

MINUTES

OHIO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION APRIL 9, 2008 – 10:00 AM Fountain Square

Chairman Mott called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.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:

Tom Price
Fred Cash
Clark Sheets
Randy Mott
Susan Reeves (arrived late)
Kevin Elder (arrived late)
Jerry Bigham not present

Others present included: David Hanselmann, Executive Secretary, Tracy Bleim, Fred Hammon, Ed Everman, Dorothy Farris, John Kessler, Jill Evans, Liz Cline, Martin Joyce, Justin Reinhart, Aaron Lantz, Clark Hutson, and Steve Hawkins, ODNR Division of Soil and Water Conservation; Kevin O'Connor, ODNR Office of Internal Audits; Mindy Bankey, OFSWCD; Michelle Lohstroh and Terry Cosby, NRCS; Kevin Fall, Butler SWCD; Tom Reininger and Holly Utrata-Halcomb, Hamilton SWCD; Kreig Smail, Miami SWCD; and Jim Dillon, Montgomery SWCD.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Mott asked for any additions or corrections to the agenda as submitted in your folder.

Clark Sheets moved to approve the agenda.
Tom Price seconded the motion. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 30, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Mott asked if there were any corrections to the January 30, 2008 minutes as mailed.

Chairman Mott asked for approval of the January 30, 2008 minutes as mailed.

Fred Cash moved to approve the January 30, 2008 minutes as mailed.
Tom Price seconded the motion. Motion passed.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

Chairman Mott asked if any visitors would like to address the Commission and invited them to participate in the discussions.

COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS

Cash reported that he joined the Director and others at the Great Lakes Commission Meeting in Washington from Feb.26-28. Director Logan and Cash had an opportunity to visit a couple of the legislators to discuss some of the concerns that they had in their area relating to the Great Lakes. Cash noted that he attended the meeting last week to discuss the vision and mission of this OSWCC, which he thought was very fruitful.

Sheets said that he attended the NACD meeting in Reno and noted that Ohio brought back some awards where local districts were recognized. Sheets added that he also attended the Farm Bill area meeting at the 4-H Center. Senator Brown and Congressman Zac Space were present at those meetings also.

Price stated that he attended the first meeting of the Governor's Food Policy Commission at ODA. There is going to be a fairly wide ranging interest group looking at food policy and how it relates to the inner city and the production interest.

Mott reported that he attended the Recreation and Resources Commission Meeting and noted that he appreciated Hanselmann and Hines visiting the group to provide an update on the Rural Drainage Report. Mott attended the strategic directions meeting that the OSWCC had last week and there were a number of local meetings with supervisory board meetings. Mott also attended an interesting meeting locally with regard to how local residents feel about wind generators and whether zoning is appropriate for those and how they will be incorporated into the local area. Mott noted that there was one resident who was extremely interested in putting up a wind farm and Mott thought that their township was going to follow that of the one in Champaign County, which he thought that they have a referendum on the ballot for November either for or against wind generating facilities in their township.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORTS

ELECTION RESULTS/ANNUAL REPORTS/REORGANIZATION RESULTS

Hanselmann reported that DSWC received all 88 reorganization notices from the SWCDs. It is important that we receive these forms because it allows us to complete the roster that we publish each year.

Hanselmann stated that DSWC has received 63 annual reports since the last meeting, which brings the total to 85 to date.

SUPERVISOR APPOINTMENTS

Hanselmann reported that there was one board member appointment to approve from Lucas SWCD. Bill Bettinger resigned as supervisor and the board has recommended that David Parker be appointed to that unexpired term. Mr Parker has had a career with the Toledo Area Metroparks and a former career with the ODNR Division of Parks and Recreation. He was the Assistant Park Manager of Hueston Woods State Park. Mr. Parker is currently involved in global warming issues and developing all forms of alternative energy including solar, wind, geo-thermal, and bio-fuels from renewable resources.

Chairman Mott asked if there was a motion to approve this appointment.

Fred Cash moved to approve the appointment of the recommended supervisor.
Clark Sheets seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Chairman Mott welcomed Susan Reeves to the meeting, who arrived at 10:15 am.

JOINT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Hanselmann reported that there was a request for a formation of a joint board of supervisors for Montgomery and Miami SWCDs, in which they would jointly implement the Lutheran Road Group Drainage Project. Halfway through the packet provided to OSWCC members, there is a summary that shows the "Investigation and Evaluation Report" for this project. The preliminary cost estimate is \$120,060.97 and Hanselmann thought that it was worth noting that this project has been approved upon its initial request to the Ohio Public Works Commission for \$79,500 of cost share assistance for the project. Hanselmann noted that one of the recommendations from the Rural Drainage Advisory Committee was to further explore and work with county engineers to raise the priority for drainage projects to be funded by the Public Works Commission. Hanselmann thought that only two or three conservation districts in Ohio have been able to get that priority and funding so Hanselmann thought that it was a compliment to the district that they reached out and identified this alternative source of funding to buy down the cost to the landowners.

Chairman Mott asked if there were any other comments from Jim Dillon of Montgomery SWCD or Kreig Smail of Miami SWCD?

Dillon said that he was asking for the OSWCC's approval so that we could go ahead with the project because we have some funding secured and it is a good project.

Smail added that the design has been approved or completed.

Price asked how long it took to get this project to the point that it is at now?

Smail thought that it took a year.

Sheets asked if they were ready to go out and implement it?

Dillon said that as soon as the joint board of supervisors is approved and formed, we will go out and implement it.

Chairman Mott asked if there were any other questions or comments by the board?

Tom Price moved to approve the formation of the joint board of supervisors
Susan Reeves seconded the motion. Motion carried.
Chairman Mott abstained from the vote.

Hanselmann said that he had several other items to bring up briefly as part of the Executive Secretary Report. Hanselmann wanted to make the OSWCC aware that a formerly approved joint board of supervisors for Auglaize, Hardin, Champaign, Shelby, and 80% of Logan counties have been planning a log jam removal project for the Great Miami River. Most of the project would be funded by the \$25/per parcel assessment and that was the minimum assessment that was approved in the law change several years ago. Landowners in Logan County objected to those assessments that were planned and filed signatures for a referendum last November. The voters in Logan County approved the referendum which disapproves of this project. There was no specific guidance in the revised code at that time, when this petition was filed, for how a referendum in one county would relate to a five county or multiple county project. The prosecuting attorneys in the area analyzed other case law and reached a recommendation that there would be a basis to move forward with the project even though the voters in Logan County had disapproved it through a referendum. The joint board of commissioners went ahead and authorized the distribution of assessments to landowners so there is considerable controversy in Logan County of people objecting to these assessments even though they are the \$25 minimum assessment. State Representative Tony Core has been involved in the deliberations of this matter and Hanselmann noted that he has had several discussions with him. Hanselmann said that it wouldn't surprise him if there is a need for future legislation to clarify how these kinds of matters would be resolved.

Hanselmann reported that there is current legislation that the OFSWCD and DSWC have worked hard on, but thanks to Montgomery SWCD, they followed through and worked with their own legislator, Representative Arlene Setzer to introduce H.B. 472. Jim Dillon provided testimony to the House Ag and Natural Resources Committee to clarify that the works of improvement projects under Chapter 1515 can take full advantage of the maintenance procedures in chapter 6137, the county engineer's version of the drainage laws. It also clarifies the update of the six year maintenance base so that maintenance assessments can be increased because many of the projects couldn't keep up with inflation. This bill will authorize the commissioners to approve the estimated construction cost by the county engineers of that improvement work to be constructed at the time of the permanent base, at which the base can be adjusted upward if the need is there for such a project. Hanselmann said that it has been an obstacle to have sufficient funds to implement the maintenance provisions for quite a few projects.

Hanselmann stated that there is information regarding the Nonpoint Source Education Mini-Grants in the OSWCC member packets. Jeanne Russell put this information together because she wanted you to be aware of the projects that were approved totaling \$10,000 and local in-kind match of over \$58,000.

Hanselmann reported that DSWC staff are working diligently to respond to several complaints that were filed based on a provision in Chapter 1511.021 "Operation and management plan – nuisances – complaint". There is a provision in the law that authorizes our division and conservation districts to respond to complaints where agricultural pollution to waters of the state either has occurred or is occurring. Hanselmann noted that there is a county in Northwest Ohio where hogging operations are under construction. The geology in the area is known to have certain conditions that could pose a threat in the minds of the people that filed a complaint and they are alleging that it poses an imminent threat, even though there are no animals there yet. But upon completion of the facility, there will be manure and animals obviously so our staff is investigating the known geology through well logs and pollution potential maps. Staff have been out on site and met with the producer and landowner to gather further insights for plans for the operation, and even involving the chief counsel of ODNR in determining exactly what the statute implies, in terms of responding to such a complaint. Hanselmann said that DSWC will keep the OSWCC posted as we reach a decision on whether it is a valid complaint or not.

Price asked if the legal response for that would go through county prosecutors or the state or through our counsel here at ODNR?

Hanselmann said that Tony Logan, the Chief Counsel at ODNR is working on it. The complaint was filed with our division via email so we have shared the complaints on an informal basis. We haven't asked the conservation district to investigate the complaint. DSWC is investigating it, though we are involving the district at the meetings and on site.

Chairman Mott added that the board members need to mail in their Financial Disclosure Statements to the Ethics Commission before April 15. Mott noted that Bleim mailed a copy of those out to each OSWCC member.

OSWCC ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

REVIEW REPORT OF SWCD USAGE OF CORE SWIMS MODULES

Joyce distributed to the OSWCC members a copy of the letter that went out on February 11, 2008 from Chairman Mott and Chief Hanselmann that apprised the districts of the fact that the OSWCC had reviewed and approved that all 88 districts begin in 2008 utilizing the SWIMS program. Attached to that letter was the guidance policy on how we are actually asking districts to use the program.

Joyce referred to the second handout which was titled "SWCDs which have SWIMS setup / or are utilizing as requested by OSWCC Policy". This information was taken yesterday from the SWIMS database and it depicts which SWCDs have the SWIMS program set up per the policy from the OSWCC so that they can begin to report in the manner that we have asked them to. Joyce reported that 59 of the 88 districts have the SWIMS program set up so that it will meet at least what the OSWCC has asked them to do. Many of the districts listed are well beyond simply having the program set up. Joyce thought that the numbers were pretty good for this point.

