

2023 Kansas Statutes

2-1904. State conservation commission; members; terms; records; seal; powers and duties; rules and regulations; compensation and expenses; employees; office and supplies. (a) There is hereby established, to serve as a conservation program policy board of the state and to perform the functions conferred upon it in this act, the state conservation commission. The state conservation commission shall succeed to all the powers, duties and property of the state soil conservation committee. The commission shall consist of nine members as follows:

(1) The dean of the Kansas state university college of agriculture located at Manhattan, Kansas, shall appoint two designees to serve on the commission as members. One designee shall represent an agricultural experiment station and one shall represent the cooperative extension service.

(2) The secretary shall request the secretary of agriculture of the United States of America to appoint one person, and the secretary shall appoint one person, each of whom shall be residents of the state of Kansas to serve as members of the commission. These members shall hold office for four years and until a successor is appointed and qualifies, with terms commencing on the second Monday in January beginning in 1973.

(3) Five members of the commission shall be elected by the conservation district supervisors at a time and place to be designated by the commission. The method of electing such members to be conducted as follows: The state is to be divided into five separate areas. Area No. I to include the following counties: Cheyenne, Rawlins, Decatur, Norton, Phillips, Smith, Osborne, Rooks, Graham, Sheridan, Thomas, Sherman, Wallace, Logan, Gove, Trego, Ellis and Russell. Area No. II to include: Greeley, Wichita, Scott, Lane, Ness, Rush, Pawnee, Hodgeman, Finney, Kearny, Hamilton, Edwards, Ford, Gray, Haskell, Grant, Stanton, Morton, Stevens, Seward, Meade, Clark, Comanche and Kiowa. Area No. III to include: Jewell, Republic, Mitchell, Cloud, Lincoln, Ottawa, Ellsworth, Saline, Rice, McPherson, Reno, Harvey, Kingman, Sedgwick, Sumner, Harper, Barber, Pratt, Barton and Stafford. Area No. IV to include: Washington, Marshall, Nemaha, Brown, Doniphan, Clay, Riley, Pottawatomie, Jackson, Atchison, Jefferson, Leavenworth, Wyandotte, Johnson, Douglas, Shawnee, Wabaunsee, Geary, Dickinson, Morris, Osage, Franklin and Miami. Area No. V to include: Marion, Chase, Lyon, Coffey, Anderson, Linn, Bourbon, Allen, Woodson, Greenwood, Butler, Elk, Wilson, Neosho, Crawford, Cowley, Chautauqua, Montgomery, Labette and Cherokee. Areas II and IV shall elect members in even-numbered years and Areas I, III and V shall elect members in odd-numbered years for two-year terms. The elected commission members from Areas I, III and V shall take office on January 1 of the even-numbered years. The remaining two elected members of the state commission from Areas II and IV shall take office on January 1 of the odd-numbered years. The method of election is to be by area caucus of the district supervisors of each of the five separate areas of Kansas. The commission shall give each district notice of the time and place of such annual election meeting by letter if a member is to be elected to the commission from that area that year. The selection of a successor to fill an unexpired term shall be by appointment by the commission. The successor who is appointed to fill the unexpired term shall be a resident of the same area as that of the predecessor.

(b) The commission shall keep a record of its official actions and shall review all rules and regulations proposed by the division that are necessary for the execution of the division's functions under this act.

(c) In addition to the powers and duties conferred in this section, the commission shall have the powers and duties not delegated to the division pursuant to K.S.A. 74-5,126, and amendments thereto.

(d) The commission shall designate its chairperson and, from time to time, may change such designation. A majority of the commission shall constitute a quorum, and the concurrence of a majority in any matter within their duties shall be required for its determination. Members of the commission attending meetings of such commission or attending a subcommittee meeting thereof authorized by such commission shall be paid compensation, subsistence allowances, mileage and other

expenses as provided in K.S.A. 75-3223, and amendments thereto. The commission shall provide for keeping of a full and accurate record of all proceedings and of all resolutions, rules and regulations and orders issued or adopted.

(e) The commission together with the division shall make conservation program policy decisions to be approved by the secretary, including modification of current conservation programs, creation of new conservation programs and annual budget recommendations.

