

KACD GENERAL SESSION MEETING

November 25, 2024

Hyatt Regency Hotel

Wichita, KS

Those Present:**DIRECTORS:**

Bill Simshauser, President

Bevin Law, Vice President

Allen Roth, Secretary-Treasurer

Jerry Clasen, Director

Daryl Donohue, Director

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Dan Meyerhoff

The meeting was called to order by President Bill Simshauser at 3:15 PM.

President Bill Simshauser appointed Wayne Lukert, Shawnee County, as Sergeant at Arms and Rod Vorhees, Wilson County, as Parliamentarian.

Roll call was taken with 46 board supervisors present. In accordance with KACD by laws there is a quorum present to conduct business.

Minutes

Minutes of the November 20, 2023 KACD Business Meeting were presented as published online in the convention proceedings. Allen Roth, Ellis County, moved to approve the minutes as presented. Dwayne Roux, Harvey County, seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report dated November 7, 2024 was presented. Allen Roth, Ellis County, made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Dwayne Roux, Harvey County, seconded the motion. Motion carried.

President's Report

President Bill Simshauser provided a report on this year's activities. He thanked all for attending the convention and their continued interest and dedication.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Dan Meyerhoff provided a report on the agreements and outreach activities.

NACD Report

Bill Simshauser, NACD executive board member gave an update on NACD activities

2023 Resolution Update:

Resolution # 1 – Increase State Aid to Conservation Districts. A one-year proviso was passed to increase state aid to \$35,000.00. KACD will continue to work with legislators to make this permanent.

Reports from Standing and Special Committees: (All resolutions adopted should be shown in the resolution section of the Proceedings Booklet). Minutes from all committees are attached.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH COMMITTEE:

Chairman Dwayne Roux, Harvey County, presented the report.

President Bill Simshauser accepted the report as presented.

DISTRICT OPERATIONS & RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE:

Chairman Wayne Lukert, Shawnee County, presented the report. There were four resolutions presented this year to the committee.

Resolution #1: Winter Wheat As A Cover Crop.

Resolution #2: Partner Employee Eligibility for 'Internal to an Agency' Job Announcement.

Resolution #3: Conservation District Use of Government Owned Vehicles.

Resolution #4: Funding of Conservation District Operations.

President Bill Simshauser accepted the report as presented.

ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE:

Chairman Allen Roth, Ellis County, presented the report.

President Bill Simshauser accepted the report as presented.

FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

Chairman Allen Roth, Ellis County, presented the report.

President Bill Simshauser accepted the report as presented.

GRASSLANDS COMMITTEE:

Daryl Donohue, Wilson County, presented the report for Chairman David Kraft.

President Bill Simshauser accepted the report as presented.

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

Chairman Baron Shively, McPherson County, presented the report.

President Bill Simshauser accepted the report as presented.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE:

Chairman Brad Shogren, McPherson County, presented the report.

President Bill Simshauser accepted the report as presented.

URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

Chairman Mark Lehman, Crawford County, presented the report.

President Bill Simshauser accepted the report as presented.

WILDLIFE, FORESTRY AND RECREATION COMMITTEE:

Chairman Sam Sanders, Reno County, presented the report.

President Bill Simshauser accepted the report as presented.

ENVIROTHON COMMITTEE:

Chairman Dwayne Roux, Harvey County, presented the report.

President Bill Simshauser accepted the report as presented.

Resolutions:

Resolution #1: Winter Wheat As A Cover Crop. Adam White, Kearney County, made the motion to adopt resolution #1. Ron Brown, Bourbon County, seconded the motion. Motion passed with 23 votes for and 18 votes against.

Resolution #2: Partner Employees Eligibility for 'Internal to an Agency' Job Announcement. Jarrod Bowser, Jackson County, made the motion to adopt resolution #2. Jed Fleske, Pawnee County, seconded the motion. Motion passed with all votes for and 0 votes against.

Resolution #3: Conservation District Use of Government Owned Vehicles. Nathan Larson, Riley County, made the motion to adopt resolution #3. Steve Hargrave, Riley County, seconded the motion. Motion passed with all votes for and 0 votes against.

