

MINUTES

OHIO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION JANUARY 30, 2008 – 1:30 PM COLUMBUS RENAISSANCE

Chairman Mott called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and the attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Mott asked Tracy Bleim to give a roll call of the members. The following members were present:

Susan Reeves
Tom Price
Kevin Elder
Fred Cash
Clark Sheets
Jerry Bigam
Randy Mott

Others present included: David Hanselmann, Executive Secretary, Tracy Bleim, Fred Hammon, Kirk Hines, Rob Hamilton, Ed Everman, Greg Nageotte, Constance White, Tim Gerber, and Steve Hawkins, ODNR Division of Soil and Water Conservation; Mindy Bankey, OFSWCD; Michelle Lohstroh, Rick Ellsmore, and Mike Monnin, NRCS; Tom Sweeney, Thomas Sweeney Group; Pat Carey, Cuyahoga SWCD; Kent Stuckey, Crawford SWCD; Dave Linkhart and Don Leeds, Greene SWCD; and Dan Donaldson, Lake SWCD.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Mott stated that the OSWCC might add an item to the agenda, which would be item #7 regarding the web-based GIS program (CARES) from Missouri that was presented at the last OSWCC meeting.

Chairman Mott asked for any other additions or corrections to the agenda.

Susan Reeves moved to approve the agenda.
Tom Price seconded the motion. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 7, 2007 MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Mott asked if there were any corrections to the November 7, 2007 minutes as mailed. Mott thanked Bleim for putting the meeting minutes together and added that he thought that she did an excellent job at capturing what was talked about. Mott noted that Bleim had included information on the SWIMS program that was distributed and discussed at the last meeting.

Chairman Mott asked for approval of the November 7, 2007 minutes as mailed.

Fred Cash moved to approve the November 7, 2007 minutes as mailed.
Clark Sheets seconded the motion. Motion passed.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

Chairman Mott asked if any visitors would like to address the Commission.

Cash introduced Tom Sweeney, who had recently presented an informational video at a conference for the Ohio EPA.

Sweeney informed the OSWCC about his journalism experiences and offered how best to communicate our message to the public. Sweeney noted that the empiricism of applied science and the creativity of story telling are very different skill sets, but they need each other. Before you can tell people what is important and why, you have to tell a story that will keep the people engaged. Sweeney questioned if the communication efforts of the environmental, natural resource and conservation community were effective. Is the public involved and educated enough to the point of affecting a change in behavior? Sweeney distributed a CD titled "Calming the Waters" to the OSWCC members to show how the what and why of stormwater was made important. Sweeney added that his company knows how to get that finished product on regional and local television, in every library and school curriculum across the state, and as part of a program for organizations such as the Rotary, American Legion, the Lions Club, etc.

COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS

Cash reported that he had attended a number of Ohio EPA seminars and discussions, which primarily focused on Stormwater Phase II compliance. Cash added that he thought that the session with the Directors and Representatives of ODNR, Ohio EPA, and ODA was fantastic this morning.

Bigham had nothing to report.

Reeves stated that she attended monthly board meetings, the Area IV meeting, and the National Farm Bureau Convention.

Mott reported that he attended monthly board meetings, the R&R Commission meeting, Area IV meeting, and had many discussions with Hanselmann on budgetary issues.

Price had nothing to report.

Sheets said that he attended monthly board meetings, Area Winter Meetings, and the recent funeral of NACD President, Olin Simms.

Elder had nothing to report.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORTS

ELECTION RESULTS/ANNUAL REPORTS/REORGANIZATION RESULTS

Hanselmann reported that there were no supervisor appointments for vacant positions to approve.

Hanselmann reported that DSWC received 40 election result forms since the last meeting, which brings the total to all 88 received. There were 47 new supervisors elected and 94 re-elected supervisors. Each of the board members serve a three-year term.

Hanselmann reported that DSWC received 72 reorganization notices from the SWCDs to date.

Hanselmann stated that DSWC has received 15 annual reports since the last meeting, which brings the total to 22 to date.