Joyce said that on the bottom of the page is a list of the SWCDs which do not have SWIMS setup / or are not utilizing it as requested by the OSWCC policy. Joyce clarified that even though some districts are listed here, it doesn't necessarily mean that they are not using the program or that they are not doing anything with it. Joyce said that they may be doing something that just needs to be tweaked a little bit so that we can say that they have the program set up and they are ready to go.

Chairman Mott asked if Joyce would be working with the districts listed on the bottom of the page to apprise them of where they are in the process.

Joyce said that is something that we have been doing. The Program Specialists and myself have actively been working with the districts to make sure that they are in the process of getting SWIMS set up so that it provides the information that the OSWCC has asked for.

Joyce reviewed the final handout titled "SWIMS Update" for the OSWCC. Joyce noted that the revised Land and Water, Clients and Initiatives modules have been completed. DSWC will be installing the "new" modules after July 1, 2008 online. Joyce added that DSWC was working on a potential linkage between the SWIMS program and NRCS's "Toolkit" program. Staff have met from both agencies and DSWC is working on gathering information to provide to NRCS so that they can then review and then hopefully we'll be able to move forward on this. This would allow SWIMS to access data that may reside in the "Toolkit" program, which would help eliminate some potential double-entry of data. DSWC is also working with Butler SWCD and Hamilton SWCD on the development of a potential tool that would allow their local programs to speak to and actually deposit their information into the SWIMS program.

Joyce noted that DSWC held a meeting recently with some of the representatives from some of the larger urban districts to discuss how they can utilize the SWIMS program now to meet what the OSWCC is asking for. The group also discussed and identified some improvements in the program.

Lastly, DSWC has been working with NRCS staff to clarify necessary agreements for sharing or transferring data among the partners.

Sheets asked if the OSWCC will need to encourage districts to participate in SWIMS again for those districts that are lagging behind?

Joyce thought that DSWC will just have to go in and set the program up for them so that everything is ready to go so that they are completely ready to utilize it.

Hanselmann thought that we would wait until after July when the new modules are available.

Joyce thought that they need to start using it now because the information that they put in now with the new modules will be utilized. Joyce wouldn't recommend that anyone wait to start utilizing the program.

Price asked if it would be possible to have a monthly update on those districts listed on the bottom of the page for their progress? Or maybe score those districts on the level of progress such as 0 progress or 5 progress?

Joyce thought that he could do that and added that the majority right now are probably a 4 or 5.

Sheets asked if the OSWCC needed to send another reference letter back out?

Joyce thought that he should continue to work with these districts and if there are a couple that would benefit from such a letter, maybe we could do that. Joyce added that he didn't think that the letter needed to go to all of them again.

PRESENTATION BY BUTLER AND HAMILTON SWCDs ON STATUS OF EFFORTS TO TRANSFER DATA FROM CURRENT IT SYSTEM INTO SWIMS

Tom Reininger introduced himself and shared his concerns with the OSWCC by noting that a conversion of data into the SWIMS database is much more preferred than a labor intensive data entry process. Reininger stated that Holly Utrata-Halcomb plans to discuss the extent of the reports that we now generate in the urban areas and Kevin Fall will discuss the data conversion process that we are involved in and very excited about.

Holly Utrata-Halcomb noted that Hamilton SWCD is trying to bridge the documentation gap with this "umbrella" program that will encompass everyone's needs and will be able to query and download all of the reporting requirements. For some agencies, SWIMS is fantastic because it is the only thing that they have and the queries are fantastic. But for those of us that already have programs in place, for instance, in this particular report we have our monthly SWCD report, our stormwater district report, and our Permits Plus, which adds up to be very labor intensive. Utrata-Halcomb provided the OSWCC members with one case history for each project that Hamilton SWCD does. Last year, Hamilton SWCD reviewed 1,573 plans and of those plans, Hamilton SWCD issued 150 permits of development sites over 1 acre. Hamilton

SWCD conducted 1,659 inspections on those sites. All of that information was entered into our databases. A total of 44 agencies input data within Hamilton County and are involved in these permitting processes. This new “umbrella” program that we are working on will not only benefit the urban counties but also the ditch maintenance counties and agricultural counties, hopefully. Utrata-Halcomb said that Hamilton and Butler SWCDs were looking for the OSWCC’s endorsement of this process. She added that the urban counties have the lion’s share of legislators so it is critical that we show them what we are doing as an SWCD to conserve our soil and water.

Kevin Fall of Butler SWCD distributed an excel spreadsheet that was created to show the different areas that were being pulled that the OSWCC required. Fall added that he worked with Martin Joyce on what projects needed to be included and the progress over the last three weeks has fallen right in line with the new version of SWIMS, which is critical. Fall noted that this will work just like the Clients transfer tool. If someone has an existing database with their clients in it, all they have to do is populate an excel spreadsheet and send it to Martin and Steve McClaine and it can be inputted into the Clients module. Fall said that they started with that basic structure and took the OSWCC’s guidance to input these data fields first and then added other data fields that they thought may be useful to a district for their reporting capabilities.

Fall said that the new version allows, instead of going in physically and mapping the practice, you can enter an X, Y coordinate and the info can be populated automatically. The developer of USP felt that it would not be an issue to set this up so it could be automatically transferred daily, weekly, or monthly. Fall thought that right now we are entering the bare minimum for what the OSWCC would like to have, but what is better for you and myself is if we could do this automatically because we could turn those 300 or 3,000 prospective plan reviews and inspections into its own project – giving every project those eight spatial attributes and the data there to do more with – both at the state level and at the local level. Fall noted that Steve McClaine thought that in his initial reviews he thought that this was doable within a timeframe. Fall would like to have this up by mid-year or early fall so that all of Butler SWCD’s projects can be entered in. Fall said that entering a project a day, we could potentially be entering in 30-40 projects a day at 5-10 minutes a piece, but that puts a lot of strain on staff time so this is an excellent way to get more information in with less time.

Mott commended Butler and Hamilton SWCDs for already meeting the OSWCC’s minimum standards and for also coming up with a new tool for the integration of this into SWIMS so that data entry is easier. Mott asked Martin Joyce what the time frame was for the new modules to come out?

Joyce said that the three new modules are complete, but we have to wait until after July 1 because DSWC doesn’t have enough funding in our current fiscal year for the SWIMS budget to buy a piece of required software. That software is called ArcGIS Server and it costs \$32,000-\$33,000. If our SWIMS budget remains in tact, we will have the funding after July 1. The new tool that Butler and Hamilton SWCDs are working on will work with the new modules and information that is put in today will work with the new modules. Martin Joyce noted that some of you may be asking “how are we paying for this” and added that he did not have any funding to pay for the work that will need to be done on this new tool.

Mott asked if you have an excel spreadsheet that dumps the data with the conversion package, can we already enter the data into the spreadsheet before everything is complete?

Fall said that Butler SWCD was already entering info into their individual databases. For Hamilton SWCD, it is their Permits Plus example, for us it is our excel sheet, and for all of the counties up north it would be USP. Fall said that whenever the tool is built and we get our database manager to write the report out, they can write that report out all the way back to January 1, 2008 and in one large dump can populate the entire year up to the point where we get the tool working. Then it would just be an automated transfer on whatever basis you needed it to be from that point on. We are still waiting to receive a formal quote for the project, but in talking with the developer it seems like it will be astonishingly affordable. Fall added that he couldn’t afford not implementing this project – even if he was the only district that would benefit from it.

Mott stated that this kind of tool is a very important item in us moving forward and has to be given just deliberation when it comes to the financial side of where we are going with the improvements to SWIMS. Mott felt that he couldn't see the OSWCC having any kind of discussion regarding money going into SWIMS without taking this as part of the discussion, in his view. Mott felt that the OSWCC should consider this along with the new modules so that when you folks have this all together and the discussion comes before us, that that be a part of the discussion.

Price asked Martin Joyce if all of the information for the districts went this far, what would that do to the contract that we have with SWIMS? Would that double the amount of information that is going into there?

Joyce thought that it would probably double the amount of information being inputted and maybe more than double the amount.

Price asked if the cost would double for our storage of this info?

Joyce noted that the potential cost that we would be incurred would be due to storage on the server. Joyce thought that if more storage was to be needed, we could potentially require more of the ODNR IT staff here because we pay for that each month. Some of that insight may not be apparent until we are actually closer to having the data being dumped into it.

Price asked if there was any value to show this to other states such as New York or Indiana?

Joyce said that any improvements that others end up making to the program, we will benefit from in the long run.

REVIEW STATUS OF OHIO AND NATIONAL EFFORTS FOR USE OF LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL IT SYSTEMS AND TRANSFERABILITY OF DATA

Hammon distributed some handouts and referred to the Federal Register which outlined the proposed new routine use 21, which would provide for disclosure of certain hard copy or electronic records in this system to cooperating Federal, State, and local agencies, as necessary for implementation of conservation programs. Hammon noted that this allows FSA to share their information with local and state government. The specific information to be disclosed to the cooperating Federal, State, and local agencies employees consists of: producer name/address/tax ID number; digital imagery, including CLU boundaries, calculated acreage, and farm, tract, and field identifiers; environmental resources and disaster data; conservation reserve program data; highly erodible land delineations and data; conservation producer payment history; and wetlands classifications. Hammon added that this will be quite helpful in regards to the SWIMS program because we will be able to go and pick a point on the GIS and go right to it instead of having to do more of an exhaustive search on the mapping unit within SWIMS. Hammon said that this should have gone into effect March 3 if there wasn't any comments that would change it up to the 40 day period on January 22. There are some folks with NACD reviewing it and we need to get some meetings set up with FSA so that we can effectively work with that information.