Resolution #4: Funding of Conservation District Operations. Wayne Lukert, Shawnee County, made the motion to adopt resolution #4. Daryl Donohue, Wilson County, seconded the motion. Motion passed with all votes for and 0 votes against. Wayne Lukert, Shawnee County, made the motion to amend resolution #4 to include FY 2025 and FY 2026. Daryl Donohue, Wilson County, seconded the motion. Motion passed with all votes for and 0 votes against.

Bryce Maneth, Rush County, moved to consider resolution #5, Be it resolved that Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) ask National Association of Conservation District (NACD) to request Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) to work together to supply USDA field offices in Kansas to supply an additional vehicle for

the FSA County Executive Directors (CED) in share management positions in their home county in addition to the vehicles (mostly trucks) for the NRCS District Conservationist (DC) and other field staff. Chase Rogers, Rush County, seconded the motion. Motion passed with all votes for and 0 votes against.

Resolution #5: Be it resolved that Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) ask National Association of Conservation District (NACD) to request Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) to work together to supply USDA field offices in Kansas to supply an additional vehicle for the FSA County Executive Directors (CED) in share management positions in their home county in addition to the vehicles (mostly trucks) for the NRCS District Conservationist (DC) and other field staff. Bryce Maneth, Rush County, made the motion to adopt resolution #5. Chase Rogers, Rush County, seconded the motion. Motion passed with all votes for and 0 votes against.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

The 2025 budget was presented. Allen Roth, Ellis County, moved to approved the 2025 budget as presented. Bevin Law, Clay County seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The results of the area elections:

Area 1: Allen Roth re-elected to the KACD board

Area 2: Jed Fleske was re-elected to the SCC board

Area 3: Jerry Clasen was re-elected to the KACD board

Area 4: John Wunder was re-elected to the SCC

Area 5: Daryl Donohue was re-elected to the KACD board

Adjournment:

With no more business to conduct, President Bill Simshauser adjourned the meeting at 4:44 PM

KACD Education & Youth Committee

Meeting Minutes

KACD Convention-Hyatt Regency, Wichita, Kansas

November 24 & November 25, 2024

Committee Chairman Dwayne Roux called a meeting of the KACD Conservation Education & Youth Committee to order at 2:02 p.m. at the KACD Annual Convention in the Hyatt Regency, Wichita, Kansas. Those present in-person on Sunday, November 24, 2023, besides the Chairman, were Andrea Hamm, Pam Walker, Janel Odel, Suzy Mooney, Kindsay Morris, Brian Boeckman, Brandon Dibben, Jack Fitzgerald (NRCS), Leslie Holthaus, Rick Johnson, Nina Meyer, Angela Beavers, Chalee Braun, Kacie Gosselin, Marsha Setzkorn-Meyer.

Angela Beavers moved to approve the minutes of the November 2023 meeting. The motion was seconded by Janel Odle. Motion carried.

Chairman, Andrea Hamm & Pam Walker met earlier in the day to write checks for Speech Contestants, Angela Beavers (Paper & Misc. items) Nina Meyer (awards), Limerick Contest Winner, Essay Contest Winner & Photo Contest Winner.

Andrea Hamm reported the bank balance as of November 24, 2024, is \$20,143.80.

In Committee reports, Pam Walker gave a general update and contests update. Submissions for contests in 2024 numbered as follows: 155 posters (32 K-1; 38 2-3; 52 4-6; 23 7-9, 10 10-12), 10 essays, 18 limericks and 4 photos. Pam Walker explained that all winners are listed in the program. It was also discussed moving October 19th deadline, due to it cutting it close to getting the awards ordered and for them to get them done on time. Suzy Mooney also might be able to pick up the awards from Jayhawk Trophy, so Nina Meyer doesn't have to. Pam Walker also would like to form a committee to review rules and deadline dates. Discussion about getting word out to schools about speech, scholarship, photo & limerick contest to get more students involved. Dwayne Roux gave the scholarship update 3 scholarships qualified for the Caroline & Don Peterson and all three were given scholarships of \$1,000.00 each. Some of the Peterson family joined our meeting in June to help pick the winners. Dwayne Roux would like for District Managers and Supervisors to promote this contest better as well. Chalee Braun reported the Envirothon update they had 120 students register for training and 110 showed up to the training. 16 schools and 3 of these were new. They had to change the location of the training due to the increased attendance. The committee asked for feedback from the teachers and most of the responses asking for more hands-on training.

