



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
September 11, 2015**

Supervisors Present: William Caster
Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman
Jerry Melaragno
Richard Shovelin
Dan Williams

Absentees: Brian Greene
LeRoy Candelaria

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Brandon Bishop, Natural Resource Conservation Service
George Long, USDA, Forest Service
Cody Stropki, SWCA Environmental Consultants
Katheryn Taylor, district volunteer

CALL TO ORDER:

The Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District (CPSWCD) regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors was called to order by Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman at the Natural Resource Conservation Center Conference Room located at 1206 South HWY 55 in Mountainair, NM at 8:15 a.m.

Welcome Attendees:

The Chairman welcomed those present and thanked them for taking the time to attend. The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence to remember the victims of September 11, 2001.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The board reviewed the agenda. **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to approve the agenda. William Caster seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING:

Minutes of the regular meeting from August, 2015 were reviewed. **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to approve the minutes as read. William Caster seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

TREASURER'S REPORT AND APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of August, 2015 with accounts payable for September. The date on the report was changed from August 7 to September 11. The district manager will prepare a report on electric bill payments for the next meeting. **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to accept the report for August and pay the accounts payable for September. William Caster seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

Jerry Melaragno distributed his summary budget report. He explained that his report provided a summary of the treasurer's report, giving board members a look at the bigger financial picture. He pointed out that revenue from the point system was received. He also said that the employees' payroll figures include salaries, taxes and unemployment insurance figures. He answered questions about various categories.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

The district manager reported that she has not received a letter from the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) giving final approval of the budget.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA):

Jim Wanstall's written report is included in board member's packets.

Field Office Report:

Brandon Bishop's written report is included in board member's packets. He reported that the Regional Conservation Partnership Program projects are wrapping up.

District Manager's Report:

The district manager's August report is included in board member's packets. She thanked Mr. Candelaria for helping her in the district's booth at the county fair, and she also thanked Jack Lockridge from the Deer Canyon Preserve for helping her in the booth at the Sunflower Festival. Mr. Melaragno thanked the district manager, Cody Stropki and Aaron Kauffman for sharing information during the Deer Canyon homeowners' annual meeting. He said that the panel went very well and that feedback on it was quite positive.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Correspondence is included in the board packets.

UPDATE ON GRANTS:

The district manager's report on grants listed below includes meetings attended, progress on projects, status of proposals to funding agencies, and RFPs issued by funding agencies. The written report is included in board members' packets.

Estancia Basin Watershed Health and Restoration Monitoring (EBWHRM) Project – Water Trust Board (WTB) and State Forestry Grants (NFL,) and Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance (GRGWA):

The district manager has been completing the contracts for Claunch-Pinto and Edgewood SWCDs for the EBWHRM project funding. The new contract with SWCA Environmental Consultants for the monitoring portion of the EBWHRM have been approved and signed.

The GRGWA conducted contractor site visits the first two weeks in August. There were seven contractor proposals submitted for the work. The technical committee is meeting on September 1st to review and prepare a report for the GRGWA committee, which will meet on September 11, 2015.

The district manager said that spraying of re-sprouts on 149 acres will commence on Tuesday in Grants, and the crew will be there for about a week. Then, depending on weather conditions, the crew will move on to the Santa Fe area.

The district manager submitted a proposal for the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) request for proposals through EMNRD – Forestry Division titled "2016 Southern Manzano and Gallinas Mountain WUI Project." This project would mirror proposed projects which the Mountainair Ranger District will be working on over the next two to three years. The target areas include private land in the Mountainair and Corona areas, Deer Canyon Preserve, and Barranco Canyon. There are still a lot of acres to complete in the Manzanos. She has already received confirmation that the proposal has been sent to the Western States Committee.

The district manager submitted seven reimbursement requests to NM Finance Authority for the EBWHRM.

Mr. Long elaborated on the Forest Service side of these projects. He pointed out on a map an area on both sides of the highway where a WUI project will be proposed to the Forest Service leadership team. This work will complement the work that the district manager will get done in the area. Then he pointed out an area along Hwy 422 where a watershed restoration project will be proposed. He talked about the kind of work that needs to be done in the area, including prescribed burns. These two projects have a good chance of moving forward. Discussion followed on NM Game and Fish's policy on management of wildlife—elk, bears, and big horn sheep, for example. He talked about how the Forest Service works with NM Game and Fish to achieve a balance in the forests. The Forest Service manages habitat but can make recommendations on wildlife to NM Game and Fish. The Forest Service will scope the area to establish priorities. The focus will be on watershed restoration with an emphasis on improving the habitat for big horn sheep and maybe for mule deer. The management direction will not be set until input is received from the public in the scoping process. Mr. Shovelin asked whether some areas will be designated as new wilderness. Mr. Long said that no decision has been made on increasing wilderness. He clarified the uses of wilderness and fighting fires, and on making decisions about whether to suppress fires and on the value of thinning. Mr. Long explained how funding works to pay for fighting the many fires that are burning nationwide and the effect on local Forest Service spending. Mr. Caster talked about the deteriorating condition of the Fourth of July Campground. Mr. Long described the reduced budget designated for public use campgrounds and trails. Discussion then occurred on the fires in Washington state.