Hanselmann reviewed the dates of the upcoming OSWCC meetings that were decided at the last meeting:

Wednesday, April 9

Wednesday and Thursday, July 9-10

Thursday, November 6

Hanselmann added that the two-day July meeting will be hosted primarily by Delaware County. Tom Price has offered to host a tour stop or possibly even an evening event at his farm. Delaware SWCD has offered to help us plan other tour stops. Hanselmann recommended that we visit Marion County to learn about some of the extensive Scioto River CREP enrollment practices there. In Delaware County, we may get a

chance to look at their urban program. Hanselmann thought that the tour would be on Wednesday afternoon around 1:00 p.m. and the OSWCC meeting would be on Thursday, July 10 from approximately 8:30 or 9:00 a.m. until around noon. Hanselmann asked if any of the OSWCC members wanted to suggest a different approach?

Elder noted that there was a multi-state manure expo at the Farm Science Review on July 9 so he will be unable to attend that day.

Cash asked Elder if he would be available on July 10 and Elder commented that he would.

OSWCC ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

REVIEW STATUS OF STATE BUDGET FOR DSWC, SWCDs, LAKE ERIE CREP etc. in LIGHT OF DECLINING STATE REVENUES

Hanselmann stated that a package is being finalized and things are moving quite rapidly and the cabinet agencies turned in last Friday plans for budget reductions of different sizes. From our agency it ranged from 10% to around 16% or higher. Hanselmann said that most agencies will be cut this FY '08, which ends June 30 and another amount next year which begins July 1. The department made an important decision not to seek a reduction in state matching funds this current fiscal year because they know how awkward and challenging it would be for districts that had budgeted or spent that state money to have to give those dollars back to the state. A decision was made a few weeks ago to not do that, but unfortunately that cut for this year can't be wished away and will be a part of next year's cut. Hanselmann said that whatever cut they receive next FY will be a total of this year's cut and next year's cut.

Hanselmann said that the Lake Erie CREP account has shrunk since it was initiated in 2000 from \$2 million per year from the GRF to \$1 million this year and last year and that account is being cut further.

Hanselmann said that our division operating budget will certainly be cut.

The earmarks that the legislatures voted into the budget (four totaling \$485,000) are \$220,000/year for Heidelberg Water Quality Lab, \$125,000/year for Indian Lake, \$50,000/year for the Conservation Action Program, and \$90,000/year for Grand Lake St. Marys. Hanselmann apologized that he didn't have firm numbers because Jill Evans was supposed to be at this meeting today, but had to stay back at Fountain Square to work with Cathryn Loucas on the budget. It seems that there is no executive authority to reduce those.

Hanselmann thought that the conservation district number seems secure, but the other numbers will be in flux and they may be decided yet today. There definitely will be further staff reductions in our division, which we can say with some confidence unfortunately. How many is still sort of in the balance.

Hanselmann thought that there would be an announcement made soon.

Mott asked if Hanselmann had any idea about the ag pollution abatement funding?

Hanselmann said that was one of the questions. The state match is about \$13 million this year so there may be some decisions to make about the balancing. There may be some modest amount of pollution abatement cost share funds available.

Mott asked if Hanselmann could enumerate to the OSWCC on the balance of the checks going out to the districts?

Hanselmann said that we owe fourteen districts a total of about \$1.1 million of their final and third payment to them. \$220,000 of that would come out of the C&D tipping fee account and \$900,000 would come out of the GRF. As of Monday, those funds were still frozen. However, we brought it to the attention of the department and they reiterated that they would honor a pledge that they made several weeks ago that those

funds would be able to be provided to those 14 SWCDs. As far as Hanselmann knew, those funds hadn't been authorized for distribution yet.

Hammon added that Jill Evans had said that she was sort of given a nod that it would be this month so they just have to approve it over the spending account. Hammon said that we are paying some of those districts that are getting close out of the tipping fee money so as the money comes in, we are paying some of those districts.