Unfinished business was reported by Dwayne Roux. Was reported that Judges for the State Speech contest are Brityne Rucker, Dean Krehbiel and Susan Metzger. The review of the contest rules was discussed earlier, and a committee will be formed after the 1st of the year to get those reviewed/revised. Assignments for the speech contest the next day were given-Angela Beavers, Nina Meyer and Andrea Hamm will be at the doors, Timekeepers will be Pam Walker and Brandon Dibben, Jarrod Bowser will do the speaker "interviews"

New Business-None

State/Partnering Organization representatives reported at the meeting. Jack Fitzgerald from State NRCS reported business as usual and with the fed changes a lot is unknown nothing new on the farm bill. Marsha Setzkorn-Meyer from KDA DOC reported that they are in the process of interviewing for new staff members. KACEE no report given, KFAC not report given.

The next meeting will be held in May or June (via zoom) to discuss Scholarships and other business. In September of 2025, there will be an in-person meeting.

Meeting will reconvene at 10:05 a.m. tomorrow Monday November 25, 2024.

At 2:44 p.m., Janel Odle moved to recess until 10:05 the next morning. The motion was seconded by Jack Fitzgerald. Meeting recessed.

On Monday November 25, 2024, the KACD Education and Youth Committee reconvened at 10:05 am. After Call to Order, Chairman Dwayne Roux asked KACD Conservation Ed & Youth Committee members to stand and be recognized. Roux then appointed Pam Walker as Secretary. Roux introduced and thanked judges Susan Metzger, Brityne Rucker and Dean Krehbiel, and he recognized and thanked Farm Credit Association of Kansas for sponsoring the 2024 KACD State Conservation Speech Contest.

The first speech contestant was Jewel Endicott from Area V's Bourbon County Conservation District. The second speech contestant was Avyn Teeter from Area I's Gove County Conservation District. The third speech contestant was Lora Larison from Area IV's Jackson County Conservation District, and the final contestant was Josie Kueser of Area III's Ellsworth County Conservation District.

The judges were dismissed to another room to discuss the placings of the speech contestants.

Dwayne Roux explained the Committee's paper program contents, and then he introduced Brandon Dibben who presented the Essay Contest Winners. The winning essayist was unable to attend to read their essay. Brian Boeckman read the limerick results, and he introduced the winner of the Limerick Contest, Hannah Halverstadt, who came to the stage and read her winning limerick. Trent Winter then took the stage and he recognized the three Caroline and Don Peterson Memorial Scholarship recipients for 2024: Makayla Dibben, Coy Stamm and Dylon Harris. Winter also encouraged audience members to promote the scholarships given by KACD. Pam Walker then took the stage and read the winning photographer's names. Walker also described the KACD contests display at KACD Convention which was on the tv screen near the Convention registration desk. Angela Beavers announced all the conservation poster contest winners and the numbers of submissions for contests. Beavers also explained that District Managers from counties with winning submissions should pick up, there at KACD Convention, manila envelopes containing medals, certificates, plaques and/or checks.

Chalee Braun presented the 2024 Envirothon report.

Jarrold Bowser interviewed speech contestants Kueser, Larison and Teeter by asking some serious and some fun questions.

The 2024 KACD Conservation Education and Youth Committee meeting was adjourned at 11:16 am with a motion from Jarrod Bowser which was seconded by Brandon Dibben.

Announced at the State Conservation Commission Luncheon, the placings of the 2024 State Conservation Speech Contest were:

Josie Kueser- 1st

Lora Larison- 2nd

Avyn Teeter- Honorable Mention

Jewel Endicott- Honorable Mention

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary

Dwayne Roux, Chairman

Date

District Operations and Resolutions Committee
Minutes, November 25, 2024

The meeting of the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts' District Operations and Resolutions Committee was called to order at 10:00 AM, Monday, November 25, 2024, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Wichita, Kansas, by committee chair, Wayne Lukert. There were 16 in attendance.

After introductions, announcements included the association's day at the statehouse, February 4, 2025. Districts were encouraged to attend and make appointments to meet with their legislators prior to attending. Districts were encouraged to invite their legislators to a boxed lunch at the statehouse that day. Kansans for Conservation Day at the state house will be February 25, 2025. KACD is a member of this group.

