all but #3
- \$500,000 to implement #3
- Need to develop additional in-kind sources
- Funds are coming from various pots of funds
- AACD will act as coordinator for #3
- Contribution agreements (50/50 funding)
- Email this information to the board

### **Jeanette Hale, AACDE**

- Reviewed the activities of the district employees association
- Training will be done regionally as agriculture is very diverse
- Land Resource Specialists are supposed to notify AACD and AACDE for new employees
- Training will include a possible certification program for employees
- AACDE Scholarship (\$1,000) – open to district employees and/or their family member to seek a conservation course of study
- AACDE funds have decreased over the last few years
- No longer hold retreats but target training opportunity
- Request of \$2,500 – to cover travel expenses
- Election of Directors Recommendations
  - Timing is an issue – March
  - More input from ANRC & AACD on direction to district directors
  - Joint letter go out to district directors with basic guidelines
  - Joint letter go out to each district chair with basic election guidelines on what is needed
- Commit to a member of the AACDE board to attend meetings
- AACDE will provide assistance in securing email addresses for district chairmen

### **Mike Daniels, UACES**

- New irrigation specialist, Mike Hamilton, as a joint position and is housed in Jonesboro
- Training for nutrient management will be on-line
- Advisory Board will be developed to help guide this process
- Row Crop P index is being developed to provide guidance for poultry litter application
- Many EQIP contracts require a NMP with reference to P index
- While voluntary practices are the most effective but some environmental groups will sue EPA and other federal agencies to accomplish those goals
- Work continues on C&H Farms to provide the science and documentation on runoff
- Discovery Farms continue to be highly successful and provide excellent avenues for tours and education
- Irrigation project in 25 counties in the Delta area to document nutrient reduction with detail demonstrations

- Locally led work group – perhaps we can get more participation from county agents in these meetings
- Increased focus on cross-training between NRCS & UACES
- He recommended that everyone to take a look at the new magazine, Confluence
- Dec 1 – 3, 2015 – Nutrient Management from the Great Lakes to the Gulf – how to improve coordination, lessons learned, legal issues, etc.

### **Mike Sullivan, NRCS**

- Thanked everyone for the partnership and its success
- Handouts included in binder
- While we have led the nation in landowner funding but it has been difficult on staff but additional TA dollars are being allocated
- New positions are being added to help address the workload
- Recognizes that flexibility is the key in program delivery and implementation
- \$3 – \$5 million in funds to look at new agreements
- Agreement #1 – Include additional help in the field to address resource concerns in the field
- Watershed Coordinators to identify additional partners and funding sources are one of the focus activities
- Need to get more folks certified to do advanced conservation planning
- Continue agreements that are existing; CTA, TSP, etc.
- Asked the board to offer recommendations for new agreements
- Three Focus Areas
  1. Conservation Delivery System – viable active conservation district is critical
  2. Technical Standards & Assistance
  3. Conservation Planning – whole farm plan to help landowners maintain their productivity and enhance their resources
- Conservation Planning – maintaining the contracts consumes so much time it impacts the ability of the field staff
- Critical water decline – MRBI did not address that specifically
- MRBI 2 will allow us to identify up to ten 12 digit HUC watersheds
- Some contracts are extended thru 2016 but funding amounts are going to be smaller in the future
- Local workgroup process – local funding opportunities based on resource concerns identified by the local workgroup
  - Workgroup needs to identify recommendations on practices/programs as well as percentages; forestry, wildlife habitat
- Jerry Don Clark asked if the EQIP approval process could be shortened as it would work better for the landowners, farmers, etc. If it could be done earlier in the year it would work better for producers

### **2) Minutes (July 10, 2015)**

***Motion made by Martha Manley, seconded by Charles Glover. Motion passed.***

### 3) Treasurer's Report

Woody Ray referred to the materials in the binder  
Financial Review of Accounts  
Previous Year Comparison  
Balance Sheet

***Motion to approve by James Widner, seconded by Bill Bailey***

Steve Whitehead asked for ANRC to provide a breakdown of funding for conservation districts

ANRC funding for districts  
\$750,000 – WQT  
\$940,000 – Districts  
    Districts allocation  
    Workman's Comp  
    Insurance  
\$250,000 – Grants to districts

### 4) Old Business

- Education Committee  
    Dave Ferguson Scholarship – Pending
- Resolutions & Policy Committee  
    Bill Bailey stated that he will be involving other board members in this process
- Annual Meeting
  - Feb. 16 – 17, 2016
  - Will ask Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting Business Session regarding future dates and locations
- Initiatives
  - Feral Swine Pilot Project
  - Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP)
  - MRBI 2
  - CAFO Initiative – 2 contracts have been initiated

### 5) New Business

- New Voluntary Program – Controlled Access and Livestock Fencing  
    Partnership with USFWS to offer funding for water resource management practices for landowners
- Food & Farm Magazine – Martha Manley made the motion to move forward with inclusion in the May issue
- Calendar of upcoming Meetings and Events reviewed

### 6) Other Business

- Lake Erling discussion was tabled

Meeting adjourned at 11:30am.

Respectfully submitted by Debbie Moreland, Acting Secretary