

## RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS

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Wyoming Board of Agriculture  
April 13 and 14, 2009  
Wyoming Department of Agriculture Conference Room

Present: Joe Thomas, Vice President  
Juan Reyes  
Jim Hodder  
Shaun Sims  
Jim Bennage  
Bryan Brose  
Jim Price Jr.  
John Hansen  
Bridget Kukowski  
Dalin Winters  
John Etchepare

Absent: Frank Galey  
Ryan Lance  
Patrick Zimmerer

Vice President Thomas called the meeting to order at 8:05.

### **Introductions**

The members all introduced themselves and told a little about their operations.

### **Election of President**

**Juan Reyes nominated Joe Thomas. Dalin Winters seconded. All members voted to elect Joe Thomas as President for the next year.**

### **Election of Vice President**

**Juan nominated Jim Bennage. Bridget Kukowski nominated Juan Reyes. Juan declined. All members voted to elect Jim Bennage as Vice President for the next year.**

### **Approval of Minutes**

**Dalin Winters made a motion to approve the February 25, March 3, March 18 and April 3 minutes noting correcting typos. Juan Reyes seconded he motion. All voted in favor. Motion carried.**

### **Seed lab**

Gil Waibel presented the Board with the recommendations from the recent meeting of SLAG. He said they are recommending a charge of an hourly rate on some species because the fee is not a fair pricing. Some samples may take a whole day and other just a few minutes. They are also recommending lowering some of the others. If a sample is real dirty and it takes a long time to test, or if one comes in very clean, they feel the hourly rate would best suit the grower. They would also like to be able to adjust the rates annually.

Gil feels that in two years, the lab may be within one hundred thousand of breaking even. The SLAG Committee would like these increases to protect the lab in the eyes of the legislators. They are making an effort to be competitive and still increase revenues. **Jim Bennage made a motion to approve the pricing as presented to the Board. Dalin seconded the motion. Juan Reyes was the only member voting no. Motion carried.**

### **CD Appointments**

**Dalin made a motion to approve the appointment of Stan Mitchum to the Converse County Conservation District and Vance Lugren to the Washakie County Conservation District. Juan seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

### **Conservation District Boundary Update**

Bobbie Frank said the issue is still the same as it was. She said the Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins district sent a letter to the Little Snake River (LSR) district requesting a list of the work they had performed outside of their district. They have not responded. Jack Cobb told her they will not turn away any producers. He also said they (LSR) would rather use watershed boundaries. If they were to use watersheds as the boundaries, there could be some election issues and other concerns.

Bobbie said they could use MOU's or Cooperative Agreements to allow work to be done across boundaries rather than change the boundaries. Bobbie said there would be a WACD meeting in Douglas on June 8 and 9, along with the tree planting ceremony for Olin Sims.

John gave an update on budget cuts. He said each agency is expected to cut their budget by 5%, overall. He said the Governor also wants the agencies to prepare 10% cuts in preparation for a shortage of revenues over the next years. John said a good portion of our budget is pass-through money, but it is part of operational budget, and therefore is included in the budget cuts. The 5 and 10 percent cuts do not affect the Beef Council or the Wheat Marketing Commission. He said the Governor would rather see programs cut than an across the board cut. A May 4 meeting is scheduled to discuss our budget cuts with the Governor. There is also a freeze on all hiring. The 13 positions the department had are going to have to be justified along with the State Fair seasonal employees and interns.

### **NRCS**

Xavier Montoya gave a power point presentation on the programs available through NRCS with funding from the Farm Bill.

### **Conservation District Base Funding**

23 districts have a mill levy and seven or eight receive some funding from their County Commissioners. Normal funding for districts is \$8,800 each. This is part of the Department's standard budget. John reminded everyone that with the budget cuts, there is a possibility of a portion or all of this funding being cut. **Jim Bennage made a motion to accept the base funding as presented. The motion was seconded by Dalin. Motion carried.**

### **Declared Weeds and Pests**

Slade explained the difference between the declared and designated lists. He said that each county can have a declared list and the designated list is state-wide. Each of the counties can decide what type of program they would like, regarding the designated weeds. No plants or seed can be brought into the state once they are on the designated list. He went on to explain there is a two-year study on the Weed and Pest Laws. John encouraged everyone to take an active role in those changes. The Board decided to go through each of the county requests. **Dalin Winters made a motion to approve the addition of Japanese knotweed to the Big Horn County Weed and Pest list. The motion was seconded by Jim Price. Motion carried. Shaun Sims made a motion to approve the removal of Russian Olive to the Big Horn County Weed and Pest list. The motion was seconded by Dalin. Motion Carried. Jim Price made a motion to add Common Cocklebur, Black Henbane, Mosquito, and Buffalobur to the Campbell County Weed and Pest list. The motion was seconded by Juan Reyes. Motion carried. Bridget Kukowski made a motion to add Shade-tree borers from the Lincoln County Weed and Pest list. The motion was seconded by Jim Price. Motion carried. Juan Reyes made a motion to add Chicory and Downy Brome, and Jointed Goatgrass to the Platte County Weed and Pest list. The motion was seconded by Jim Price. Motion carried. Dalin made a motion to add Tall Larkspur to the Washakie County Weed and Pest list. Shaun seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

Leanne said the deadline for mandatory reporting of greenhouse gases is April 9. Suzanne will get fact sheet out. There is nothing about carbon credits in the proposed rule.