Committee activity the past year were reviewed, including discussion with KACD on conservation district operations and funding and representing KACD to the Kansas Forestry Association. "Supervisor Empowerment and Engagement," training was conducted by the committee, Sunday, November 25, 2024 at convention with 19 people in attendance. KACD board member Daryl Donohue and committee chair, Wayne Lukert, conducted the presentation. Wayne Lukert continues to represent KACD on the Kansas Forestry Association board. New presentations on "Educating Funding Sources," and "Time and Ethics Involved While Serving as a Supervisor," are being developed. The committee continues to work on updating information on the committee page on KACD's web site.

The 5 Conservation Priorities compiled by the Sustainable Funding Committee and approved by the association on November 25, 2014 were presented for review. The guidelines for this committee were presented for review. People willing to serve on this or other KACD committees are being sought.

Partner reports: No partner reports.

There are 3 resolutions before the association:

Resolution #1 from Kearney CCD, Winter Wheat as a Cover Crop, was assigned to the Natural Resources Committee.

Resolution #2 from Jackson CCD, Partner Employee Eligibility for 'Internal to an Agency' Job Announcements, was assigned to the Natural Resources Committee.

Resolution #3 from Riley CCD, Conservation District Use of Government Owned Vehicles, was assigned to District Operations and Resolutions Committee.

A district resolution, Resolution #3, Conservation District Use of Government Owned Vehicles, was presented. Motion by Nathan Larson, Riley County Conservation District and second by Steve Hargrave, Riley County Conservation District, the committee recommend the association adopt the resolution. Motion Carried.

Discussion: Amended language suggested, add "for official NRCS business." at end of "Be It Resolved" statement. Moved and seconded as above. Motion carried.

A committee resolution, Funding for Conservation District Operations, was discussed. Motion by Steve Hargrave, Riley County Conservation District, and second by Nathan Larson, Riley County Conservation District, that the committee recommend the association adopt the resolution. Motion carried. The resolution will be designated as Resolution #4.

The meeting adjourned at 10:43 AM.

Respectfully submitted by secretary, Veronica Coons.

MINUTES OF THE KACD ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

The KACD Endowment Committee was held Sunday November 24, 2024, at the Hyatt Regency in Wichita, KS.

Lyman Nuss, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Also present were committee members, Allen Roth, Ted Nighswonger, Rod Vorhees, Mike Pierron, Gayla Speer, and Donna Fay Major (EO representative). Guests present: John Wunder and Sam Sanders.

Minutes of the November 19, 2023, were approved as sent out.

The treasurer's report was reviewed. Balance as of October 31, 2024, in the checking account is \$7,530.49. Allen Roth moved to approve the financial statement. Mike Pierron seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The committee reviewed money market and Annuity statement.

12:23 p.m. Dan Meyerhoff and Amanda Scott joined the meeting.

Dan reported on the increase of interest on the annuity, he changed location of where funds are deposited.

Old Business:

Original paintings are on display at KDA Office building.

All prints have been sold. Motion by Ted Nighswonger to destroy unnumbered prints. Rod Vorhees seconded the motion. Motion carried.

New Business:

Discussion was held on Endowment growth. Several items were discussed.

Allen Roth will look into a possible fund raiser with K-State/KU basketball tickets and a 2-day hotel stay for next year's season.

Discussion was held on low ticket sales for the Grasshopper Mower. Motion by Ted Nighswonger to suspend the mower raffle and refund money collected. Allen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Gayla Speer will contact the mower company we won't be purchasing the mower.

12:33 p.m. Dan Meyerhoff and Amanda Scott left the meeting.

Motion by Ted Nighswonger to recommend Allen Roth be reaffirmed as trustee. Rod Vorhees seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Lyman Nuss asked Allen Roth to give the Endowment report at the business session.

The date of next meeting to be determined.

Lyman Nuss adjourned the meeting ended at 12:55 p.m.

KACD Finance Committee Minutes
November 20, 2023
Hyatt Regency Hotel Wichita KS 10:00 am

The annual meeting of the KACD Finance and Development committee was called to order at 10:09 AM. There were 10 people present.