Hammon reported that another document that USDA and specifically the NASCA group have been trying to put together is an MOU between USDA NRCS and either the state or local agency to sort of formalize how information can be shared – in particular the electronic data. Hammon stated that Michelle Lohstroh, John Wilson of NRCS, Martin Joyce and himself are working on custom tailoring an MOU for Ohio. Along with this document, an Interconnectivity Security Agreement (ISA) is also being created which maps out how all of this is going to work. Hammon hoped that it would clarify a little bit better some of the things that we can and cannot share when it comes to those files that are protected by federal law and those state files that are public based on state law.

Hanselmann encouraged folks to look this over and felt like we are moving in the right direction, but if we sign this we are making a substantial commitment to security and reporting that we can't take lightly. If we want access to federal information and our partnership, it is a commitment that security issues that the federal government and all of us face. It is a commitment we need to make. It is substantial and will require our staffs at the state and local levels who participate in sharing this data information to pledge to

implement security measures and to protect the data and so on. We will need to provide some training and outreach in that regard. Hanselmann thought that it was something that we need to do, but wanted the OSWCC members to realize the substantial commitment that we are making to allow data and information to be shared among our federal, state and local partners.

DISCUSSION OF MIAMI SWCD QUESTION REGARDING CAPITAL EXPENDITURES PREVIOUS TO THE \$8000 CAP

Chairman Mott stated that this item involves the Miami SWCD so he was going to relinquish the Chair to Susan Reeves, our Vice Chair, for introducing the discussion and chairing the OSWCC during his excused absence while the deliberations are going on because it involves financial discussions regarding a district for which Mott is a supervisor. Mott excused himself from this discussion.

Vice Chair Susan Reeves opened the discussion for the Miami SWCD question regarding the capital expenditures previous to the \$8000 cap.

Hanselmann stated that the OSWCC members have correspondence from the Miami SWCD and added that the Miami SWCD has been accumulating funds and has recently determined that they have an opportunity to acquire the office building, largely with those accumulated funds, and they have recognized that the policy that the OSWCC adopted in late 2001 limits the matchability of local funds that were provided for capital improvements purposes. Hanselmann distributed a memo dated February 11, 2005 where DSWC provided additional guidance and summary information about matchability to each of the conservation districts. On the back page of that memo is a section concerning the policy on matching local appropriations for capital improvements and it stipulates that it is only allowable up to \$8,000 per year and this policy was adopted late in 2001. Prior to that date, there were no such limitations. Hanselmann thought that Kreig Smail has a spreadsheet so you have the February 11, 2005 memo, the letter that was received March 25, 2008 from Miami SWCD requesting this proposal, and a spreadsheet that Kreig has provided this morning with how they are proposing to split the funds that were accumulated from local and state sources prior to 2001 and then afterwards so Hanselmann thought that their proposal would be in compliance with the OSWCC policy just as I understand with the information that they have provided. Hanselmann pointed out that it is worth noting that currently the conservation district receives an appropriation which includes funds that allows the SWCD to lease office space and in the future, if this office space were acquired and owned by the district, the county commissioners wouldn't have the need to appropriate the funds for such office space because the building would be owned and not leased so that could be, depending on what the county commissioners do with appropriation levels, they could have a savings so that this OSWCC and our state match would no longer in the future be paying for the matching funds appropriated locally to lease the office space. This could be a savings depending on what level of appropriations the county commissioners provide to the district in the future for various purposes. Hanselmann asked if Kreig Smail would like to provide more information.

Kreig Smail, District Administrator for the Miami SWCD asked the OSWCC members to read the two page handout that he provided to the OSWCC members.

Smail reviewed the second page of the handout titled Miami SWCD Cash Reserve Fund from 1996-2007. Smail said that the OSWCC minutes of March 26, 2002 state that the OSWCC approved the cap on local appropriations for capital improvements so Miami SWCD is looking at 1996, which is when our carryover first started and up until 2001, we are requesting from the OSWCC approval to expend all of those funds. Kreig Smail said that starting in 2002 to the current end of 2007, the Miami SWCD is requesting \$8,000 per year. Smail clarified that the bold figures is what Miami SWCD is looking to expend towards the purchase of the new building. Smail said that Miami SWCD staff and supervisors feel that this is a good time to do this because we have been in this building since the late 1980's and we have been trying since the early 1990's to gain an all ag center with the SWCD, NRCS, FSA, and OSU Extension. Right now, the Extension office is not with us and we would like to have them housed with us. Smail said that Miami SWCD is housed just right outside the corporation limit and it is in a nice building with a nice location. Smail thought that this was a pretty opportune time because the landlord of the current building is aging and in his 90's and only has one heir so Miami SWCD didn't know what would happen and their lease was up in September of this year.

Cash asked what the annual expenditures were for rent?

Smail said that it is approximately \$16,000 for the total square footage that we have. Five years ago, the rent was increased and the landlord did make the comment that within the next five he would be looking to increase that as well. Smail said that our DC, our FSA County Director and myself will be meeting with the landlord probably in June to discuss rent. Smail imagined that it will go up.

Cash asked if Miami SWCD currently subleased to NRCS?

Smail said yes, we currently sublease the 2000 square foot office.

Sheets asked if there was space available for Extension?

Smail said yes, there is a third suite being rented out right now to a state department that is no longer going to be there come September.

Sheets asked if Miami SWCD is able to purchase the property, will the district own it then or will it be the county commissioners buying it?

Smail said that it would be the conservation district's.

Cash asked about the prospective renters, the Farm Service Agency and the County Farm Bureau, how are those negotiations going? Does Miami SWCD think that there is a high probability that you would be able to rent to them?

Smail said yes, he had spoken with Karen McCalister, the District Conservationist with NRCS and she would like to definitely stay. Smail added that Miami County's Farm Service Agency Director indicated that he would like to stay as well. At the current rates that we are being charged rent, we feel that we would subrent back to them at that same square footage cost and they are more than happy with that. The Miami County Farm Bureau would like to come in there and we have an area for them as well that we could sublease to them. The Extension is currently in the Courthouse and Miami SWCD would have to do some maneuvering with that, but they are interested because they do not have appropriate parking for the public so their usage isn't as good as what they would like to be and it would be better if they were out with us.

Reeves added that she thought that having an Ag Center was becoming the trend because her county would like to have one, too.

Sheets asked if we had overruled or given an extension of this \$8000 before on certain items?

Hanselmann said that since the policy was adopted (the limit of \$8000), as far as we know, only a few districts have taken advantage and gotten local appropriations that they are using for a capital purpose. As far as we know, they are expending such funds in the year that they were appropriated and made available. DSWC is not aware of districts accumulating that \$8000 over a multiple year period. Hanselmann said that one of his thoughts would be if the OSWCC decides to move forward and approve this matter, that we should perhaps give consideration to associating with that, the fact that such a request for accumulated funds needs to come before the OSWCC for approval. Such that, it is not just an automatic that a district can accumulate \$8000 per year for the next 10 or 20 years for some purpose that doesn't require additional approval for its expenditure. Just as Miami SWCD has come and asked for approval this time, so that there is some control over that. It is a fairly modest amount of money per year, but nonetheless it can accumulate into a considerable sum.

Price said so the question before us is what?

Reeves stated that the question is do we go back into the previous years to get the accumulation, is it not?

Hammon thought that the concern may be how many districts could turn around tomorrow and say we have \$250,000 that we want to do this with. About half of that amount is state match so Hammon asked Randy Mott and Kreig Smail for the documentation through minutes or other discussions that sort of give the indication that this was the plan all along.

Smail said that he brought some information back from discussions with the county commissioners back in April of 2001 and discussed at that time we were looking to possibly house a Program Specialist, an area Engineer from NRCS so we were looking at a more elaborate building, but we decided to wait if an area office was developed and it did so at the time we changed plans and kind of backed off. We weren't sure if our landlord had wanted to sell at that time or not so held back. Smail said that he didn't have the minutes with him right now, but he passed around some information that was acquired at that time.

Mott said that he has been a supervisor for almost 11 years and had proposed this local agricultural center to the county commissioners about 10 years ago, with the idea of possibly purchasing the building and providing a countywide ag center if you will and incorporate into the agencies that we discussed here this morning and at the time that I proposed this we had just been starting to accumulate a few of the carryover funds that you see listed here on the paper and Mott said that he had an immediate affirmative response from two of the three commissioners that were in office at the time. However, we also had an issue that the county extension agent at the time was not interested in moving from the current location which was at the Miami County Courthouse nor did one of the other commissioners want to alienate the extension agent. It was more or less put on the back burner at that time and the district felt that in some time in the future, there very well could be the possibility that we could accumulate funds, purchase a building and make the all county ag center. That was the reason for the accumulation of funds that you see there. However, the district administrator and board of supervisors recognized that in the course of the last few years, none of those carryover funds could or should be used for capital expenditures above the \$8000 cap the OSWCC imposed. That is the reason why Kreig Smail is here today to ask for your support to use funds that were accumulated before the \$8000 cap and just for those funds within the \$8000 cap since it was imposed.

Hanselmann thought that it could be argued that there was no policy prior to 2001 that would impact your ability to accumulate carryover funds and how it could be used. After that date, there was an \$8000 limitation and what we have in front of us complies with that new policy. Nonetheless, Hanselmann thought that the district would like to be on firm ground as they move forward and wanted the OSWCC to in essence agree with them that they are in compliance with the OSWCC policy. Hanselmann thought that it might be useful to clarify for future purposes that the policy has the \$8000 limitation, but that accumulation each year into the future wouldn't be necessarily an automatic approval by the OSWCC perhaps accumulation of a number of years capital monies should come under review. Depending on what the members of the OSWCC might want to do today, perhaps you could reach an agreement that this matter has complied with the OSWCC and we could come back in July or November with a more specific recommendation for any policy adjustment that would relate to future districts accumulating capital monies in multiple years. Hanselmann thought that we weren't ready to determine exactly what any such policy revision would consist of.

Cash clarified the understanding of why the OSWCC thought it was necessary to implement an \$8000 cap, was it to ensure that funds are used for conservation practices and programs and to cap it at \$8000 for improvements..was that the reasoning behind implementing such a policy?