REVIEW STATUS OF IDEAS BEING GENERATED BY SWCD STATE MATCHING FUND POLICY COMMITTEE

Hammon reported that the SWCD State Match Fund Policy Committee has met a couple of times now and both times have somewhat struggled to come up with anything new. With that said, to some degree, Hammon thought that both he and Hanselmann were feeling somewhat good that the current process is somewhat meeting the needs. Hammon didn't think that the whole thing was broken and felt that over the years, DSWC has been able to be flexible enough to meet the challenging scenarios that are being developed and the neat opportunities that the districts are finding for new funding sources. Hammon thought that everyone agreed that there was some great policies set when we did do the capping of the state match over \$500,000 level so it sort of gave us a breather in a sense. Hammon thought that the committee was going to continue to discuss and felt that maybe with a couple more meetings and a few more conference calls to make the existing policies a little more clearer since that was our charge.

Hammon said that the committee has had a lot of discussion regarding the ditch maintenance activities and also the new Stormwater Phase II rules because there are some similarities there, but the whole ditch maintenance has sort of been off the table for the last 40 years so that is creeping into the discussion. Hammon thought that the committee was touching on the sensitive areas that we needed to, but we are going to take some more time and will hopefully have something for the OSWCC in April or definitely by July.

Hanselmann added that we haven't come up with a compelling scenario that is different from the current policy.

Hammon added that the SWCDs are contacting the Program Specialists more so that DSWC doesn't have to react to something later on.

Mott thought that maybe our communication out to the districts and giving them the opportunity to address this issue at the different employee meetings has had a benefit as well.

Cash wanted to clarify that his understanding was that the Stormwater Phase II was matchable given that it is mandated by the EPA?

Hammon said that we are matching certain segments of funds that are given to districts through their municipalities to help carry out the education activities and some of those types of things if it is appropriate to your program.

Hanselmann added that if it was through the counties, it would have to be appropriate through the county general fund.

Cash asked what about tasks such as the plan review?

Hammon said that as long as it is an appropriation by the municipality.

Hanselmann stated that any capital costs would not be matchable because we broadly set a limit of no more than \$8,000/year of any appropriations being used for capital improvement purposes.

REVIEW REPORT FROM DSWC/OFSWCD RURAL DRAINAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND PLANS TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Hanselmann stated that he hoped that the Rural Drainage Report could be used as a spring board to follow through on the training and outreach recommendations so that the public is more educated about the value of drainage so they may be more supportive of paying an assessment if it comes in front of county commissioners. It also educates what some of the environmental impacts are and the ways to help mitigate some of those impacts. Hanselmann also hoped that it could be used for funding ideas and mentioned that there were four or five large scale ideas for example. There has been a very large billion dollar plus bond issue that has been at play for a number of years in Ohio for infrastructure (roads, bridges, etc.). Drainage projects aren't eligible there, but Ohio Public Works have prioritized use of that money for drainage infrastructure. Those decisions are largely controlled by the county engineers and they have pledged to work in these areas where the projects are prevalent to support using issue 1 public works commission capital improvement monies for drainage infrastructure projects. Hanselmann stated that the OFBF approved a year ago to explore the idea of a county drainage fund perhaps funded through some association with CAUV. Hanselmann thought that the state capital improvement budget in general is a possibility, but it will be just as tight as the operating budget for the department. Hanselmann added that there were a number of environmental protocols that DSWC will need to do a lot of educating the engineers, SWCDs, and others about what is allowed easily and what considerations will need to be given to other scales of projects. A key part of reaching this consensus with the Ohio EPA was their proposal to establish a rule that would add a general aquatic life use for the different categories of aquatic life. Hanselmann reported that DSWC has been invited to the House of Representatives and Senate Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee to present information on this topic. Hanselmann also stated that the report will be in the February issue of the Ohio Farmer.

Mott asked Hines how many meetings it took to put this together?

Hines said that DSWC held 9 or 10 formal full day meetings and several sub-committee and internal meetings.

Mott asked how many of those 9 meetings was spent on educating the partners?

Elder said that somebody in the room got an education out of every meeting. Elder added that a manual is coming out of this work also.

Hines said that the plan has been developed, but we haven't implemented anything yet so there is still a lot to do. Hines said that we are excited about the manual and the consistency that it will bring to petition ditch projects so we are about 2 months from that being rolled out.

Mott asked if the county commissioners would be trained on this and how would the manual be distributed?