Allen Roth presented the minutes of the 2023 Finance and Development committee meeting. Bevin Law moved to approve the minutes as presented. Kathie Rondeau seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Allen Roth presented the financial report. Dan Meyerhoff reviewed the 2024 Profit and Loss report and the Balance Sheet to date.

Dan Meyerhoff presented the 2025 Proposed Budget. Travis Groff moved to approve the budget as presented. Zane Sloan seconded the motion. Motion passed. Budget will be presented at the business meeting.

Allen Roth adjourned the meeting at 10:34 AM.

KACD GRASSLANDS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Monday, November 25, 2024 – 10:05 A.M. Redbud B
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Wichita

Chairman David Kraft called the KACD Grasslands Committee Meeting to order.

Chairman reviewed criteria for the Kansas Grasslands Merit Award. The committee received two nominations for the award this year. Tim and Lori Murray, Pottawatomie County, are the 2024 recipients and will be recognized at the awards banquet this evening.

Chairman gave an update on Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition's 2024 Range Youth Camp with 28 participants. David stressed the role of local conservation districts and social media in driving good attendance to the camps. Social media also has been instrumental in the formation of a new partnership with Farm Bureau. David cited the likely outcome of those kids who attend choosing an agriculture career individually, and often-times with NRCS or Extension.

Chairman also reported on the Adult Range Schools noting the generational transitioning of grassland management as evidenced by the age range of attendees.

KGLC is looking to expand their footprint of grassland management influence with the possibility of working on tribal lands with the Potawatomi Tribe.

Playa Lakes Joint Venture Social Scientists, Lindsay Shorter and Ryan Roberts, reported on the progress of a Conservation Innovation Grant through NRCS. The goal of the project was to develop an effective outreach model for brush management in six counties of Kansas and Oklahoma. They discussed an overview of the project objectives, deliverables, and outcomes as they wrap up the three-year study. Lindsay and Ryan pointed to their recently developed guide, **Communicating Effectively About Woody Plant Encroachment**, and an upcoming website, Tomorrow's Grassland, aimed at providing information to help landowners achieve and maintain healthy grasslands through the removal of invasive woody plants.

Comments and discussion were encouraged.

Fifty-two people were in attendance at the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned by David Kraft at 11:00 A.M.

Cheryl Davis, Secretary

**Minutes from the Natural Resource committee meeting at the KACD Convention
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Wichita, KS November 25, 2024**

Baron Shively called the meeting to order at 10:06 AM. He requested attendees to sign in when they leave if they had not already done so. Minutes from the November 2023 meeting at the KACD Convention were read to the attendees. Motion made and seconded to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

Baron introduced Gaye Benfer with NRCS. She reported agency's current primary resource concerns are grasslands, water conservation and soil health. The priority resource concern for each primary concern is plant pest pressure, quality and quantity, and nutrient management respectively. Gaye also informed the group there were 837 EQIP contracts in Kansas with a total cost of \$6,184,000 spent. Funds for FY 2025 increased for EQIP, EQIP IRA, MOBU, NOBO, NWQI CSP and CSP IRA. Any fund renewals must be obligated by December 22, 2024. RCPP is making a come back in NRCS Areas 1 and 2. There are 5,050 contracts for alternative funding arrangements for technical assistance with partners that are not NRCS. Payments for Kansas totaled \$36,995,458 for FY 2024.

Local work group recommendations and information was shared. Outreach for is the main recommendation to reach smaller producers with topics and subjects. Communication between agencies is key. Other recommendations were to stress soil health importance, continued support treating erosion, nutrient management, water quality, habitat for ground nesting birds and treatment of invasive species.

Baron then introduced David Jones with the State of Kansas Division of Conservation. Dave explained the State raised landowner and project limits for State cost share to \$15,000 and \$10,000 respectively. Districts received their FY 2025 funding amounts to use for cost share contracts. On October 18th left over funds cancellation took place and underfunded contracts were paid to counties that made requests. Dave stated that success is measured by the conservation that is put on the ground. Funding for the State cost share programs comes from the Kansas Water Authority and the budget is \$21 million. Dave commented that keeping districts informed results in quick pivot time and that helps everyone work together.