Hanselmann said that it was primarily a fear that one or more conservation districts could achieve a very large appropriation for capital purposes – at the same time the OSWCC felt that state match was primarily for conservation district operations and that there are certainly some capital needs – that it might be appropriate to limit the state funds for such purposes to \$8000 since there is an authority in the revised code that requires districts to get approval for funding above that so there was a legal basis to exercise this policy. But primarily, fear was that a single district could diminish significantly the amount of state match funds were available for each of the other conservation districts. Hanselmann summed up that it is the breaking of the budget and having a serious impact on all of the other conservation districts for a single sort of project or purpose that didn't seem appropriate to allow that to happen and it would be better to have a

policy that would preclude it rather than reacting to that kind of scenario after appropriations had been made.

Sheets moved to allow the Miami SWCD to exceed the limitations put in place based on their request and added that any other request that would come before the OSWCC would be done on an individual basis. This would allow the Miami SWCD to proceed with their request.

Fred Cash seconded the motion.

Reeves asked for a roll call vote.

Fred Cash	I
Clark Sheets	I
Tom Price	Oppose
Susan Reeves	Oppose

Bleim stated that there were two members for the motion and two against. (Kevin Elder had not arrived to the meeting, Jerry Bigham was absent, and Randy Mott had excused himself from the vote since it applied to his district.)

Price stated that this was the first time he had seen this so to make his decision based on 10 minutes of discussion he did not feel was appropriate.

Reeves said that she was skeptical of everyone accumulating through the years and if 50 districts wanted to do that, Reeves understood that this would be a case by case issue, but it could really break the bank.

Price said it is a noble exercise to put together an all ag building, but the basis of our discussion is really on cost share and such that we had that and until we see what the other ramifications will happen as a result of passing this, I don't think that we will know at this point.

Cash thought that this was perpetuated by the argument that the cutoff is there and the \$8000 accumulated is what they are asking for and prior to this policy, they had accumulated funds so Cash thought that it was noble to have an all ag center and the benefits of the cost savings it was indicated that it would be \$16,000 a year, which is what they indicated that they are spending now so that is why Cash is supportive of the motion.

Hanselmann recommended that the OSWCC perhaps consider this in the future, when there will be additional OSWCC members present and between now and the next meeting we can try to answer any questions that the OSWCC members might have and allow time that wasn't available prior to this OSWCC meeting for division members to gain more insights and knowledge and then if there are questions that might need to be answered and then determine if the district wants to put the matter in front of the OSWCC if there is a subsequent need. If someone wants to recommend something different from that sort of scenario please let me know.

Cash thought that was appropriate so that the OSWCC can deliberate on this and Miami SWCD could bring it up at our next meeting if they choose to.

Reeves clarified that this would be at the July OSWCC Meeting.

Hanselmann stated that Justin Reinhart has agenda item #6 and he has come back from a TDP class 20 miles from here so if no one is too hungry we could have this agenda item before we break for lunch.

REVIEW DRAFT PROJECT DESCRIPTION FOR AN ENTERPRISE GIS SYSTEM TO SUPPORT LOCAL AND STATE NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT BY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE USERS

Justin Reinhart noted that there is a yellow handout in the OSWCC members' packets referring to the Request for Proposals for the Ohio Conservation Geographic Information System that the OSWCC was updated on at the last meeting.

Reinhart reported that DSWC has held one meeting to date of the SWCD GIS User Group and worked with them on what they would like to see out of the project. DSWC also met with ODNR's OIT staff to look at the RFP process and to review how this would actually be implemented technically with the software and hardware components of it. DSWC has begun to write up the RFP and most of the sessions will be completed by our Department of Administrative Services regarding the contractual aspect and the technical specifics by the Office of Information Technology. Reinhart added that DSWC has begun working on the Scope of Work and the bulk of the work will be to get this RFP together over the next few weeks.

Reinhart stated that the DSWC was working with the contractor on the GIS functionality and reporting tools so that this would be a unique project differing from other common GIS and other current web based projects that are out there now or in the works. DSWC anticipates that this will be an on-going project that once this is data-centered, it will become the foundation of the tool. Reinhart said that they hope that this information will be available to the public, which will include natural resources information such as soils and watershed management and boundary layers. DSWC hopes to serve this out through the 88 SWCDs and it will become a service that they are providing and not necessarily the division is providing to their clients and customers. Reinhart said that DSWC hopes to incorporate local data into it that they will be able to utilize by giving county-wide information out.

Reinhart noted that the primary objectives of this proposal are to make all federal and state maintained spatial data related to soil, water, and natural resource conservation easily accessible, to provide a means to perform spatial analysis and summaries of this data, and to provide a means of reporting spatial and tabular data for specific tasks.

Cash asked if there was a training component to this, either web-based or otherwise?

Reinhart said that once the project is assembled, there will probably be a rollout procedure that we will incorporate into the RFP that the creator of this GIS system would assist in the training. Reinhart thought that they would train the internal staff and then DSWC would assist districts with the training. Reinhart hoped that it would be low maintenance and user friendly.

Price asked if bringing in additional databases, such as the EPA databases on watersheds, would be able to be imported into this system fairly easily?

Reinhart said that is a goal and their hope that this would prompt other agencies to incorporate their data. The project should be set up so that the database maintenance allows for easy assimilation to view data, as well as access and maintain on a regular basis.

Price asked if Ohio EPA had been a part of the discussions with this?

Reinhart said that they have not had discussions with Ohio EPA yet, but have spoken with ODA, specifically LEPP on some unique related elements on how this might be able to assist them with their permitting duties.

Cash noted that at the last meeting it was stated that other states are using this system. Cash asked if Reinhart had discussed incorporating other agencies' data and the issues with any of the other states that were using this system?

Reinhart said that the update that the OSWCC received at the last meeting was in reference to the Missouri model for this project. Reinhart added that DSWC has been in contact with the Missouri group.

Cash asked if they had been able to integrate their agency's data into the system?

Reinhart said that they had been able to and said that the question now is are those datasets for Ohio referenced properly so that we could bring them into our system.

Lohstroh said that we may need to run this through the NRCS Administrative review in regards to making any federal spatial data related to natural resource conservation easily accessible. Lohstroh didn't know if this should come to the table, but thought that it may go back to our MOU agreement on how we release data, which is not in place yet. Lohstroh added that she is just bringing it up for consideration because it is not a finalized situation and there are two places on the front page that reference it.

Reinhart asked if Lohstroh was being NRCS specific or all federal agencies?

Lohstroh said that she was interested specifically in NRCS, but other federal agencies have FOIA requirements also.

Mott thanked Reinhart for the update.

STORMCENTER COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT VIDEO DURING LUNCH

Hanselmann noted that during lunch, a video will be shown of a StormCenter Communications project that entails working with television stations to promote water resources related programming through their weather reporting and other news features. The project will also maintain a website. Hanselmann stated that to come up with funding to support such an initiative has been going on for 3 years now. Luckily, one was rolled out with some support from USDA NRCS Western Lake Erie Basin project. Hanselmann said that Marcy Kaptur has been very influential in making that project happen.

Dorothy Farris reported that folks in northeast Ohio are wanting to do something similar to this EcoTrack project. Farris said that she spoke with Greg Nageotte in the spring of 2006 about one of the initiatives that OWRC was trying to do with the stormcenter communications. Farris said that she became an ad-hoc member with the Education Committee of OWRC to help roll this out in northeast Ohio. Farris said that she received commitments from 13 SWCDs who would like to participate in this project. Farris reported that she applied to the Gund Foundation for a \$300,000 grant, but they thought it was too governmental so it was denied. Farris said that she engaged the Western Reserve RC&D in northeast Ohio and they agreed to fund \$22,500 for this project, which will help build a website. Farris said that they still need approximately \$425,000 to fund this project. Farris hoped to have the funding by fiscal year 2009.

Kevin Elder arrived during lunch around 12:30 pm.

DISCUSSION OF MIAMI SWCD QUESTION REGARDING CAPITAL EXPENDITURES PREVIOUS TO THE \$8000 CAP (CONTINUED)

Tom Price moved to reopen Item #4 regarding the discussion on Miami SWCD.
Susan Reeves seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Chairman Mott noted that since this discussion involved Miami SWCD and Mott serves as a board member for Miami SWCD, Mott relinquished his duties as Chair and stated that Susan Reeves who serves as Vice Chair will handle the discussion from here.

Vice Chairman Reeves opened the floor for further discussion.

Price stated that after further discussion during lunch, Price wanted to change his vote on this and apologized for not understanding this from the start.

Hanselmann offered to go over the numbers that were presented by Miami SWCD that perhaps led to some confusion in the discussion. Hanselmann said that he will do his best to depict the situation, but if others have more insight feel free to jump in.

Hanselmann asked the OSWCC members to pull the information that Miami SWCD provided today. Hanselmann noted that DSWC received this information today as well and hadn't seen this previously. Hanselmann indicated that DSWC received the letter on March 25 previously and apologized that the letter had not gone out ahead of this meeting.

Hanselmann stated that the numbers in bold which are the total dollars in 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001 – those dollars are what remained in the district's account at the end of their fiscal year and were gained from state and local funds, a combination of the two. That is the total carryover from those sources of funds. These dollar amounts were prior to a policy established, so districts were accumulating to the extent they had and could cover current expenses and had funds left over at the end of the year. Many districts across Ohio were accumulating their carryover. This went into the SWCDs carryover, a combination of state and local monies, prior to the adoption of any policy restricting use of such funds for capital improvement purposes. Hanselmann summed up that these are monies appropriated a number of fiscal years ago (county money and state money) and those monies are co-mingled and become conservation district funds. Those funds are authorized by the county in a sort of fiscal gyration, but they are conservation district funds at their disposal to use in accordance with Chapter 1515 of the revised code.

Hanselmann added that the state portion of that, any restrictions the OSWCC has put on the use of the state funds, which the OSWCC did in late 2001 by adopting a policy that said of the state money we provide each year, only \$8000 of such funds can be used for capital improvement purposes. That policy did not preclude the accumulation of those dollars, so what we have is from 2002 until the present, for six years the Miami SWCD with money that is long since out the door and in their local accounts, not current OSWCC money so to speak, they have accumulated \$48,000. Hanselmann thought that Kreig Smail had used some unfortunate words by asking for that to be matched but the reality is, that those funds were part of the state match against the local money so if we look, for example, at 2002, there was a \$64,000 carryover and Hanselmann noted that he didn't know what the level of state match was for that year off the top of his head, but for the ease of calculation purposes, perhaps \$32,000 was county money and \$32,000 was state money.

