

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met Monday, August 4, 2025, in the Agriculture Lab Building located at 2800 N. Lincoln Blvd in Oklahoma. The meeting was called to order at 9:32 a.m. by Chair Robert Priess. He stated this was a scheduled regular meeting held in accordance with the Open Meeting Law, Title 25, Oklahoma Statutes, Sections 301 and following as amended. The agenda for this meeting was posted at 2:00 p.m. Thursday, July 31, 2025, at the front entrance of the Oklahoma Agriculture Building, 2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, as well as on the agency's website conservation.ok.gov.

ROLL CALL

Bert Bitseedy, Administrative Assistant, took roll call and the following members were in attendance:

Robert Priess, Chair, Area 2 Member
Grant Victor, Vice-Chair, Area 3 Member
Gary Crawley, Area 5 Member
Dan Herald, Area 1 Member

Absent:

Joshua Haven, Secretary, Area 4 Member

Others in attendance were:

Trey Lam, Executive Director
Lisa Knauf Owen, Director Assistant
Bert Bitseedy, Administrative Assistant
Jeannie Parsley, Comptroller
Janet Stewart, General Counsel
Justine Anderson, Public Information Manager
Mike Sharp, Office of Geographic Information and Technical Services Division Director
Tammy Sawatzky, Conservation Programs Director
Moriah Manuel, Conservation Programs Administrative Assistant
Tom Goode, Conservation Programs Field Operations Manager
Clancy Green, District Services Director
Brandon Welborn, District Services Administrative Programs Officer
Shanon Phillips, Water Quality Director
Maryanne Dantzler-Kyer, Water Quality Environmental Projects Coordinator
Trampas Tripp, Land Management Division Director
Greg Kloxin, Soil Health Director
Meg Greski, Soil Health Program Coordinator
Josh Ketch, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Management and Strategy
Jean Lam, OACD Executive Director
JanLee Rowlett, ODAFF Deputy Commissioner
Bryce Boyer, ODAFF Director of Communications
Gage Milliman, Oklahoma Farm Bureau
Andrew Fleet, OSU Extension

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS REGULAR MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Herald and seconded by Mr. Victor to approve the minutes of the July 7, 2025; Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Herald, Crawley, Victor and Priess. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

CLAIMS/FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Commissioners reviewed the claims register, p-card statement, revenue summary and allotment budget / available cash report as provided by Ms. Parsley in Exhibit #1. Ms. Parsley stated the finance team report in the packet, and she would be happy to answer any other questions. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Crawley and seconded by Mr. Herald to approve the financial reports as presented. Those voting aye were: Herald, Crawley, Victor and Priess. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

PRESENTATION OF AGREEMENTS

Ms. Owen requested the approval of the following new agreements (Exhibit #2), items “a-d.” After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Victor and seconded by Mr. Crawley to approve the new agreements as presented. Those voting aye were: Herald, Crawley, Victor and Priess. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Ms. Owen requested the approval of the following amended agreements (Exhibit #2), item “e.” After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Herald and seconded by Mr. Victor to approve the new agreements as presented. Those voting aye were: Herald, Crawley, Victor and Priess. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

ESSENTIAL OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL REQUESTS

Mr. Lam requested the approval of the following essential out of state travel requests (Exhibit #3), item “a-b.” After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Herald and seconded by Mr. Crawley to approve the essential out-of-state travel requests as presented. Those voting aye were: Herald, Crawley, Victor and Priess. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT DIRECTOR APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Green discussed with the Commissioners recommendation of Conservation District Director Appointments shown on Exhibit #4. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Victor and seconded by Mr. Herald to approve the District Director’s appointments as presented. Those voting aye were: Herald, Crawley, Victor and Priess. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

JOINT PLANS OF OPERATION

Ms. Green presented the list of districts who have completed the requirements for the Conservation District Joint Plans of Operations as shown on Exhibit #5. She noted that there was only one district plan remaining to be approved and is hopeful it will be on the September agenda. Ms. Green recommended the approval of these plans. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Herald and seconded by Mr. Crawley to approve the list of completed Joint Plans of Operation as presented. Those voting aye were: Herald, Crawley, Victor and Priess. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

FISCAL YEAR 2021-2024 OPERATIONAL AUDIT REPORT

Ms. Parsley presented the FY21-FY24 Operational Audit Report conducted by the Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector on Exhibit #6. She discussed with the Commission internal

control considerations and recommendations that were provided by the State Auditor. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Herald and seconded by Mr. Crawley to accept the audit as presented. Those voting aye were: Herald, Crawley, Victor and Priess.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR EXPENDITURE REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Ms. Stewart discussed further with the Commissioners the recommendation put forward by the State Auditor's Office to strengthen internal control of agency expenditure review by agency leadership. She presented a written standard operating procedure that would formally document the reviewing, approving, documenting, and reporting of expenditures at the Commission, ensuring transparency, accountability, and sound fiscal oversight. Ms. Stewart requested approval of the Standard Operating Procedure for Expenditure Review and Approval Process. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Victor and seconded by Mr. Herald to approve the standard operating procedure as presented. Those voting aye were: Herald, Crawley, Victor and Priess.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments

NEW BUSINESS

No new business

CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP REPORTS

Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry (ODAFF): Deputy Commissioner JanLee Rowlett introduced Bryce Lawyer as the new Director of Communications for ODAFF. They are excited to welcome someone with state communication experience, as he previously worked at the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT). In an animal health update, there is information regarding the new world screw worm currently affecting Mexico and the potential risk of them spreading to the United States. ODAFF is disseminating this information to ensure everyone is prepared, and veterinarians are discussing it throughout the states. Upcoming Events:

- Oklahoma City and Tulsa State Fair-Made In Oklahoma store. Currently the MIO team is in Washington DC participating in the Great American Farmers Market.
- Women Ag- AgHERculture for High School and College level students in late August.
- Ag Youth Council-August, with 15-20 High School senior students to learn more about careers in Ag

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): Josh Ketch, the Assistant State Conservationist for Management and Strategy, represented State Conservationist Jeanne Jasper. He reported that currently there are no plans for additional employee cuts in the reorganization plan, but they are working on reassignments within the state. Additionally, the request for funding under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) for grass planting has been approved, and steps are being taken to move forward with the payments and program.

Oklahoma Association Conservation Districts (OACD): Executive Director Jean Lam is excited to announce her official appointment as the Executive Director of OACD. She mentioned that they have received approval to proceed with the state meeting and to continue their partnership

with NRCS. The theme for July was “Coalition Building and Leaning on Partners.” OACD is continuing its collaboration with OLAC (Oklahoma Local Ag Coalition) and other partners, focusing on Land Ethics. The association is working with the Commission to jointly staff an exhibit at the Oklahoma Cattleman’s annual meeting. She mentioned attending the 508 Cattle Conference with Association board member, Ginger Emmons. She mentioned they will be cosponsoring the Lending Farm Summit. They will be reapplying for the AMP (Advancing Market Producers) Program.

STATUS REPORTS

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. Victor – reported his area needed more rain, but the pasture and grass is good. The corn harvesting and wheat had too much rain.

Mr. Priess – reported that there is wheat still being cut for production, the area had adequate rain, and the hay is good.

Mr. Herald –reported good crops and green grass.

Mr. Crawley- reported good grass, lots of hay was produced and received plenty of rain.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF

Executive Director: Trey Lam reported that he attended the Oklahoma Native group meeting. He also mentioned the agency's full staff meeting at the College of the Muscogee Nation in Okmulgee, as well as the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Convention in Norman and the 508 Cattle Conference in Woodward. Additionally, he highlighted the research project associated with the Terry Peach Project, collaborating with Land Management Director Trampas Tripp, which has shown good results. He noted that the grazing project using goats has been very successful in managing brush zones for cedar removal.

Water Quality Program: Director Shanon Phillips reported that the wetlands initiative has begun with the implementation of the salt cedar spraying program. The SHIP program is successfully building relationships with producers. The soil health assessment for the Terry Peach Project has been completed and is ready for monitoring. Additionally, the Blue Thumb education training has been a success. However, there has been a delay in fish collection due to rain, and this will continue throughout August and September. She stated the report is in the packet and would be happy to answer any other questions.

Office of Geographic Information and Technical Services: Director Mike Sharp reported that they are still reviewing the deliverables of the aerial photography and have also been working with the Land Management Division to begin identifying cedar using the new system. He stated the report is in the packet and he would be happy to answer any other questions.

Land Management: Director Trampas Tripp reported that he attended the Farm Bureau meeting and a session in the City of Stillwater regarding emergency preparedness. He mentioned

that the unpaved roads training in Clinton had a successful turnout, with 31 attendees and positive feedback, which will help in preparing grant submissions. He also provided updates on staffing, noting new Land Management Technicians starting in the Deer Creek and Lincoln County Conservation Districts. The "Fighting Fire with Fire" training will resume in October, and more applications for the prescribed fire training are being received. Additionally, the upcoming woody species training in the watershed will be in September. He stated the report is in the packet and he would be happy to answer any other questions.

District Services: Director Clancy Green reported that they are currently processing the second round of the DIG program. She mentioned that her team will participate in discussions regarding projects around the conservation districts at the upcoming area meetings. Additionally, her division will attend the upcoming South Central Region and NASCA/NWC meetings. The forthcoming training for the district will focus on time and leave management. She also addressed the new hires and current vacancies within the districts. She stated the report is in the packet and would be happy to answer any other questions.

Conservation Programs: Director Tammy Sawatzky reported that they are currently collaborating with the districts on Operations and Maintenance Funds. The drought program concluded on July 31, 2025, and they are now in the process of submitting claims. She will be attending the NASCA/NWC meeting alongside Tom Goode and is preparing the presenters for the event. He stated the report is in the packet and would be happy to answer any other questions.

Assistant Director: Lisa Knauf Owen reported that all staff are now back in the office. She mentioned that the funding request has been submitted to NRCS and that the current shared service agreement will end on August 31, 2025, with hopefully a new agreement starting on September 1, 2025. She also wanted to express her gratitude to Stephanie Acquario, Attorney, for her assistance with the Urban Hub Project in Ardmore, OK. Purchase Orders (POs) are currently being prepared for projects within our agency. Additionally, General Counsel Janet Stewart met with OKC Metro realtors to present information regarding flood control and easements.


NEXT MEETING

After discussion, the Commissioners next scheduled meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission that was set for the second Monday, September 8, 2025, at the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture Lab Building, 2800 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma at 9:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Priess declared the meeting adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on September 8, 2025.


Chair