Matt Sprick requested to speak briefly about Climate Smart availability for producers to sign up thru their conservation districts.

Resolution # 1 – Winter Wheat as a Cover Crop was read to those in attendance. After a brief explanation and discussion, a motion and second was made to accept and pass Resolution # 1. Motion failed 3 – 5.

Resolution # 2 – DOC employees applying for NRCS positions apply as Internal to Agency was read to the attendees. A brief discussion was held and motion and second was made to pass this resolution. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:52 AM.

KACD Stewardship Committee Minutes
November 24, 2024
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Wichita KS

The annual Vespers Service presented by the KACD Stewardship committee was held November 24, 2024 at 6:30 PM. There were 42 people present.

Fourteen supervisors were recognized for their past service. See program for a list of supervisors recognized.

Just Friends provided Blue Grass and Gospel music following the service.

KACD Urban and Rural Development Committee Minutes
November 25, 2024
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Wichita, KS 10:05 am

The annual meeting of the KACD Urban & Rural Development Committee was held Monday November 25, 2024 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Wichita. Chairman Mark Lehman called the meeting to order at 10:05 am with 17 people in attendance. Mark asked if any resolutions were to be presented. There were none. He introduced the Miami County Conservation District and they presented their program on Community Engagement. After the presentation a question and answer session was held. Meeting was adjourned at 11:00.

KACD Wildlife, Recreation, & Forestry Committee minutes

November 25th, 2024

Hyatt Regency Hotel in Wichita KS

Meeting Started at 10:07 in the Redbud "C" room of the Hyatt Regency with 18 people in attendance.

*Liz Lutz read the previous meeting minutes. Mike Pierron of Johnson County moved to approve the minutes, Bill Simshauser of Kearney County seconded, and the motion passed.

*Kris Ethridge of NRCS discussed EQIP updates, and the importance of eradicating seed sources. Comment was made regarding the availability of programs for cost share for windbreak renovation.

*Questions were raised about the inclusion of Pheasants Forever funding opportunities regarding windrows. Kris Ethridge of NRCS emphasized the benefits of working with Pheasants Forever for the best technical assistance and plan development.

*Chris Mullins of Kansas Forest Service encouraged producers to reach out to KFS for technical assistance.

*Discussion of percentage of cost share for windbreaks.

*Discussion of GPGI (Great Plains Grassland Initiative) and the importance of spreading the message "the right tree in the right place".

*Chris Mullins brought up the buyback program if producers show that they have killed Bradford Pear trees to prevent takeover.

*Mike Pierron mentioned concerns about the effect on quail by windbreak disturbance. Wes Sowards of the Kansas department of Wildlife mentioned that early successional cover is best for quail.

*Comment was made regarding programs for cleaning out silt from ponds. It was said that there may be availability for it, in the realm of developing water as part of a grazing plan. Must be addressing a resource concern. Deb Lush of Bourbon County encouraged producers to install fence out on the back side of dams to manage silt build-up.

*Bill Simshauser presented a Resolution that will be discussed later in the day. KACD will ask NRCS to support requesting winter wheat being eligible for classification as a cover crop for the NRCS and other climate smart programs, while not impacting its eligibility as a cash crop through crop insurance.

*Meeting ended at 10:57

KANSAS ENVIROTHON COMMITTEE MEETING
November 24, 2024
HYATT REGENCY, WICHITA, KS

Members in attendance: Chalee Braun, Molly Schmidt, Dana Schmelzle, Gayla Speer, Angela Beavers, Pamela Hays, Donna Fay Major, Mandy Shoemaker, Cathy Thompson, Brian Boeckman, Diana Harden, Veronica Coons, Lori Kuykendall, Andrea Hamm, Dwayne Roux, Monty Breneman, Pam Walker, Lindsay Morris, Cheli Helm, Leslie Holthaus, Suzy Mooney and Melanie Brungardt.

Meeting was called to order by Chair, Chalee Braun at 4:40 p.m. with welcome and introductions.

A motion was made to approve the minutes with Diana Harden and Leslie Holthaus added to the attendance of the August 21, 2024 meeting by Diana Harden and seconded by Pamela Hays. Motion carried.

The Treasurer's Report was reviewed. A motion was made by Gayla Speer and seconded by Pam Walker to accept the treasurer's report as presented. Motion carried.