(f) The division in consultation with the commission shall have the following duties and powers:

(1) To offer such assistance as may be appropriate to the supervisors of conservation districts, organized as provided hereinafter, in the carrying out of any of their powers and programs;

(2) to keep the supervisors of each of the several districts organized under the provisions of this act informed of the activities and experience of all other districts organized hereunder and to facilitate an interchange of advice and experience between such districts and cooperation between them;

(3) to coordinate the programs of the several conservation districts organized hereunder;

(4) to secure the cooperation and assistance of the United States and any of its agencies and of agencies of this state, in the work of such districts and to contract with or to accept donations, grants, gifts and contributions in money, services or otherwise from the United States or any of its agencies or from the state or any of its agencies in order to carry out the purposes of this act;

(5) to disseminate information throughout the state concerning the activities and programs of the conservation districts organized hereunder and to encourage the formation of such districts in areas where their organization is desirable;

(6) to cooperate with and give assistance to watershed districts and other special purpose districts in the state of Kansas for the purpose of cooperating with the United States through the secretary of agriculture in the furtherance of conservation pursuant to the provisions of the watershed protection and flood prevention act, as amended;

(7) to cooperate in and carry out, in accordance with state policies, activities and programs to conserve and develop the water resources of the state and maintain and improve the quality of such water resources;

(8) to enlist the cooperation and collaboration of state, federal, regional, interstate, local, public and private agencies with the conservation districts;

(9) to facilitate arrangements under which conservation districts may serve county governing bodies and other agencies as their local operating agencies in the administration of any activity concerned with the conservation of natural resources; and

(10) to take such actions as are necessary to restore, establish, enhance and protect natural resources with conservation easements for the purpose of compensatory mitigation required under section 404 of the federal clean water act, including:

(A) Accepting, purchasing or otherwise acquiring conservation easements, as defined in K.S.A. 58-3810, and amendments thereto, on behalf of watershed districts for the purpose of protecting compensatory mitigation sites;

(B) contracting with engineering consultants, surveyors and construction contractors for the purpose of restoration, establishment and enhancement of natural resources; and

(C) establishing fees for the acquisition and administration of conservation easements held on behalf of watershed districts, accepting such fees from state and local government agencies, and assuming responsibility to ensure the terms of the conservation easement are met, as approved by the department, for the length of term of the easement for which fees have been accepted.

(g) There is hereby established in the state treasury the compensatory mitigation fund to be administered by the department of agriculture. All expenditures from the compensatory mitigation fund shall be for conservation. All expenditures from the compensatory mitigation fund shall be made in accordance with appropriation acts upon warrants of the director of accounts and reports issued pursuant to vouchers approved by the secretary of agriculture or the designee of the secretary. The

secretary of agriculture shall remit all moneys received by or for the secretary under this section to the state treasurer in accordance with the provisions of K.S.A. 75-4215, and amendments thereto. Upon each such remittance, the state treasurer shall deposit the entire amount in the state treasury to the credit of the compensatory mitigation fund.

(h) All costs associated with compensatory mitigation, including, but not limited to, the costs of any litigation or civil fines or penalties, shall be paid by the watershed district for which the division holds the conservation easement.

(i) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Kansas department of agriculture shall not expend moneys appropriated from the state general fund or from any special revenue fund or funds for the purpose of accepting, purchasing or otherwise acquiring conservation easements on behalf of watershed districts.

(2) The Kansas department of agriculture may expend moneys in the compensatory mitigation fund established by this section for the purpose of accepting, purchasing or otherwise acquiring conservation easements on behalf of watershed districts and for the administration of such conservation easements.

(j) The division shall not accept, purchase or otherwise acquire any conservation easement other than for the purposes of this section.

History: L. 1937, ch. 5, § 4; L. 1951, ch. 11, § 1; L. 1959, ch. 5, § 1; L. 1972, ch. 5, § 3; L. 1974, ch. 348, § 3; L. 1979, ch. 6, § 2; L. 1989, ch. 5, § 1; L. 1992, ch. 116, § 23; L. 2001, ch. 86, § 3; L. 2012, ch. 140, § 124; L. 2015, ch. 58, § 1; L. 2021, ch. 74, § 4; May 6.