

**Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts**

**12:30pm Friday, April 29, 2016**

**Arkansas River Room, Little Rock, AR**

Agenda attached

**I. Meeting called to order** by Rocky Harrell, President at 12:30pm.

**Members present:**

Rocky Harrell, President

Martha Manley, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

Bill Bailey, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Woody Ray, Sec/Treasurer

James Widner, NW Area President

James Mitchell, WC Area President

Steve Martin, Central Area President

John McAlpine, SE Area President

Steve Whitehead, SW Area President

Charles Glover, Past President & NACD Delegate

Debbie Moreland, AACD Program Administrator

Jeanette Hale, AACDE President

**Guests:**

Mike Sullivan, NRCS State Conservationist

Amanda Mathis, NRCS

Adrian Baber, ANRC

Ryan Benefield, ANRC

**II. Partnership Report:**

ANRC – Ryan Benefield, Deputy Director

- Reported on the revision to Title 2
- Scheduled to go to the Legislative Council on May 17, 2016
- No changes since the annual meeting

AACDE – Jeanette Hall, President

- She thanked ANRC & NRCS for their support
- Reported on activities
- They will be increasing the dues and charging non-members a higher registration fee
- AACDE Scholarship given to Alexx Ivey, Columbia County

U of A Division of Agriculture – waived

NRCS – Mike Sullivan, State Conservationist

- EQIP and CSP Ranking and obligations are underway
- Filled 10 of the 61 DC positions
- Administrative transformation has resulted in some openings which have not been filled at this time due to changes in the hiring format
- National Review
  - Civil Rights – did exceptionally well with positive comments related to improved diversity, etc.
  - Recognition for work with Strike Force, Hmong population, etc.
  - Some concerns raised due to handicapped accessible
- National Audits on programs
  - EQIP contracts – some practices are not addressing resource concerns such as stacking shed that not being used for something other than poultry litter.
  - CSP contracts – at least one that had an improper payment
  - Agreements – Not enough documentation that all of the work has been implemented
- DUNS & SAMS Issue
  - Multiple landowner contracts (1,500) with some issues
  - Payments have been held up due to old DUNS numbers or had not recertified on SAMS
  - 38 contracts may not be funded due to concerns
- Nutrient Management Planning & Training – Amanda Mathis
  - ANRC & NRCS – review of the plans and how they may work seamlessly
  - Training is being planned for WQTs, NRCS staff and others to get certified and re-certified
- Conservation Boot Camp – Amanda Mathis
  - 3 week conservation plan training program
  - 9 step conservation planning process
  - How to have a discussion with the landowner on what the conservation plan means and how it was developed for them
  - AACD submitted four names to NACD to be considered for the boot camp in Lincoln, NE
    - Suzanne Ivey, Columbia County
    - Kristen Michaels, Benton County
    - LaTisha Allen, Drew County
    - Zach Avey, Stone County
- NRCS Retiree Part Time Position

- Due on May 15, 2016
- Edge-of-Monitoring
  - Funding available to landowners to do edge-of-field monitoring but additional education is needed to help landowners understand all components of the contract
  - Must partner with qualified entities which follow all protocols

**III. Minutes from the Sept. 12, 2015**

***Motion to approve by Martha Manley, seconded by Charles Glover. Motion passed.***

- IV. Treasurer’s Report – Woody Ray**  
 Previous Year in Comparison  
 Financial Review  
 Balance Sheet

**Motion made to work with the bookkeeper to develop a financial reporting system that better reflects the restricted funds and provides additional transparency. Motion passed.**

**V. Old Business**

- Monroe Samuel Natural Resources Clinic – was held on April 26, 2016 at the Little River Demonstration Forest in Ashdown.
- The districts have asked for a Scantron. The board asked for more information regarding the purchase to see if we can purchase a used machine or if a new machine would be the better long term option
  - Debbie Moreland reported that she had checked online for used, refurbished machines and at the State Surplus Center but there was some concern regarding their long term functionality

**VI. Other Business**

- WCCD Update – Philip Miron, attorney  
***Motion made by Bill Bailey to provide items requested in the April 12, 2016 email, seconded by Steve Whitehead. Motion passed.***
  - Materials will be gathered for their review on June 1, 2016