We have received the donation from ADM for trailer and logo is complete. The Convention Booth and donation box are located in the ballroom this year.

The Annual Report was given at the KACD Youth and Education committee earlier in the day by Chalee Braun. She reported on the meetings and events that Envirothon had been involved in for 2024.

Envirothon Training was well attended with 120 students registered. This required a larger venue, so the event was moved to Flush, KS. Some suggestions for future training were look for an even larger venue and have more hands-on activities at the training.

2025 Current Environmental Issue:

"Roots and Resiliency: Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Canopy of Change"

Regional Competition Reports

April 2, 2025 – Red Rock Guest Ranch, Soldier (Brian B, Dana S, Molly S, and Chalee B)

April 9, 2025 – Morris County Fair Grounds, Council Grove (Mallory L and Lori K)

April 9, 2025 – Linn Co. Fair Grounds or Old Iron Club, Mound City (Pam W, Stacy R, Mandy, Joyce)

April 10, 2025 – Ellsworth County Fairgrounds, Ellsworth (Pamela H and Donna Fay Major)

Pamela mentioned only allowing 3 teams per school for Regionals

The Kansas State Envirothon will be held April 23, 2025 at Camp Wood, Elmdale, KS.

Job assignments for State competition –

1. Location Coordinators – (Chalee, Diana and Mallory)
2. Volunteer and T-Shirt Coordinator – (Dana)
3. Medals and awards – (Molly)
4. Oral Presentations/Scenario – (Angela and Chalee) Maybe focus will be about handling wildfires
5. Tabulators – (Molly and Dana)
6. Presenters – (Chalee)
7. Test Writers Update – Template Completed (Pamela H, Pam W, Dana, Brian, Chalee)

**The National Conservation Foundation's International Envirothon
July 20-26 Mount Royal University, Calgary, Alberta, Canada**

They have asked for additional funds besides the dues and registration.
Reminder to have passports ready.

Unfinished Business:

The General Rules were updated and presented. A motion was made by Angela Beavers and seconded by Brian Boeckman to adopt the updated General Rules. Motion carried

New Business:

A motion was made by Angela Beavers and seconded by Mandy Shoemaker to pay the \$1000 deposit. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Diana Harden and seconded by Suzy Mooney to reword Oral Presentation Rule #5. Judges will be asking questions to gauge the Teams' depth of knowledge being used to assess the score.

If requested, Chalee Braun will be representing Kansas Envirothon at the KAAE Conference Presentation. A motion was made by Dana Schmelzle and seconded by Molly Schmidt to pay mileage for this event. Motion carried.

Chalee Braun will be assisting with a KNRC Booth February 6-7, 2025.

A motion was made by Dana Schmelzle and seconded by Diana Harden to purchase acrylic Clipboards for the Regional and State Envirothons. Motion carried.

Diana Harden will work on Envirothon Fundraising in January.

Next Meeting – planning for February 26, 2025, at Manhattan AO and on VTC.

A motion was made by Diana Harden and seconded by Molly Schmidt to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gayla Speer

Following the meeting, a gift was given to committee member Gayla Speer, for her years of service.

A group picture was taken after the meeting.

Resolution #1

Sponsoring District: Kearny County Conservation District

Committee: Natural Resources

Winter Wheat As A Cover Crop

BE IT RESOLVED:

Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) will ask the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) to support winter wheat being eligible for classification as a cover crop for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other climate smart programs, while not impacting its eligibility as a cash crop insurable through crop insurance.

RATIONALE:

Cover crops are tools to help farmers combat the effects of climate change. They are used to slow erosion, improve soil health, improve water quality, enhance water permeability, help control weeds, pests, and diseases, and increases biodiversity in the soil.

Winter wheat can be used as a cover crop and as an insurable cash crop. Winter wheat accomplishes the goals of a cover crop without affecting its viability as a cash crop. Wheat is recognized across the country for its soil health, erosion control, and its crop rotational benefits.