Hanselmann said that the manual would be distributed to SWCDs, county engineers, or environmental groups. It would be a much more limited audience. The report would be distributed to a much broader audience such as the county commissioners association for example. Hanselmann added that this was a joint effort between DSWC and the OFSWCD.

Mott noted that it was a nice product and it should be well-received.

DISCUSS AGRICULTURAL POLLUTION ABATEMENT PROGRAM AND RECENT IDEAS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES, AND RELATED TOPICS AT ODA AND OHIO EPA

Hanselmann reported that DSWC is looking at ways of improving its Agricultural Pollution Abatement Program and its effectiveness. The Directors of ODNR, ODA, and Ohio EPA have met and were made aware of some of these issues and concerns. Hanselmann noted that OSU does a survey approximately every two years concerning the attitudes that the public has regarding agriculture. Agriculture still continues to be pretty well appreciated by Ohioans, but the negatives for livestock concerns are growing.

DSWC was on the verge of sitting down to talk with those three directors to decide what recommendations to implement, but then the budget situation took precedence.

Hamilton reviewed what the five core issues were that were identified at the meeting with staff from ODNR, ODA, and Ohio EPA and some of the recommendations made regarding those issues. The first issue discussed was the manure leaving permitted operations and Hamilton asked Kevin Elder to describe that issue.

Elder said that ODA looked at the amount of control that they had over manure leaving permitted operations and found that about 90% of the liquid manure and 55%-60% of the dry manure is either applied by a certified livestock manager or a person that has been trained or certified by the department itself. Elder said that they are recommending that there is a signed contract between individuals when one operation takes that manure from another operation. Elder added that there was a recommendation that ODA also let SWCDs know what farm operations are taking that manure.

Hamilton noted that the second issue was riparian setbacks for land application of manure. DSWC recommended looking at ways to improve the quality of that setback by incorporating more permanent vegetative buffers like was done with the CREP programs, but there would need to be a special incentive to make the vegetative buffers permanent.

Hanselmann added that it is not only the standards, but also the training so that they are actually incorporated into a conservation plan and the farmer knows what they are so that the buffer is effective.

Cash noted that slope is another concern in regards to runoff.

Elder pointed out that buffers are working, but there are concentrated points that are not functioning.

Elder noted that the third issue deals with special manure management requirements in high quality watersheds. Elder noted that it is a challenge to know what is necessary for these protected streams. Elder thought that if a high quality watershed is protected, there should be that same kind of protection for all streams because he didn't know what additional requirement to establish for those high quality watersheds. Elder said that ODA does have bigger setback requirements for those higher quality streams. The challenge is that the nutrients that are applied to the land should be applied correctly to meet the standards. Elder thought that this area needed more research to figure out what the best changes for this should be.

Hamilton reported that the fourth issue was establishing planning requirements for certain medium sized CAFO's. Hamilton thought that with our current capacity this would be quite an undertaking so DSWC may not have the staff or resources to consider it. Hamilton thought that DSWC would work more with the groups who are expanding in a proactive way to make them more aware of the planning expectations and to encourage a closer connection with the SWCDs.

Hamilton noted that the last issue was increasing oversight of non-compliant small and medium CAFO's. If a producer has two or more violations within one year or if they fail to meet a guideline that an SWCD has specified or if the operation has only installed a portion of the recommended practices, DSWC recommends that these producers submit a plan and are subject to periodic inspections. If they still failed to install our recommended practices, then it would automatically trigger a Chief's Order. Hamilton felt that this wouldn't require any rule changes because it was already under DSWC's authority. This is one recommendation that DSWC will discuss further with its partners and SWCDs.

Hanselmann added that DSWC would tentatively like to move ahead with some of these recommendations if Director Logan and others agree that it is important. DSWC would appreciate any feedback on this if you are uncomfortable with this scenario.

Price asked what the estimated cost was to engage in these comprehensive nutrient management plans?

Hamilton thought that it would cost about \$1500 to hire a consultant. If you had to have soil testing done, it would probably cost around \$3,000 - \$4,000.

Mike Monnin added that typical sites run around \$2,500 - \$3,000 and maybe \$4,000 with soil testing being done.

