



PO Box 129, Mountainair, NM 87036 Ph: 505-847-2243 Fax: 505-847-0615

## MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING June 1, 2018

**Supervisors Present:** Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman  
David Cain  
LeRoy Candelaria  
Larry Gomez  
Richard Shovelin  
Dan Williams

**Absentees:** William Caster

**Others Present:** Dierdre Tarr, District Manager  
Nicky Huey, rancher  
Ricky Huey, rancher  
Loralee Hunt, Pattern Energy  
Kim Kostelnik, New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts (NMCCD)  
Travis Lightfoot, Corona schools  
April Luna, NRCS  
Tom Perkins, Perkins Ranch  
Adam Renz, Pattern Energy  
Jim Rose, rancher  
Michele Rose, rancher  
Katheryn Taylor, volunteer, CPSWCD

### 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 8:10 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.

### 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 unanimously.

### APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the regular meeting from May 4, 2018 were reviewed. **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to approve the minutes as read. Dan Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes of the special meeting from May 18, 2018 were reviewed. **ACTION TAKEN:** Dan Williams moved to approve the minutes as read. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. Motion carried with one abstention.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT AND APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:**

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of May, 2018 with accounts payable for June, 2018.

**ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to accept the report for May 2018 and pay the accounts payable for June, 2018. Leroy Candelaria seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

## **OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

### **Audit Contract:**

The district manager stated that the new audit contract will be for \$19,000. Next year's audit will be the third and final year of the contract, and then the district manager will have to go out for bids the next year for a new three-year contract that includes a single fed audit.

## **REPORTS:**

### **New Mexico Department of Agriculture:**

No report.

### **Field Office Report:**

The NRCS Field Office written report is included in board members' packets. April Luna elaborated on the report. She said that contracts were signed in May, and she expects that more will be signed in June. Ms. Luna is serving on the Civil Rights Committee and conducted the Civil Rights Review in Portales for the Quality Assurance Review for Team 11 – Clovis and Portales. She attended the NRCS Brush Management Training in Roswell and Moriarty from May 7 – 11. She has also been very busy doing checkouts and getting contracts ready to sign.

### **District Manager's Report:**

The district manager's written report is included in the board member's packets.

## **CORRESPONDENCE:**

No correspondence.

## **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.

### **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)**

#### **Watershed Health Grant – Water Trust Board:**

The district manager will close out the current grant next month.

The Estancia Basin grant for \$600,000 was approved by the WTB and the Board of Directors for the Department of Finance. Some readiness items will be prepared next month, and then that grant will move forward.

#### **New Mexico State Forestry Grant:**

The district manager has started contracting for the 2017 funds of \$265,000. These funds will only be spent on Claunch-Pinto projects including those on state land. There are four active contracts in the Corona area for hazardous fuel and defensible space. One project has just completed in Deer Canyon Preserve with two more in the works. There is one contract above Manzano on the Herrera property. If the district cannot spend all of the money, the remaining funds will be used on the Estancia Basin project.

The district manager has received unofficial communication that State Forestry has approved a grant, and pending the submission of paperwork, that grant will be starting. She wants to do right-of-way work near Cedarvale and around Gran Quivera. She has also been asked by the Salinas Pueblo Missions to look at areas along the roads into Quarai and Abó.

#### **Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance aka Upper Rio Grande Salt Cedar Project:**

This project was not approved for funding by the WTB but demonstrating more matching funds will improve ranking for future applications. This grant is for riparian and watershed restoration work. The project area starts at Taos, extends to Bernardo and goes across to the continental divide between

Gallup and Grants. The district manager may be able to secure some private funding so that this work can move forward.

**Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP):**

**Romero Wood LLC CFRP:**

The district manager met with a Forest Service representative on May 22 to get an update on the project. Between 132 and 140 acres still need to be completed by September 1. The Cibola National Forest will probably close around the week of June 11. The effect of that closure on the project is not known. The project may receive a waiver to work there despite the closure. The district's crew can only thin from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. The sawyer has to be on fire watch for three hours after 10:00. The spotter will return to the office and work there.

**Capilla Peak CFRP:**

This two-year grant is for NEPA work in the Capilla Peak area. After the restoration work is done in the Capilla Peak area, the village of Manzano should be protected. The SWCA team has finished most of the cultural surveys on the Capilla Peak project. One more bird survey needs to be done. The project should be finished on schedule by the first of September.