Hypothetically speaking, of that \$32,000 of state money, the district is proposing to use \$8,000 for the building fund purposes in compliance with the policy that the OSWCC adopted. Hanselmann indicated that Miami SWCD is not using the local money that is remaining in their carryover.

Hanselmann said that they are using the money prior to the policy adoption in 2001, the total of a combination of state and local money and then in 2002 and thereafter, Miami SWCD is requesting to use \$8,000, which are state funds that were already distributed. Hanselmann said that approval or disapproval of a motion in this regard will not impact this year or future year's state match distribution to them or any other conservation districts. Hanselmann said that these are funds that were previously distributed and are sitting in the conservation districts accounts in the county for purposes as approved by the board. Hanselmann added that this is limited by general state law, by purposes of Chapter 1515, and by any policy this OSWCC has adopted, which Hanselmann thought that the relevant policy in this regard is the \$8,000 limitation.

Vice Chair Reeves noted that a motion is still standing so asked if there was any further discussion or should we have a roll call vote?

Cash commented that the motion made by Clark Sheets was that this was a case by case examination of a request of this kind and wanted to make that part known.

Reeves added so that it is still standing.

Cash added that he was still seconding as his support of the motion.

Hanselmann said that since we are still in discussion, in reference to a case-by-case basis, is there a sense by the OSWCC that you all would want DSWC to try to articulate a policy that would guide SWCDs regarding an accumulation of multiple years of funds within the \$8000 limitation?

Cash thought that would be appropriate.

Hawkins asked if this was the kind of thing that the OSWCC would want to encourage the districts to set aside \$8000 for carryover or to spend large amounts of carryover on real estate at the end of the year?

Hanselmann said that this is why he brought up the point in the initial discussion and now whether the OSWCC would like us to bring back to the OSWCC a policy that would address exactly what Steve is raising...what kind of policy would relate to the accumulation of the \$8000 funds in any one year? Hanselmann offered that he believed that the district was free as long as it was within any of these other restrictions, to spend the \$8000, but it seems like it might be a good idea from what I am seeing from the OSWCC to try to come up with a policy that would address the issue of accumulating that amount of money year after year. Hanselmann questioned if there were any sidebars that could guide districts who are considering doing that. Hanselmann added that it does seem like there is interest in adopting such a clarification policy, but that wasn't the case when this policy was adopted and it was simply \$8000 per year.

Reeves asked if there was any other discussion?

Kevin Elder asked if he could have the motion restated before we vote on it since he wasn't at the meeting before lunch?

Reeves asked if Clark Sheets could restate the motion?

Sheets moved that we allow Miami SWCD to exceed the \$8000, but we are doing this on a review basis or an individual basis and as other districts come before us it is not an automatic and we will review their request on an individual basis.

Hanselmann said that he had no idea what Robert's rules are here, but Hanselmann didn't think that Miami SWCD was asking to exceed the \$8000.

Kreig Smail said that was correct.

Hanselmann added that Miami SWCD is requesting to use funds within the \$8000 for 2002 and thereafter. Hanselmann apologized if he was out of order here, but wanted to clarify what Miami SWCD was requesting.

Reeves thanked Hanselmann for the explanation and asked if the OSWCC understood the motion?

Elder said so he understands the motion since he wasn't involved in the original discussion, the total includes money that is collected before the policy limitation of \$8000 became into effect and then they are wanting to use the \$48000, which is \$8000/year from 2002-2007.

Hanselmann said that was correct and added that it involved only that amount.

Elder reiterated that it was only that amount.

Hanselmann said that it is reflected on the sheet provided by Miami SWCD this morning.

Hawkins said so the OSWCC wants districts to start setting money, old money back and setting it aside for a larger carryover to purchase buildings in the future?

Price said that was not necessarily what we want them to do, but we are allowing it to happen.

Hawkins said that this is different from what the OSWCC has told them in the past and they have always told them to spend it down.

Cash said that any request would be subject to its own terms and the OSWCC would review it. Cash thought that what Clark Sheets is saying is that this case that is presented to us is one that we are willing to approve. If a new case is presented to us, we will examine it and if we feel so we will pass. But, Cash added that what Hanselmann is saying is that we are willing to examine that policy and we will come up with a criteria that we will use beyond just case by case. At this point in time, we are acting on this particular request based upon the information that has been provided.

Sheets said that since the original motion failed and we had a tie vote, the OSWCC probably should proceed with a new motion.

Clark Sheets moved to allow Miami SWCD to spend \$48,000 that they had in reserve and added that he would word it a little differently so it would be in addition to the accumulated money that they had held in reserve prior to the limitations that were put on matching in late of 2001. Fred Cash seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Reeves asked for any discussion and then a roll call vote.

Jill Evans commented that the one thing that you would want to avoid is having the district asking the county commissioners to parcel out money for one capital improvement project over a number of years in order to avoid the cap. Evans didn't think that was the case this time, but thought that we should avoid that.

Hammon thought that there should be guidance from the OSWCC to clarify the expectations. Hammon added that we currently don't have anything to handle this situation. Hammon thought that from this point on, the districts need to know how the OSWCC feels as far as accumulating for capital purchases.

Hawkins added that they will cite this example.

Elder said that in the discussion, part of his decision was the fact that Miami SWCD had met with the county commissioners, county auditor, and others and everyone was in agreement locally on what they were doing with these funds.

Reeves asked for a roll call vote.

Fred Cash I
Susan Reeves Nay
Kevin Elder I
Tom Price I
Clark Sheets I

Bleim stated that four OSWCC members were in favor and one was against the motion. Motion carried.

REVIEW FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SITUATION IN PAULDING SWCD; DISCUSS DSWC REVIEW OF 13 SWCDs WITH DITCH MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS

Hammon referenced the green handout on the Paulding SWCD situation where a district employee was accused of stealing between \$70,000 and \$100,000. Hammon said that there has been limited exposure from news media. Hammon reported that Elizabeth Pessefall, the District Administrator for Paulding SWCD for 23 years did plead guilty to the theft and the sentencing was scheduled for May 7. Pessefall faces up to 1 ½ years in jail and a \$5,000 fine and full restitution. Hammon noted that Kevin O'Connor is present at this meeting today and he met with the district yesterday and the board of supervisors and provided some recommendations to the board. Once DSWC learned about this incident, DSWC started to take a look at other similar programs and reviewed the 14 SWCDs that have a ditch maintenance program in the state.

Hammon reviewed with the OSWCC members how this incident happened. Hammon said that all districts pay all of their payroll and it doesn't matter if the districts have ditch maintenance or not, all districts pay

their payroll through the special fund. Hammon noted that where it gets interesting with the ditch maintenance program, is that they collect funds from the different projects and those individual projects sit in the individual fund or what they call the rotary fund. In three cases, Paulding, Clinton, and Seneca, if they write a payroll check, for example, if district employees are working part time on the ditch maintenance program, let's say 60 hours come over from the special fund and they make that paycheck up and 20 hours come over from this rotary fund or maintenance fund and that would make their 80 hour paycheck.

Hammon said that Pessefall actually received a paycheck for 100 hours. Hammon said this started in 2001 and slowly built through 2007, where she basically took an additional \$60,000 from the ditch maintenance fund through payroll activities.

Hammon said that the other two instances where she took money was she was also sort of in charge of running the vouchers through or payments of invoices from the ditch maintenance program and keeping the district's records. They were running the vouchers through the board and the board was signing them to Hammon's belief, but then evidently after the board meeting, Pessefall was making additional vouchers that she made out to her family members. Hammon said that she either signed it herself or she had a rubber stamp made of the district fiscal officer's signature and stamped them after the board meeting so there was definitely intent and this has been confirmed.

Hammon said that his real concern when he started doing these reviews was a) how many other districts do this double draw from the special fund and from the ditch maintenance fund and who is seeing that or not seeing that?

Hammon noted that they also didn't have the approved vendor's list, which is sort of how this all got caught. The new auditor was trying to clean up the 1099's and the vendor's list information and that is where she came across Liz's family members and then started digging from there.

Hammon said that this went on for about 6 years and the county auditor is actually the wife of a current sitting board member in Paulding county and some of her office staff wondered out loud how can the board afford to pay her so much? And so she went home and over supper time asked her husband how he paid Pessefall \$64,000 a year?

Hammon said that her husband said "we don't pay her \$64,000/year, we pay her \$36,000/year". Come to find out, they were issuing her a W-2 that said \$64,000 so we found out that the districts don't see the W-2 information and it gets sent directly to the homes of the employees. Hammon said that there wasn't good reports coming back to the board or the managers about the final salary numbers at the end of the year.

Hammon reviewed his findings of the 14 SWCDs that operate a maintenance program. Hammon added that he actually only reviewed 13 counties, he did not do Paulding county.

Hammon stated that all of the districts had an MOU with the County Engineer and the County Commissioners. Hammon thought that the most recent MOU was over five years old so many of the MOUs have not been reviewed or revised for years so there is a recommendation to update the MOUs.

Hammon noted that the SWCD board involvement ranged from seeing most paperwork (invoices, proposed work, monthly and annual reports) to almost no involvement. Hammon said that there were probably 3 or 4 districts that were hardly involved with the board. In one case, there was a district technician generating the invoice and sending it directly to the county auditor and the county auditor was paying. There was no appointing authority whatsoever from the board or county commissioners so Hammon thought that this needed to be changed. All district staff working on maintenance activities receive a paycheck from the SWCD and 11 of those districts are reimbursed from the maintenance program and Hammon thought that this was a good idea.

Hammon summarized the recommendations by stating that all of the districts need to have their MOUs reviewed and revised. Hammon recommended that the county auditor be added to the MOU and additional

language defining an audit procedure. Hammon added that DSWC would offer our services by checking it during our internal audits and Kevin O'Connor would check it during his audits so that way we know someone is looking at it. Hammon said that he asks the same question to every district, do you have evidence that these ditch maintenance funds have been audited by the state examiner? Hammon noted that there was only 3 out of the 13 districts reviewed that had ever had knowledge of those funds being audited so there is a weakness there and Hammon thought that we could plug that with our shop.