Asset Management Plan:

The district manager is working with a company to develop an asset management plan that the district needs in order to submit proposals to the Water Trust Board. The plan will help the board to develop plans and requests to address maintenance issues on property and equipment owned by the district.

New Mexico Association of Counties:

The district manager is working on a "Request for Bids" for the update of the Torrance County and CPSWCD Community Wildfire Protection Plans. She is also drafting a "Request for Bids" for the educational funding the district received.

Central New Mexico Cooperative Weed Management Area:

No report.

Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP):

Romero Wood, LLC:

Pablo Romero has completed 168 acres of thinning on the project area. CPSWCD has completed 21 acres and will complete the remaining two acres today.

Cody Stropki, SWCA Environmental Consultants, and the district manager met with the Mountainair High School principal, the science teacher and the agriculture teacher to discuss the educational component of the project. Classroom instruction will be provided followed by visits to the project area to show students the equipment at work. This project will fit the classroom curriculum that both teachers are teaching. This effort may lead to an Envirothon team in April.

New CFRP Proposals:

The district manager is working with the Cibola National Forest on two new proposed CFRP proposals to complete the NEPA on areas within the Mountainair Ranger District so that thinning projects can be planned and completed.

Forest Service Participating Agreement:

The district manager is working on an agreement with the Alamo Navajo School Board, Inc. for the Zuni project. All signatures will be obtained before the end of the month.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):

Cody Stropki, SWCA Environmental Consultants is working on the two "coordinated resource management plans" needed in the North Central New Mexico Watershed Restoration project area. The district manager said that \$1,320,000 of spending is projected for the 17 proposals that Mountainair has received. Last Friday, the district manager was notified that the RCPP pre-proposal has been approved to move forward for the second year. Discussion followed on fencing an area along NM Highway 42. The district manager helped facilitate a discussion with the Department of Transportation on maintaining the fence along the highway right-of-way.

Mr. Stropki is working on two presentations on the RCPP, one for the Society of Ecological Restoration in Tucson in November and the other for the district's annual meeting.

Agreement with the New Mexico State Parks:

There has been no activity at this time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Draft Letter to Cibola Forest Supervisor:

ACTION TAKEN: Richard Shovelin moved to approve draft two of the letter to Ms. Elaine Kohrman, Forest Supervisor, regarding the concern of Juan and Pablo Chavez and John Perea regarding the withdrawal of funding for the Torreon Allotment fencing project. Jerry Melaragno seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

Capital Outlay -- shop building:

Paperwork to spend capital outlay funds in the amount of \$50,000 has not yet been received. The district manager said that the money will pay for completing the first phase of construction on the 1800 square foot metal building shell with a concrete floor. Mike Valdez will bring plans to the October board meeting for approval

Cibola National Forest – Forest Plan Revision Resource Assessment Wilderness Inventory:

The district manager sent a draft of the desired conditions and wilderness plans to board members for comment. She needs to submit a letter reflecting board members' comments by September 25, so she needs board members' comments by September 18 in order to meet the deadline.

Annual Meeting Plans:

The annual meeting will take place on October 14 in the community center. Post card invitations will be sent right away. Kerry Jones, a warning coordination meteorologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and National Weather Service and Joe Diaz, Chief Meteorologist at KOAT TV will make a presentation between 11:00 and 12:00. Cody Stropki will present on the Ojo Peak project. NRCS will make an annual report. The agenda for the annual meeting will be available for review at the next board meeting.

Local Work Group Meeting:

The Local Work Group meeting will convene today at 10:30 following the board meeting.

Americorp/Vista Program:

The district manager is preparing the application. She needs information about old mines in the district because doing some kind of work on them is included on the application.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts (NMCCD):

The district manager said that there are now 20 members in the coalition. She also said that David King will represent the coalition at a social to discuss the watershed bill which passed the legislature last year but was vetoed by the governor. The group wants to come up with a plan and make a presentation to the Water Resource Interim Committee when it meets in Ruidoso.

South Central Mountain RC&D:

The district manager has a 51 page report and will provide a copy to any board member who wishes to read it.

Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee (EBWPC):

The district manager said that the committee is behind on its regional water plan update.

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:

OTHER:

The district manager will provide a contact number to any board member who wants to attend one of the attorney general's Open Meeting Act trainings – September 16 in Grants, October 21 in Las Cruces, November 18 in Alamogordo, or December 16 in Roswell.

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

Mr. Melaragno said that he and the district manager attended a meeting of the Central New Mexico Cooperative Weed Management area steering committee in Edgewood on September 10. The area is comprised of four conservation districts. Three were represented at this meeting called by José Varela López. This meeting was the first held since 2010. It was decided to disband the organization because support for it is not in place any more. Also, weed issues are being handled by individual districts. Herbicide once bought with grant funding no longer available will be divided among the districts.

PLAN FOR NEXT MEETING:

The district manager wants to discuss the 2016 annual meeting, which will be the district's 75th anniversary.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, October 2, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. at the Natural Resource Conservation Center, 1206 South Highway 55, Mountainair, NM.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the board, the regular meeting of the Claunch-Pinto Board: **ACTION TAKEN:** Jerry Melaragno moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 a.m. William Caster seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

JERRY MELARAGNO, SEC. – TREAS.