### **State Lands**

Jim Arnold & Butch Parks gave a synopsis of the office. They said 3.6 million acres were granted by the feds and there are 23 trust beneficiaries. They currently have 4,000 different grazing leases. The categories are easements, temporary use permits, and special use leasing with a maximum of 75 years.

They said there are a couple of processes for the sale of state land. The first is a competitive process and if there is interest in the sale, they would do an RFP. The other type is a 2-party agreement. According to Jim, the state is requiring the applicant to go back to the lessee to see if they may have any legitimate concerns. Butch reviewed a map he handed out of the wind projects in the state. Of the wind farms in the state, state lands only accounts for 10% of them. They do have a leasing term of 35 years on those state owned properties.

Because there are so many concerns from as lessees, Butch said they are hoping to have a conference bringing both sides together. They are going to send letter to ag lessees to let them know when there is a company wanting to lease state lands for wind energy development. The roads become public roads if they are on lands that are legally accessible. The surface impact payments have been one-time payouts, but the lessee may need to have the surface damage payments on an annual payment. Annuities are an 80-20 split between lessee and the State. Agriculture operators can access the amount state lands receives on their wind leases via the internet, which may help individual as operators in negotiations with companies.

### **TMDL Discussion**

Suzanne Stevenson talked about the national perspective. There is a lot of finger pointing at agriculture and ag practices for poor water quality issues. There is a big push from back east to regulate point-source contamination. Suzanne said her job is to bring Ag's point of view to the table. Her View is that general ag producers have integrity and are honest folks and the best thing they can do is to build relationships with the folks at DEQ. She said Jim Ruffle, Tom Johnson and P. Monahan are the TMDL experts. She encouraged the board to have them come to a meeting to discuss TMDLs. DEQ has been given a lot of money to do TMDLs. Region 8 would like to have a voluntary approach to water issues showing some positive results from watershed plans. She said 60% of the waters in Wyoming are in good shape and the other 40% are impaired or approximately 790 stream miles.

Bobbie Frank talked about the transition between what we have been doing in Wyoming and what we have to do now. We have been complying with the intent of the law by implementing watershed plans.

She went on to say that Wyoming has not been doing the TMDL development in the timeframe of the law. E-coli is the number one reason for listings a waters body. WACD has encouraged districts to help DEQ with outreach, at the very least. She feels that at having a state agency implement TMDLs is much better than having a court order imposes such as other state have had.

John Waterstreet said he is seeing a good working relationship with the communities. DEQ is willing to work with folks when writing these TMDLs. Bobbie asked the Board to keep constituents informed on TMDLs. She also said that a watershed progress report is going to be published again this yer. It's available on the WACD website. DEQ is trying to make the process as open to the public as they can.

### **WBC Update**

Tom Johnson talked about the various programs within the Wyoming Business Council. Tom Fuller offered information regarding his Energy Office of the WBC. Their mission is to promote energy renewal. He said they do have a program available to give the landowner up to one year to collect wind data, which will give them an idea what the winds value would be since the companies don't share that information. The cost to the landowner would be \$4,500. They will also have at residential grant program available June1. They also have training available for building operators, education to 5th graders, the Energy Star home performance audit program, the Roping the Wind Event, and a small business energy audit program. With the stimulus money, there is an Energy Efficiency Block Grant Program through the Department of Energy. Cities, towns, and communities are eligible.

He said there may be some grants available to small business for energy development which would include ranches. Another energy program is for non-entitled communities. 60% of the stimulus money has to go to those communities and the other 40% is left for John's office to determine where it will go. They also have a revolving loan fund with low interest rates to cities, etc. for energy efficiency improvements.

### **Candidate Conservation Agreements and Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCA and CCAA)**

Justin Williams said there is currently only one CCAA in Wyoming including 3370 acres of deeded land. CCAAs are on private land and CCAs are on public land and their purpose is to maintain or

increase the number of endangered species. He said there is work being done on a state-wide CCA/CCAA through the Governor's planning office.

There is one in the process at PH Livestock and that CCAA is being used as a guide for others, as well as the state-wide plan that is in the works. The agreements need to be in before the species in the plan are listed. The state-wide plan will only include sage grouse.

### **Strategic Plan**

Karen Everett reviewed the board's strategic plan and made some changes. The board would like to have a brochure of some type explaining what the department does for producers as an educational tool.

### **Schedule Changes**

**Shaun Sims made a motion to have conference calls once a month or as needed at 7 a.m. Dalin Winters seconded the motion. The motion carried with Juan Reyes voting no.**

### **MOU with the WBC**

**Juan Reyes made a motion to approve the MOU with the Wyoming Business Council as presented by Jason and Cindy and encouraged Joe Thomas to sign it. The motion was seconded by Bridget Kukowski. Motion carried.**

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Joe Thomas, President

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Date