Elder noted that there is at least 100 new operations going in each year.

Hanselmann pointed out that a majority of them have a nutrient management plan.

Price clarified that Hamilton had said if they had two separate violations in one year, but then in the remarks you said that the second year they can come back and have a violation. Price thought that this wouldn't happen and wondered why Hamilton wouldn't consider two years on two separate violations?

Hamilton thought that did make sense to word it as two separate violations in two years.

HIGHLIGHT DSWC GOALS FOR 2008

Hanselmann distributed the goals that DSWC put together for 2008. It was noted that DSWC has had similarly long, impressive lists of goals in the past and we could step back a year later and be proud of our accomplishments with the help of our partners. Hanselmann said that this is our effort to let our staff know what our agreed-to goals are. This has been shared with the Director's Office and others since almost all of these are coordinated with our partners and is part of the workload for them also. DSWC looks forward to working with our partners on these goals. Hanselmann requested the OSWCC members to review the goals and if they had any questions or concerns with the goals or the work, he would be happy to talk with you. If you have any bright ideas where your organization or agency can help or wants to be involved, please let Hanselmann know.

Mott pointed out that the OSWCC members should make themselves aware of what is in this document and if there are any questions or concerns to contact Hanselmann.

REVIEW STATUS OF IDEAS FOR CREATING A CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP VISION

Hanselmann stated that in the previous meeting or two, it was discussed to have the OSWCC members, DSWC, OFSWCD, NRCS and perhaps others meet and think about setting some overarching goals for our partnership. They are not only capacity building related, but also natural resource conservation and environmentally related that deal with soil and water resources. Hanselmann thought that when we drafted this agenda and shared it with the chair that we would be able to share with you that we had created a committee as we had pledged to do at the last meeting and would have a timeline for our meeting plan, but Hanselmann apologized because too many other things had gotten in the way. Hanselmann felt that this would be a productive exercise and as he looked ahead, some of the things that were talked about today was to look at the bigger picture for the long term. What goals can we share with the public and legislators that are compelling so that they can say "yes, that crystallizes my thought about what Ohio needs" and those are important goals so that they can support them or identify ways that they can be modified if they need to be.

Hanselmann thought that this would be a good way to know what we are committed to work towards and share that as a marketing tool with the public and others. We don't have a process that we can monitor them very effectively so this sort of relates to the SWIMS effort and how we will have more of a monitoring capability.

Cash indicated that he was willing to participate on the committee. Cash pointed out that having a clear cut vision statement helps us to communicate our goals and really define ourselves to the public. Cash thought that it would really benefit us if we could collectively get together and create a vision statement. Cash added that we could facilitate it through emails to collectively exchange ideas or through conference calls.

REVIEW AND DISCUSS WEB-BASED GIS PROGRAM (CARES)

Mott noted that there was a workshop held yesterday during the OFSWCD Annual Meeting regarding this web-based GIS program (CARES) from Missouri and there was an issue of what the cost of this might be. Mott stated that there was a lot of positive discussion by a number of the SWCD Administrators who attended that workshop and they were willing to provide funding based on an idea that we might float to the OSWCC and that would take those dollars off of the top of state match to purchase this web-based GIS program.

Gerber said that DSWC has just been trying to make more people aware of this program. Gerber noted that in a survey done last March, there was a question of why more districts weren't using GIS already and added that this program is a good alternative and a great marketing tool. Gerber stated that DSWC is going to meet with ODA and has spoken already with the Office of Information Technology at ODNR. Gerber said that DSWC hasn't really approached other partners yet on asking them to jointly provide funding to purchase this software program.

Hanselmann said that we are sensing that there is considerable interest and the costs are not enormous. DSWC is estimating in the ballpark of around \$150,000 to develop it and then \$10,000 per year for the maintenance costs. Hanselmann thought that the interest from the workshop yesterday will spur our division to seriously explore coming up with a more detailed proposal about what this initiative or project would be and how it would be used locally. Hanselmann said that this will allow us to submit some grant applications such as the Ohio Water Development Authority. After we share clearer information, we may find that we have enough partners to purchase this software.