**V. Old Business (continued)**

- Resolution – AACD Board of Directors passed a resolution at the Annual Meeting Business Session to ask that dues continue to be paid as they have in the past.
  - Discussion was held regarding Executive Board responsibilities to the membership based on the resolution and its stated action item.
  - Executive Board will provide guidance at the appropriate time
- **Annual Meeting – Martha Manley, Chairwoman**
  - Due to the rising costs of a two day conference and increasing request by districts to hold a one day conference a new format is being offered. (Handout attached)

- New format entails starting at 5:30pm with a Legislative Reception on Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2017 followed by a full day on Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2017
- AACDE was advised that the evening would be free if they wished to pursue a special event on Feb. 14, 2017 for their annual fundraiser
- Debbie Moreland suggested two registration fees
  - ❖ \$50 for both days (Legislative Reception and Wednesday meeting)
  - ❖ \$40 for Wednesday only
  - ❖ Everyone would pay the same registration regardless; district directors, employees, NRCS, ANRC, etc.
  - ❖ Jeanette Hale recommended that we charge a flat \$50 per person to cover both days rather than two different registration fee scenarios.

***Charles Glover made the motion to move to the new format with all participants paying a registration fee of \$50, James Widner seconded the motion. Motion passed.***

### **Initiatives**

- **Feral Swine Initiative** – It was reported that the first phase of the program has begun with 5 districts receiving traps and phones. Phase II will follow as soon as Phase I has been fully implemented.
- **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)** – It was reported that after consultation with Dr. Mike Daniels and NRCS it was determined that we not move forward with the Middle Bayou Deview RCPP at this time

***Motion made by Bill Bailey to delay any further action on this RCPP at this time, seconded by James Widner. Motion passed.***

- **Soil Health State CIG Proposal** – Based on the NRCS Soil Health Subcommittee meeting and a request by members of the subcommittee, AACD would seek a NRCS State CIG to do the following:
  - Provide assistance in the development of a Soil Health Alliance infrastructure
  - Implement demonstration sites/field days for landowner education
  - Coordinate 2 Soil Health Tours

***Motion made by Bill Bailey to move forward with a Soil Health State CIG Proposal, seconded by Charles Glover. Motion passed.***

- **Controlled Access & Livestock Fencing Program (CALF)**
  - It was reported that the first contract has been implemented and payment made. The remaining funds are held until a request is made based on approval by the USFWS personnel.

- **Private Lands Partnership Proposal** – Charles Glover
  - It was reported that AACD has been asked to partner on a proposal to host this conference in 2017. The proposal has been submitted but no word on approval.
- **African American Forest Landowners Proposal** – AACD has been asked to administer a revolving loan program which provides funds for legal work to clear forest landowner titles to land so they can participate in Farm Bill programs. Grantor is U.S. Forest Service Endowment
  - More details will be provided on process but the funds would be paid directly to the lawyers, etc. who are hired to clear up any ownership problems and the grant would pay the funds back directly to AACD. The funds would then be available for the next landowner.

## VII. New Business

- **Meetings and Events (Handout attached)**
  - SC NACD Regional Meeting to be held on August 10 – 11, 2016
  - NACD Executive Directors’ Retreat to be held the week of September 26, 2016 – AACD to host this year
  - Area Meetings – dates and locations are being finalized
  - Water Resource Tour – to be held in conjunction with ANRC Commissioners Meeting on September 20 – 22, 2016 at the Delta Conference Center in McGehee, AR subject to the approval of the Legislators and ANRC
  - COMPASS grant – program to work with veterans will be started within the next few weeks. Ad will run in the Arkansas Times “Food and Farm” May issue
  - Edible Garden Conference – Forrest City, AR

With no other business the meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.

Respectfully submitted by Debbie Moreland, Acting Secretary

Handouts placed in file with minutes:

- Agenda
- September 12, 2015 Minutes
- Treasurer’s Reports
- Annual Meeting 2017 Proposal
- Veteran Ad (COMPASS Grant)
- Edible Garden Conference Invitation
- Upcoming Meetings Calendar
- Conflict of Interest forms
- Mileage & Expense forms for board members