Hammon thought that if the boards are going to accept the MOU and take on the maintenance, they really should provide the oversight and guidance to the maintenance program. The vouchers and reports need to be seen by the board and approved by them.

Hammon reported that the SWCD boards should adopt policies requiring all contractors to have and provide proof of liability coverage. Districts should not allow work to be performed until proof is provided. The division will probably need to do some research on coverage levels and provide a minimum level recommendation. Districts should contact their insurance provider for a recommendation also.

In closing, Hammon said that the board of supervisors have assumed the responsibility of providing oversight for the ditch maintenance program and they need to put policies, procedures, and oversight in place just as they do with their district programs. If boards aren't willing to provide that kind of oversight, then they should relinquish the program.

Hammon said that each of these districts was going to get an individual report from himself. Hammon added that DSWC would be meeting with the state auditors on April 18 and thought that the Paulding situation had precipitated this meeting, but DSWC will show them what districts do and specifically how we are going to work on this program with our boards to try to tighten things up a little bit.

Mott thanked Hammon for the update and asked him to keep the OSWCC posted.

REVIEW STATUS OF STATE BUDGET FOR SWCDS, DSWC, AND DSWC REORGANIZATION PLANS

Hanselmann stated that in early February DSWC was able to distribute the final state match checks to 13 conservation districts that we owed their final payment to. Hanselmann said that DSWC has all of this fiscal year's funds out to the districts, but thought that we still owe a few of the legislative earmarks. In terms of the big picture regarding the state budget, revenues had been coming in pretty close to projection until just into the new calendar year. A report came out last week for the March income and it is down 7.8% compared to projections and in the previous month, it was down approximately 6%. A year to date, it is only down just shy of a -2% with all of the different tax sources collectively. State spending is down even more than that so Hanselmann thought that the state was in the black for now. Hanselmann added that there is definite worry that the economy in Ohio is on a downward trend. Hanselmann said that the department is making budget reductions. Hanselmann thought that DSWC was safe through this fiscal year ending June 30 and there hopefully wouldn't be additional cuts, but next fiscal year, we are not certain of. Hanselmann added that is the second year of the biennium and stated that appropriations are in place, but DSWC didn't know what the future holds.

Hanselmann reported that our reorganization is sort of moving along. DSWC's Information Technology Manager, Rick Burke, will be moving over to the Division of Mineral Resources Management. Hanselmann added that Constance White is no longer a Program Specialist and has replaced a vacancy in our watersheds and nonpoint program. Hanselmann stated that DSWC has submitted a reorganization plan for our department and it may lead to some additional personnel reductions that we won't be at liberty to devolve into until late or early June. There are several divisions like ours that are general revenue funded that are undertaking reorganizations.

DSWC has polled the 88 SWCDs to get a handle on the local matchable income that the OSWCC will need to try to match with whatever level of funding is available for state match come July 1st and get what is appropriated currently or a somewhat smaller amount depending on funding levels. Hanselmann added that we still lack information from 7 or 8 SWCDs so it is a little hard to tell until we get all of the information in

from the 88 SWCDs. It may make a material difference on whether we are more or less than last year, but preliminarily with 80 or so districts giving us their best guess, it looks like we are up about 5%, which is what we had projected and is budgeted in the appropriation that was sent previously. If we can hang on to that appropriation, we should be able to maintain the match rate of 98.5% or so.

Jill Evans asked if Hanselmann wanted to discuss the specific cuts to the division?

Hanselmann stated that it is about \$450,000-\$500,000 that we have lost in our operating budget for next year, which is the need for us to find places for our staff in this reorganization plan. That \$500,000 reduction will be the base that will go into the next biennium so we have lost that long term in all likelihood. Hanselmann said that DSWC has gone from 85 staff in 1990 to 62 in 2000 or 2001 and now we will be down in the upper 30's so there has been over a 50% reduction in our staff since 1990.

Hanselmann shared with the OFSWCD and others previously, that we have lost quite a few of our special accounts like the agricultural pollution abatement cost share.

DISCUSS PLANS TO REQUEST APPLICATIONS FOR SWCD PROGRAM ASSISTANCE GRANTS FOR DISTRIBUTION IN JULY 2008

Hanselmann stated that the OSWCC members have some information received from Vinton SWCD on April 2 discussed previously. It is the recommendation of DSWC that we can fully honor a request from Vinton SWCD that might come under a current Program Assistance Grants guideline. Hanselmann stated that it is \$35,000 per year that is the maximum that can be requested. You may recall that Vinton SWCD did not request that amount in the previous two years. They could request that full amount this year, so nothing in our current policy would preclude them from receiving that maximum amount. Their request would relate to the following year or two or three. Hanselmann thought that Vinton SWCD's request was that we revise the policy and make it a longer term cap such that a year or two from now they could request a continued amount of money. DSWC has proposed that we come back no later than the November OSWCC meeting with a recommendation perhaps to revise the Program Assistance Grants guidelines, but by delaying any consideration of a revised policy, we won't disadvantage Vinton SWCD this year, nor any other district that we are aware of that this current policy would relate to. Hanselmann added that rather than revising the policy now, DSWC would like to take a little time to consider whether there is a basis to revise that policy for not this coming July's distribution, but the following year.

Hawkins stated that he thought that Vinton had the druthers on this because they wouldn't want \$35,000 this July and they would want around \$8,000-\$10,000. Hawkins said that \$35,000 is a large amount of money that they would have to explain to the county commissioners and they don't want to jeopardize their funding so they would rather see it be more of an even keel type funding over the 7 years as opposed to any large amount for 3 years.

Hammon said that in his mind, this gets back to changing the core policy because you are basically saying that you are going to support a district with a \$20,000 base and that is what they are asking really. This original program was designed to help districts in a catastrophic situation where they had a major cut. We added opportunities for districts that were seeing a long decline and were struggling with a stagnant situation and they were coming to the OSWCC saying that they wanted to try something new and as sort of a jumpstart approach or to alleviate a district from having to lay someone off from a catastrophic cut. Hammon thought that Vinton SWCD was asking to change the whole formula so that they are supportive of a larger amount on the base rate. Hammon said that he recommended to Hanselmann that we stick with this current policy this go around for July and then look how this might play into effect on the future match or just tweak this particular grant program.

Mott asked if Hammon was going to make suggestions for the November OSWCC meeting if there would be any changes or opportunities for change?

Hammon said that it would be November or January depending on how the funding scenario looks.

Hanselmann asked if Hawkins thought that Vinton SWCD would be okay with this scenario if we don't make a change since Vinton SWCD couldn't count on a change, if we explain to the county commissioners that this is something that they needed to do to protect that option?

Hawkins didn't think so because Vinton SWCD would prefer having smaller amounts over several years so that it would be easier to plan the budgets.

Hanselmann said that DSWC isn't prepared today, but supposed that we could be by July with the recommendation.

Mott asked Hawkins if Vinton SWCD were to ask for \$35,000 and receive less and resolve this issue of smaller amounts over a longer time, would that help to resolve their issue or do they have to have the \$35,000?

Hawkins said that Vinton SWCD doesn't want the \$35,000, but the OSWCC's rules say that they have to ask for \$35,000 because you allow up to \$35,000/year for 3 out of 7 years. Hawkins said that the OSWCC's rules dictate that. Hawkins thought that they would like the \$8,000 or so over a longer time so that they can gradually work it into their budget because it is a matter of establishing relationships and partnerships with other groups in the area and they are just trying to build their program. It isn't something that can be done quickly.

Mott agreed and noted that it takes time.

Sheets asked if they would come right back to us in the near future and ask for another \$8,000 or so? Sheets wanted to clarify that it is either going to be the \$35,000 or \$8,000 depending on how many years they can apply for the grant.

Hawkins said yes, it is based on the current policy. Hawkins thought that they would ask for the \$35,000 in July and noted that if the OSWCC would establish some other policy where it could be spread out over 7 years, then Vinton SWCD will probably ask for an amount less than that.

Mott encouraged DSWC staff to come up with something by July if that is possible. Mott thought that there was some discussion on both sides for this so he would like to have something by the July OSWCC meeting so that we could have discussion on it that morning.

Hanselmann said that DSWC will have something by July and encouraged Vinton SWCD to apply for the \$35,000 and then if the OSWCC adopts a policy prior to that decision to distribute money, then Vinton SWCD could possibly go with a lesser amount perhaps with the confidence that the OSWCC has adopted a policy that leaves the door open for future grants. Hanselmann asked that between now and May or June, if any OSWCC members have special thoughts on a direction to go on this, DSWC would appreciate hearing it so that we can build it into our recommendation that we put together.

Hammon said that one other thought with regard to our current distribution challenges, we could in this case, if they ask for the \$35,000, we could give them \$15,000 in June and July and then hold the other \$20,000 until 2009 and then it would be in two separate checks for their two fiscal years. That would spread it out over 2 years so that may be some help. That could be a potential option.

Mott asked the DSWC staff to do some preparatory work before our July OSWCC meeting and hopefully we can have our OSWCC comments go back to staff between now and then.

RECEIVE INTERIM REPORT FROM STATE MATCH POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Hammon provided a handout titled "OSWCC Match Policy Committee Interim Report". Hammon stated that DSWC held a couple of meetings since last fall and noted that this is a very challenging topic. Hammon didn't know if at this point in time DSWC was recommending any changes. Hammon reiterated that this is not a final report and that this was prepared by him as an interim report.

Hammon said that in reviewing the policies on matchability and the history of how it has evolved, the group seemed comfortable and appreciative that we had these policies in place because it sort of protects the match fund and added that only allowing \$8000 for capital expenditures was a good move. Hammon added that limiting the matchability of local appropriations over \$500,000 helps to protect the match fund from major shock and to avoid “break the bank” situations.