Mott said that he was certainly impressed with the general consensus by the District Administrators that the ability to have this available is so important to districts from the standpoint that it puts the district in the forefront of being able to provide a very valuable service to local building associations, county engineers, county auditors, and county commissioners. There were certainly a number of districts willing to support that monetarily so there is a lot of interest in moving forward.

Hawkins added that to be able to compile over 2,000 different layers of information is a great asset, but it will also have our name of Soil and Water Conservation across the top which is an excellent marketing tool.

Mott asked how do we incorporate it into SWIMS and keep certain information secure if it needs to be? Mott questioned in regard to the last meeting how the privacy issue with SWIMS is moving along.

Hanselmann stated that there have been a few questions in regard to the Farm Service Agency data and he was aware that there was an application pending from NACD to USDA and FSA concerning accessibility and sharing of some of their files. Hanselmann noted that we had identified a need to draft a formal request and he apologized because he had not had the chance to follow through and maybe with these conversations that is not where we need to go right now.

Lohstroh said that NRCS does not have a letter and it is in their interest to have a letter because we would like to use it in the discussions regarding linking SWIMS with Toolkit since they are parallel needs. Lohstroh reiterated that we really need this letter because they may not be able to give us an answer without that request. NRCS needs to send it to the national office with their formal request.

Hanselmann said that a letter will be forthcoming.

Mott asked Sheets if there was any feedback from the OFSWCD with regard to sharing information and SWIMS?

Sheets said that we have to protect privacy rights, but was sure that the OFSWCD would support it.

Hawkins said that if you go through the training on what is available and what isn't available, one thing that he gained was that FOIA takes precedence over any state law. Hawkins noted that the accomplishments that are reported in SWIMS, specifically the landowners, it looks like those would almost be regarded in the same way as far as anything reported on landowners and it would be the cooperators file regardless of whether it talks back and forth to Toolkit. Hawkins thought that it should be that both of them are a joint effort between NRCS and SWCDs and probably fall under FOIA as far as anything related to landowners and what they are specifically doing. You would have to contact the landowner to release that information.

Lohstroh said that historically that has been NRCS's position. However, when some of the open records law issues came up in Ohio, it was our understanding that this was not always necessarily the case. NRCS has been addressing it on a case-by-case basis, specific to what they requested. It is NRCS's feeling as an agency that much of that will be protected, but Hawkins is right that if you pull these things out, it takes on a whole new meaning of what can we release and those are some of the questions that our paperwork asks.

Hanselmann noted that it is complicated further by the Farm Bill restrictions on the Release of Information provided by producers isn't a blanket prohibition – it also rests on the fact that it is proprietary for the trade secret nature so there is a dual threshold under FOIA. For the state to acknowledge a FOIA restriction, the FOIA interpretation would have to hit both of those marks, which is by case law about trade secrets. Much of the information that a producer provides to USDA would probably not be a trade secret.

Lohstroh stated that what a producer wants to install or the number of hogs, NRCS does not release to the public. Lohstroh added that if you want to install a holding pond or a lagoon or you are going to put in an in-barn system and how many employees you have – those are things we would not release.

Hanselmann said that for SWIMS we may not need all of that information to be able to document that we have a nutrient management plan. President Bush signed into law significant changes to FOIA recently and Hanselmann wondered if that would have any impact on the interpretations that have been taken?

Lohstroh didn't know. John Wilson is now in that role, but Lohstroh didn't think that any of that had come down locally and that is one of the reasons why NRCS wants to send this back up because they feel that it is beyond their decision-making authority in some places.

Mott noted that there are certainly a number of questions that we don't have answers to today but our bottom line on our discussion here is two-fold, one is that we are going to look more closely at our web-based GIS program that was laid out and the second is that we are going to formalize a letter to NRCS to follow through on our previous conversation about what we want to do about SWIMS and how we want to share that.

AGENCY AND SWCD REPORTS

OSU

Bigham stated that OSU has been struggling with budgetary issues in the College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Science and jokingly added that they have been trying to decide which one of those is least important. OSU will be looking at some reorganizations to try to keep some viability to the core things that are valued most.