Resolution #2

Sponsoring District: Jackson County Conservation District

Committee: Natural Resources

Partner Employee Eligibility for 'Internal to an Agency' Job Announcements

BE IT RESOLVED:

Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) will ask the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) to support a policy change to recognize TA Partner agency employees as eligible for **"Internal to an agency"** job announcements with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

RATIONALE:

Conservation districts, through State NRCS approval, can hire technical assistance (TA) positions, either through the Division of Conservation (DOC) or the Kansas Associations of Conservation Districts (KACD). The positions available are technicians, soil conservationists, and archeologists. These positions are made possible through Cooperative Conservation Grants & Agreements (CCGA) or Contribution Agreements with majority of the funding coming from NRCS. DOC and KACD are able to facilitate the TA agreements across the State on behalf of NRCS. These positions, in part, are designed to have a pool of employees that are being trained by NRCS staff and qualified to transition into the Federal NRCS positions. They have been trained specifically to have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to apply for "Internal to an Agency" job openings.

Furthermore, we have experienced some TA Partner employees taking significant pay reductions when transitioning into the comparable NRCS position. The knowledge and experience these TA Partner employees are gaining under the direct supervision of the NRCS SDCs and DCs should be recognized when determining their respective grade and step salary when they transition into an NRCS position. The TA agreements have an annual grade and step pay increase incorporated into it as they gain skills required to perform their job duties. The TA Partner employees should be able to maintain their current pay grade/salary when transitioning into an NRCS position.

Resolution #3

Sponsoring District: Riley County Conservation District

Committee: District Operations and Resolutions

Conservation District Use of Government Owned Vehicles

BE IT RESOLVED:

The Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) will ask the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), to support identifying and implementing a solution to the inequitable financial risk borne by Districts and their employees when operating Government Owned Vehicles (GOV) for official NRCS business.

RATIONALE:

Conservation district employees, such as managers, technicians, archaeologists, etc., use GOVs as directed by the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service for travel to events and meetings, towing educational trailers, conducting archaeological evaluation of sites for cultural resources concerns, and for conducting field work such as laying out terraces and other conservation project design and implementation. District employees only operate GOVs when carrying out work for NRCS, and in support of the NRCS mission.

In order to operate GOVs, district personnel receive authorization, training and direction from NRCS. NRCS provides fuel and maintenance for the GOVs. However, NRCS shifts financial responsibility for losses arising out of the use of the GOVs to districts and their employees. This transfer is documented in a contract between each district and NRCS that includes the following language:

"14. The Partner will immediately report all vehicle accidents and traffic violations to NRCS and complete all required documents to report accidents. The Partner will reimburse NRCS or pay an auto repair Company directly for any and all repairs to the GOV as a result of an accident caused by the partner operator and pay all traffic violation citations."

"15. The Partner will assume responsibility for claims arising from accidents caused by Partner Drivers. The Partner will be responsible for receiving, processing, and paying tort claims that are submitted due to an accident caused by a Partner driver."

This contractual risk transfer, and the fact that district personnel are not covered by the Federal Tort Claims Act is not unique to Kansas conservation districts and puts a strain on their limited financial resources. Districts in other states may also face this challenge. Requiring conservation districts and their employees to assume these financial risks when operating NRCS vehicles for the benefit of NRCS does not seem equitable. Districts and their employees gain nothing in return for assuming this risk. Insuring for this risk is complex, inconsistent and expensive.

Resolution #4

Committee resolution from District Operations and Resolutions committee

Funding of Conservation District Operations

Be it resolved, that the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts encourage the Kansas Legislature to support the FY 2025 and FY 2026 Division of Conservation budget request to include increased funding for conservation district operations, consistent with the association's continued efforts to secure additional funding for conservation district operations.

RATIONALE: The programs in the request, including Aid to Conservation Districts, enable Kansas conservation districts to implement the Kansas Conservation Act throughout the state and further the clean water goals of the State of Kansas, as well as complying with the Federal Clean Water Act.

Resolution – 5

Sponsor – Rush County Conservation District

From the floor

Be it resolved that Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) ask National Association of Conservation District (NACD) to request Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) to work together to supply USDA field offices in Kansas to supply an additional vehicle for the FSA County Executive Directors (CED) in share management positions in their home county in addition to the vehicles (mostly trucks) for the NRCS District Conservationist (DC) and other field staff.

Rationale:

FSA implements shared management and its FSA CEDs need to travel between two or more counties while their budget does not support employee mileage reimbursement if personal vehicle is used.