Hammon reported that in the group’s discussions, there was a discovery of the difference between how county funds and municipal and township funds are matched. In Ohio Revised Code Chapter 1515, the language reads that the county commissioners funds must be run through the general fund. When the law was changed to allow districts to get municipal funds and township funds, those kinds of sideboards were never put on there. Any time an SWCD gets an appropriation from a township or municipality, it can come from anywhere, but if the SWCD gets an appropriation from the county, it has to come through the general fund. By coming through the general fund, it really precludes a lot of other county funds that technically could come to the district. That is not really something that we recognized before or discussed.

Hammon said that if we open that gate up, we could potentially be opening the gate up to lots of things. It could be money that comes from the health departments, ditch maintenance, sewer districts, etc. Hammon thought that at this point in time, there was not an urgency to change that. Hammon thought that we should be aware of this and discuss it as we do go down the road toward a match policy, though.

Hammon said that the other area that was discussed concerned the OSWCC’s decision to deny a request to match local funds provided to another entity. Hammon added that DSWC continues to be asked why this scenario is not matchable. Hammon thought that at this point in time, no consensus was reached on recommending a change to the OSWCC’s current position of not matching funds provided to another entity.

Hanselmann added that some districts argue that they could provide a service to their community more efficiently by contracting or entering an MOU with some other entity and provide funding to that entity compared with hiring their own staff and providing that service so those are some of the discussions concerning this.

Hammon thought that we should probably put together a better protocol for receiving requests and providing opinions and rulings. Basically, the policy has evolved over the last 50 years and probably the most knowledge of the match program is institutionalized in the minds of the DSWC staff members. Hammon noted that there isn’t a lot in writing and added that districts are asking for the decisions and policies to be in writing. OSWCC members and staff members change so we need to have these decisions in writing. Hammon said that DSWC is committed to try to put together some sort of protocol and get that to the OSWCC by November.

Hammon added that with the advent of the OSWCC’s visioning effort, he thought that we may want to put this on hold for a little bit. Hammon thought that there wasn’t a real urgent need for change and that the current policy was adapting to district’s situations. If the OSWCC goes in a new direction and focuses on certain priorities, then that may impact the match procedure down the road. Hammon thought that we may want to put this on hold and go in concert with the OSWCC’s visioning effort.

Mott complimented the committee on the work that they have done so far because it has been an ongoing process and also encouraged the case book idea and thought that it seemed like a very logical thing to come out of this. As a OSWCC member, we look to the DSWC for past history or decisions and noted that he would like to look at the highlights of past decisions made. Mott encouraged DSWC to make this a priority so that the information can be carried on in the future.

DISCUSS OSWCC/PARTNER STRATEGIC DIRECTION MEETING AND DETERMINE COURSE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAN/DIRECTION

Mott thought that the OSWCC members had an informative and enjoyable meeting last Friday that provided some ideas for a different course of action that we could take in the future. Mott appreciated the

effort by all of the folks who attended the meeting and asked Hanselmann to provide an overview of the meeting.

Hanselmann thought that the meeting was well attended and noted that he did not have a chance to create any meeting notes from the discussion yet, but will identify some highlights and key points that were made in the discussion. Hanselmann noted that the one idea was to create resource and perhaps capacity delivery goals at the state level and at the county regional level. The county regional level would be some request or requirement from the OSWCC that SWCDs and groups thereof periodically identify their important resource goals – not just at the conservation district level, but at a broader level. One of the worries during the discussion was resources that would be available to districts. We certainly want to balance scenarios where districts may gain additional resources and responsibilities, but on the other hand, some situations may actually go the opposite direction. Regardless, we owe it to the tight budget situation and efficiency of government to make sure that conservation district operations are efficiently operated. The suggestion was made that we have regional goals that are regionally agreed to at the regional or local level. Hopefully, they can develop support in those communities to meeting those goals and also open the door for conservation districts and their partners to share in resources to achieve those goals. At the state level, setting those resource goals allows us to articulate to the legislature, new administration and partners what it is that we are trying to accomplish for the entire state of Ohio.

Hanselmann reported that there were some discussions on what kinds of programs should conservation districts face or should they be facing that will position them to be effective and important in their communities in the future. Hanselmann added that there were some concerns about the current situation in Ohio and the future so how can we position ourselves to succeed within those constraints? Should we become more regulatory?

Hanselmann said that our challenge now is to create a little process that opens the door for more input and collaboration to chart a course. Hanselmann noted that the sense during the meeting was that we need to put a construct together that districts and our partners can listen to and react to. DSWC will be articulating the process and sharing it with OSWCC members over the next few weeks here and perhaps at the July OSWCC meeting we can decide the process that the OSWCC and key partners want to follow.

Mott asked if this could be distributed electronically to the participants and OSWCC members? Mott thought that it would be great if we could reserve 35-45 minutes during the July OSWCC meeting to discuss what has been sent to us after we review it and if there are any comments, you could send them back to David previous to that meeting. Mott hoped to reserve a little bit more time at the next meeting to discuss the issue more.

Price said that one of the ideas brought up during that meeting was extending the idea of developing the team approach in the problem areas or opportunity areas that we have available. Price thought that was a huge opportunity for us to look at to engage more districts and form team approaches to addressing issues.

Hanselmann said that we plan to benchmark with OSU Extension and others who have taken some different approaches to employing staff and resources and perhaps along those lines. Hanselmann recalled that one consideration was to think about a base effort in each county so that we maintain the support of county commissioners and the community in that county and add to that, the team approach to these regional goals for other important areas to focus on. Hanselmann added that perhaps it is marrying a base level of effort in the county with a different kind of approach for problem solving depending on what the need is.

DISCUSS SEVERAL NUTRIENT-RELATED INITIATIVES: GULF HYPOXIA AND NEW ACTION PLAN, DEVELOPMENT OF STATE NUTRIENT CRITERIA FOR LAKES AND STREAMS, AND OHIO EPA PHOSPHORUS TASK FORCE

Kessler noted that there was a handout regarding the Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Action Plan in the OSWCC member packets. Kessler stated that there were three major nutrient related initiatives that were either going to impact the entire state through the Ohio River Basin or the Lake Erie Basin. Kessler stated that

the three initiatives were the following: 1) the Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Action Plan to reduce Gulf Hypoxic Zone 2) the State Nutrient Criteria and 3) the Lake Erie Watershed Phosphorus Task Force.

Kessler stated that the first item concerns the Gulf of Mexico. There was a congressional mandate in the late 1990's and USEPA and some other federal agencies led a task force to develop a mitigation plan for a low oxygen zone that was forming outside of the mouth of the Mississippi River. It was impacting local fisheries and coastal ecosystems. An action plan was developed in 2001 and approved by this task force, but very little was done. There was no serious funding from the federal level or state level directed to implementing that plan. The Ohio Conservation Partnership should be quite proud because we were able to offer some programs to help. The Scioto CREP and our support with the Water Quality Trading Program in the Great Miami are two examples.

Kessler said that we tried to assist owners downstream and make it locally meaningful by assisting with funds and so forth. Kessler added that there are some successes in there and Ohio is perceived as a very constructive member of this task force.

Kessler noted that there was a redrafting of this plan based on some additional scientific reassessments and that plan is due out shortly. It is basically a voluntary plan that looks at existing programs and aims to shrink by 30% this hypoxic zone in the Gulf by 2015. The other goal of this plan is to help improve local waters by meeting water quality goals.

Kessler said that the most recent science shows phosphorus playing a role equal to nitrogen. In the past, the focus was on nitrogen, but as time has gone on, they are looking at both of these parameters, and they are sort of out of balance with one another. Kessler added that it makes it a little easier to adapt our programs because we can look at phosphorus as well.

Kessler said that we have voted to approve the plan and Hanselmann cast that vote for us at the last meeting. Kessler said that hopefully Hanselmann or he would represent ODNR at the June meeting.

Kessler stated that the biggest setback is that we don't have a lot of funding to implement or monies that we can shift from other program priorities.

Kessler said that there is a request that three states develop more serious nutrient reduction plans. Kessler added that there is a pending appropriation request involving Louisiana Senator Landrieu for \$20 million and the formula for that request which DSWC helped draft and Director Logan supports is \$1.6 million for Ohio. Kessler didn't know what kind of chance it had or where it was in the appropriations process. DSWC is trying to find out the exact status, but it is competing with all of the other needs for the country. DSWC recommends that we stay in a constructive state position and stay engaged. It may cost a little bit of money to travel there, but we think that it is worth it because somewhere down the road we may get an appropriation that may help local needs as well as the Gulf of Mexico hypoxia issue.

Elder asked if a draft plan was available on the web?

Kessler said that it is available online and a request went out for public comment and the division, OFBF, and other partners provided comments on it.

Hanselmann noted that Gary Mast represents USDA on the Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Task Force and participates in every meeting so it is nice to have Gary very involved.

Kessler reported that the other item that he wanted to highlight was the status of the state nutrient criteria. Kessler said that we are looking at specific numbers in rule that will be generated by a formula or a certain set of algorithms and physical data that will give you numbers for nitrogen, phosphorus, chlorophyll and secchi depth. Those formulas are being developed right now and they would eventually be something that we would measure in stream to see if they meet this standard.

Kessler noted that he spoke with Ohio EPA and they wanted to let us know that they are looking at, for lack of a better word, some cause and effect. For example, in a stream situation you may have some shade, some one-sided construction on a drainageway or there may be some factors in our drainage BMP manual that may help assimilate pollutants to help offset some of the negatives with excess nutrients.

Kessler said that they perceive that as a way to make these standards somewhat easier to manage so we will be working on those adjustments. Kessler thought that this is a real important approach that we should support because there needs to be an understanding of how dynamic these systems are. It is not like measuring for copper; it is much more complicated with these natural systems.

Kessler said that DSWC recommends that we stay engaged and invite EPA down so that they can provide some technical explanations and to be able to ask them questions and to stay engaged in the process and comment throughout so that we can have the best rules for our landowners, constituents and farming communities.

Kessler reported that the last item that he wanted to provide an update on is the Lake Erie Phosphorus Task Force and added that Kevin Elder also participates on this task force. Kessler stated that about two years ago, large algae mats appeared on Lake Erie around Toledo and Maumee State Park. These mats were pretty unusual and in a volume that we had not seen before so people were understandably upset. Consequently, with a lot of these other serious concerns, Director Korleski decided that a task force would be formed to study this. The task force participants include academic folks, government folks, soil and water representatives, a representative from the conservation action project, representatives in the agricultural fields, and other experts. Kessler said that the task force is working on this issue and had a meeting in late March and another meeting is scheduled for April. Kessler noted that the website is www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw/cafo/PTaskForce/PTaskForceWorkgroup.html.