NRCS

Lohstroh reported that NRCS doesn't have a budget yet; however, we are being told that there is no mark being listed in our budget for contribution agreements. NRCS is still taking a look at it to see what we can do, but without a budget that is hard to tell. NRCS is still hoping to do some, but there is no specific dollars out there that NRCS is aware of singled out for TSP's. Lohstroh noted that Cosby mentioned the EQIP sign-up and that is important because we have contracted all of the money basically that we have so

far. NRCS has requested additional dollars, but we have not heard back from that yet. NRCS may have a sign-up in February for CSP and we are trying to gear up for that now. There will probably be some meetings soon with the Upper Sandusky watershed. NRCS is also doing some modifications on CSP contracts and that is taking a lot of time. We are losing dollars as people are dropping out or they have lost management of those acres so we are seeing an awful lot of changes being done by staff right now in regards to those efforts.

OFSWCD

Sheets stated that tomorrow is the Director's Meeting and we will be revisiting our strategic plan with Ray Ledgerwood.

Mott wanted to bring an item up to the OSWCC members concerning a letter received from Vinton SWCD regarding our Program Assistance Grants. The Vinton SWCD board of supervisors requests the OSWCC to review and evaluate the grant program criteria. They are recommending that we consider changing the number of years you could receive the grant or until you reached the maximum amount requested. Mott wanted to open up any thought processes in regards to the letter and where we would want to go with this at the next OSWCC meeting.

Hanselmann said that unless you feel otherwise, DSWC could reproduce the current criteria and have our staff develop one or two alternative ideas that would be responsive to this request and share that information with you ahead of the April meeting so that they and other districts would know if any changes are being contemplated or the distribution of these funds at the July meeting where we set aside dollars off of the top of state match funds can be decided. Neither of the two years that we have done this have all of the funds been utilized. Hanselmann noted that Paulding and Harrison SWCDs may be zeroed out and Harrison SWCD is back on the March primary ballot. Hanselmann said that DSWC will develop some ideas for this and may put it into the context of some other things that we may learn over the next few months.

White noted that Vinton SWCD had received a little over \$12,000 and they had used that money to purchase a new computer for their technician and to cover the technician's training. Vinton SWCD staff thought that they couldn't justify asking for all \$35,000 because you can't just ask for it without substantiating the need.

Mott thought that this brings up a point because the OSWCC didn't anticipate this issue and didn't think that we could have anticipated it since it was a new program so he thought that it was appropriate to bring it back up for further discussion.

Sheets felt that the OSWCC shouldn't fault the district because of a lack of guidance that they received.

ODA

Elder reported that ODA has been working on their budget and it will impact everyone. The three agencies have been working on policies for livestock and the drainage report. One of the issues that needs to be brought to the attention of the SWCDs and OSWCC is they are looking at water quality impacts to Lake Erie and what may be the causes for the increase in dissolved phosphorus levels. Some of the findings coming out of it is that there needs to be more soil testing done regardless of if it is in the Lake Erie watershed or not and that the recommendations are according to good agronomic needs. An example is that the soil testing company is taking soil tests and giving results back and providing recommendations. The agronomic recommendation that was coming back for fertilizer was crop removal – 50 lbs of phosphorus per acre for every one of them. Elder thought that we need to keep a press on educating producers – either what box to mark on the soil test or how to read the analysis of the soil test to make their own fertility recommendations. Elder said that we did it when we were doing no-till and when we were doing manure nutrient management back in the 1980s. Elder didn't think that we were looking closely enough at the results to determine if everything was accurate. Elder thought that we have lost some of the agronomy side because some of the permits that we have that are brand new facilities and have no

livestock, yet they have soil tests that are too high and they cannot apply manure. Those facilities have not had manure and have only used commercial fertilizer.

Elder reported that LEPP has done 167 permitted facilities where the facilities are under permit. Over 300 inspections have been done and 10 facilities have been expanding or are new construction and have been permitted within the last year.

With no further business to come before the Commission at 3:35 p.m.,

Tom Price moved to adjourn the meeting.

Clark Sheets seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Mott, Chairman

David Hanselmann, Executive Secretary