

SERA 43
Southern Region Water Resource Network
DRAFT Minutes
26 July 2016, Louisville, KY

SERA 43 met during the Soil and Water Conservation Society annual conference in Louisville, KY.

Attendees: Diane Boellstorff (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service), Terry Gentry (Texas A&M Univ.), Drew Gholson (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service), Gary Hawkins (Univ. of Georgia), Deanna Osmond (North Carolina State Univ.), Rebecca Power (Univ. of Wisconsin), Andrew Sharpley (Univ. of Arkansas), and Kevin Wagner (Texas Water Resource Institute).

The group met to discuss opportunities for strengthening SERA43 participation and support, and to plan efforts to seek additional funding to enhance networking and strategic regional project planning.

Rebecca Power described the North Central Water Network's successful approach, which led to funding for their continued efforts from participating states' Extension Directors. Project deliverables include newsletters, webinars, annual conferences and regional initiatives, including collaboration with the Hypoxia Task Force.

Rebecca recommended developing a 1-2 page description of SERA 43 objectives for members to share during discussions with their State Program Leaders and Extension Directors regarding SERA 43 deliverables, outcomes, and project support needs. A draft list of objectives is attached. Edits, comments and suggestions are encouraged. Diane Boellstorff will contact Ron Brown (Mississippi State Univ.), Executive Director of the Association of Southern Rural Extension Directors (ASRED), to discuss SERA 43 objectives and activities, as well as the possibility of presentation of SERA 43 history, accomplishments and goals at the upcoming ASRED annual meeting. In addition, Deanna Osmond will contact Eric Young (North Carolina State Univ.), Executive Director of the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (SAAESD) to explore options for describing SERA 43 and its opportunities for project support to Dr. Young and later to SAAESD members during their annual meeting.

Other sources of funding were discussed such as Southern SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) Professional Development Program (PDP) grants (maximum amount \$80,000), which may support the costs of a regional water resource training event. Three program tracks were suggested by Gary Hawkins, 1) water quality/nutrient management, 2) water quantity/irrigation, and 3) best practices for private irrigation and drinking water well management. Two of the suggested tracks reflected the working groups identified during the SERA 43 meeting in 2015 at the Soil and Water Conservation Society annual conference in Greensboro, NC. Pre-proposals for the SSARE PDP grants will likely be due in March 2017. Diane Boellstorff will monitor the SSARE website for the RFP announcement and will draft the pre-proposal with Gary Hawkins and any interested SERA 43 members. Although Extension personnel and researchers would meet for further planning during the event and would deliver

the water resource training, the event also would be made available through remote access to County Extension Agents.

Gary Hawkins noted that EPA Environmental Education grants may also be an appropriate source of support and will keep the group informed regarding this potential opportunity.

Kevin Wagner reported that the Southeastern Conference (SEC) will host an Academic Conference focused on Water at Mississippi State University on March 27-28. Additionally, Kevin noted that Water Resource Research Institutes in the SEC were also exploring collaboration opportunities and establishing a MOA to facilitate such. Kevin suggested that possibly these three efforts could be successfully merged to provide a common forum and thus support for SERA 43 planning efforts.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30. Diane Boellstorff will serve as chair July 2016-June 2017. Nominations for chair elect are currently being accepted.

Respectfully submitted by D. Boellstorff