Kessler thought that it was interesting to note that the total phosphorus loading has gone down dramatically to well below levels recorded in the late 1960s so it is very troubling. There are a lot of theories for why this would occur and the possible reasons for this spike include the release of the dissolved reactive phosphorus, which is possibly accumulating in the upper few inches of no-till land. Kessler said that this perhaps is an unintended consequence. Kessler added that other theories of possible sources of dissolved phosphorus include: home septic systems, drinking water plant byproducts, etc.

Elder added that dissolved phosphorus isn't the only issue in agricultural areas, if you look at the Cuyahoga area, dissolved phosphorus spiked in that area at the same time that they started using phosphorus in the freshwater treatment plants. Elder said that they used a tremendous amount there so they are looking at all of the different issues so it is not just an agricultural issue.

Cash asked if there were some discussions about a mussel?

Elder jumped in and commented that even the algae is not a naturally occurring algae, it is something that has never been seen before.

Kessler said that in regards to the aquatic mussels, they are looking at that also. The group happened to look at the ag component first and some recommendations will be coming out on that soon. Kessler said that DSWC recommends the development of cost-effective nutrient assessment and management steps that are more consistent and have better laboratory consistency.

Elder said that there will be a lot of research items that will be in the recommendation because we don't know what it is so we don't know what to do. Elder added that we don't want to go back to inversion tillage, which is one of the issues to get rid of the concentration on the surface. Elder noted that the best collection of soluble phosphorus data is through the Heidelberg Water Quality Lab. Ohio EPA doesn't require soluble phosphorus testing in any of their tests, it is total phosphorus. Elder said that there are a lot of unanswered questions.

Kessler said that one exception is that there is some low oxygen levels in the lake, too and that is expanding.

Price asked if there was a spike in the Gulf of Mexico also at the same time that we saw this in Cleveland?

Elder didn't think that there were any comparisons that he had every seen.

Hanselmann thought that in 2000-2006, nitrates in the Gulf and the Mississippi went down 20% in that period and the phosphorus went up about 13-14% so he thought that maybe there was some similarities.

Elder commented that on the farm it is part of the phosphorus index and we also did the site assessment index back around 1988 so the research needs to be updated so that it can be done easier because the soil testing and phosphorus index is very intensive.

DISCUSS VARIOUS INITIATIVES ASSOCIATED WITH RURAL DRAINAGE SYSTEMS REPORT

Hanselmann reported that DSWC is continuing to work hard on taking advantage of the consensus that was reached with the Rural Drainage Advisory Committee. Director Logan sent a copy of the report to every member of the general assembly. Hanselmann noted that he sent a letter and a copy to each county commissioner about a month ago and is working on drafting something for the county engineers soon. Next week, Hanselmann said that he will be spending about a half hour at the Senate Agriculture Committee to review the report and the recommendations. Hanselmann said that DSWC is trying to build awareness to members of the general assembly on the issues, the need, and the importance of the infrastructure. There are not a lot of specific recommendations that we need their support on right at this very minute, but hopefully the capital improvement budget and hopefully a modest request is being made by ODNR which will hopefully get to OBM. The Joint Agency on Rule Review (JCARR) later this year or early next year will have to approve the rules that were embodied in the report. Ohio EPA will propose a new general aquatic life use and we want to get the House and Senate to understand that and not be afraid of a rule change by Ohio EPA.

Hanselmann said that DSWC is trying to finish the Drainage Manual and we are a month or two behind schedule on that, but we will wrap that up soon and we will be planning 3 or 4 regional meetings with conservation districts and county engineers probably in August in western and northwestern Ohio and then we will aim to cover the rest of the state because there is interest growing elsewhere.

Hanselmann said that DSWC will be reaching out to the Public Works Commission through the county engineers and their association to try to build support. As Hanselmann mentioned in regard to the Lutheran Road Group Drainage Project in Montgomery and Miami counties, that is a great example of accessing those funds and we want to create scenarios where a lot more of the multi-county Public Works Committees decide the distribution of those funds.

Hanselmann said that DSWC has spent a lot of time on the consideration of whether funding under the Farm Bill and the conservation title under the Farm Bill, specifically under EQIP, if there is a basis to make those funds available, obviously through NRCS.

Hanselmann said that one of the recommendations of the Rural Drainage Advisory Committee was to explore Farm Bill funding so we are following through on that with the Public Works Commission and other ideas, too. Hanselmann said that we will continue to make good progress and give this a priority. Certainly, within the division we think that it is very important and feel that we have set the stage for a lot more understanding of the issues.

AGENCY AND SWCD REPORTS NRCS

Cosby reported that CSP sign-up starts April 18 and goes for a month. There are 64,000 farmers eligible across the country on 23 million acres. In Ohio, we are looking at 1.2 million acres. Cosby said that it will take a huge workload so NRCS will be moving staff as needed. Cosby added that NRCS was going to set

up some operations in the southwestern part of the state because we haven't had any CSP sign-ups. With CSP watersheds, they are asking us to have 3,000 – 5,000 participants and it is supposed to be on an 8 year rotation so if you sign up, you can't go back for 8 years.

Cosby said that Ohio was one of the deficit states so he will be meeting with the chief to discuss the budget. Cosby thought that there was a \$20 million cut in CRP since last year, which is a big part of NRCS' budget. Cosby said that he has a number of vacancies that need filled. A District Conservationist retired last week and another will be retiring in a few days from now. Cosby thought that Ohio was one of twenty states with a deficit.

Cosby said that NRCS had to get down to 519 computers by this Monday and we are there. It costs NRCS \$3,000 - \$3,500 per computer to add it on the system, which NRCS can't afford to pay for out of the budget.

Cosby reported that a new vehicle usage policy was issued because it is costing NRCS \$3,500/week to buy gas for the vehicles and NRCS needed to cut costs.

Cosby reported that NRCS does have money in their budget for the TSP agreements. If NRCS does sign the agreement, it will be very limited and there will be certain things that NRCS will sign the agreement for. Right now, CNMPs and CRPs are on the top of Cosby's list. Right now, NRCS is really being scrutinized on the contracts that we had out there and the high cancellation rate.

Cosby said that NRCS was going to be looking at single practices and shorter contracts since contracts that have multiple practices rarely get done.

Cosby distributed a map of the backlog of practices by county. Since 1996, NRCS has put over \$220 million on the ground, but with the high cancellation rate, we are trying to get more practices on the ground. Cosby added that next Friday, April 18 is the last day of the current Farm Bill and noted that all indications are revealing that NRCS will probably not get an extension.

Cosby stated that lastly, we did have a special sign up in Grand Lake St. Marys through Senator Brown and Congressman Boehner and NRCS has been working with them. Cosby said that the sign up was not what was anticipated, but the sign up ends on April 11.

Hanselmann asked Cosby if NRCS moves to single practices and shorter term agreements, will the EQIP scoring system work for that change or will it argue for some revisions perhaps?

Cosby said that they couldn't change things because it is done nationally, but added that EQIP must be size neutral.

ODA

Elder said that there will be a buyout at ODA and it should be announced and sent to the employees by the end of this month. Every program in the department is being looked at. Elder added that the budget reductions department wide is about \$3.5 million and it has affected our program already because LEPP has lost an engineer and one of the attorneys will be retiring and will not be replaced.

Elder said that LEPP has received 15 applications for the livestock permits. Quite a few of those facilities that are asking to expand have been going without public meetings.

Elder reported that LEPP has had some serious problems this fall or winter with some livestock facilities. Rainfall events become important and Elder noted that one facility was under some enforcement actions because of discharges. Elder added that there was a spill in the south yesterday and one in the east in regards to the application lines. Elder said that he was also aware of some non-permitted complaints, too, and LEPP is working with the SWCDs on those.

OFSWCD

Sheets thought that everything was going good so far.

Bankey added that the OFSWCD had a very successful All Employees Meeting at the beginning of March and the OFSWCD is in the process of planning the Summer Supervisor School, which will be held in late July.

Bankey noted that the OFSWCD was working with the Columbus Foundation to seek grant opportunities.

Mott wanted to discuss a couple of things before adjourning. He proposed that the OSWCC members provide a few dollars for meal costs so that staff members don't have to supply a lunch for our meetings. Mott appreciated suggestions for an amount and threw out a dollar amount of \$10 if that would be agreeable to cover the price of the lunch.

Hanselmann said that it is our privilege to provide what we have been able to provide and suggested that we could go to ordering the box lunches at a fixed cost, which is usually \$8-\$10 and you could pay for that or we could do a potluck approach and you could chip in like Mott was suggesting.

Reeves suggested that we could brown bag like the governor.

Mott said that the R&R Commission has done a catered box lunch for \$8-\$10 so if that is in agreement with everyone, it absolves the staff of having prep time on the food and it is just a matter of ordering the box lunches and maybe we could do that by email or we could have a box surprise. Mott clarified that from this point forward, the OSWCC members will provide their own cost for the meals and however the division wants to handle it, we will let you have the discretion on what you want to do there.

Mott asked if the OSWCC members could also receive the background information or reports prior to the OSWCC meeting through email if there is an opportunity to do so. Mott thought that if there was an email sent 7-10 days ahead of the meeting, it would give the OSWCC members an opportunity to read through the report before the meeting.

Hanselmann said that we will try to get information to the OSWCC members prior to the meeting. Hanselmann added that perhaps we will judge something and defer it to another meeting if we can or have to because we are not prepared.

Mott thought that flexibility is always important to keep in mind and staff time is critical, too.

Elder commented that there hasn't been a representative from Ohio EPA or FSA to attend these meetings and was wondering if there was an attempt made to get a representative to attend?

Kessler stated that we have requested representatives to be sent.

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

Clark Sheets moved to adjourn the meeting.

Fred Cash seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Mott, Chairman

David Hanselmann, Executive Secretary