**Corona CFRP:**

The Corona CFRP is a three-year NEPA project and was designed by land owners in the Corona area. The work is near the municipal wells. After the SWCA team finishes the Manzano area, it will go to Corona. The team has permission from the Forest Service to work there even though the forest is closed, providing they meet certain requirements. At the conclusion of the NEPA work, the district manager will apply for implementation funding in 2020.

**Chupadera CFRP:**

The district manager said that this large project is in the southern part of the district in Socorro County and part of Torrance County. This work is for the State Land Office and BLM. Work just started last week. The first year ends on August 30 and should be on schedule by the first of September.

**Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):**

The district manager said that for the 2017 funding, NRCS has received its ranking criteria and is in the process of ranking projects. She hopes to get permission to roll over remaining 2015 and 2016 funds into 2017. This is a large project area incorporating the Estancia Basin area with the Greater Rio Grande area. It starts at the state line at Taos, extends to Bernardo, goes over to the Continental Divide between Gallup and Grants and includes all of the East Torrance, Edgewood and Claunch-Pinto districts. In 2017, \$969,000 was received. About \$200,000 in technical fees will only go to contractors to do cultural resource surveys and biological surveys. The rest of the money will go to on-the-ground work to pay for any of the practices for EQIP. For 2018, \$3.4 million dollars was awarded. The preliminary paperwork for 2018 has been signed and sent to Washington D.C.

Applications from landowners will probably be in the EQIP application period ending in December.

Five hundred and fifteen thousand dollars was set aside for cultural resource work and biological surveys. Right at \$ 2.9 million dollars will go to on-the-ground work for cooperators in the project areas. The district has brought in a little over \$7 million dollars since 2015 for this project.

**New Mexico State Park Project:**

The district manager will contact the state park on a project for the fall.

**FEMA Grant Proposal:**

The FEMA project is a hazardous fuel reduction project for about \$109,000. The district manager has received the phase one funds of \$37,000 to do the NEPA work. The purpose of this money is to protect the East Mountain area from a horrific wild fire. She will go out for a bid on the NEPA work that needs to be done.

**New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Commission Water Quality Grant:**

The district manager said that the project to install two 5,000 gallon catchment tanks at the fire station in Mountainair is finished, but she has ordered an additional 2,500 gallon tank for the fire station, providing 12,500 gallons of storage for the Mountainair Fire Department. She plans to submit a proposal for next year's funding for a similar project in Corona.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

### **Capital Outlay, Shop Building:**

The district manager has asked for a letter from Construction Industries that indicates that the building is a commercial building and has to be ADA compliant. She has been working with Senator Stefanics to whom she will give a complete written background on the building. Senator Stefanics has already moved the issue forward to the chief of staff of the Senate.

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

The district manager said that there is a new forest supervisor, Steve Hottenbach. He met with the Cibola Stewardship Council on Tuesday, May 29. He indicated that a draft revision may be available late in 2018 or early 2019.

The district manager requested that the government entities with cooperating agreements with the Forest Service be notified when the draft becomes available, but the revision will then be reviewed with all the members of the Collaboratives.

### **Americorp/Vista Program:**

The district manager explained the program, and said that she is working on the matter. There are now four candidates for the position.

### **Beautification – Partnership with the town of Mountainair – Elm Trees in Town Right of Ways:**

The district manager explained the partnership and what the town Public Works Department will do in cooperation with the district. The chairman said that he met with the mayor and explained the circumstances when spraying can take place. The mayor asserted that the town council has no problem with the partnership and its work and understands limitations on spraying.

### **Lincoln, Torrance and Socorro Transmission Line SunZia Transmission Line:**

The district manager distributed a map of the approved route of the SunZia Transmission Line and reported that she attended a recent public meeting held by the Public Regulation Commission (PRC) in Socorro. She reported that a majority of the approximately 70 attendees were concerned about SunZia's mitigation plan concerning the route. She reported on statements made by various attendees both expressing concerns about the effects of the transmission line on the land, people and livestock as well as support for it. She also said that the BLM has had the district's land use plan for a long time, but SunZia has never made a response to the land use plan in respect to its own mitigation plan.

The district has provided written testimony to the PRC and has been approved by the PRC as an intervener. The district manager's testimony expressed concern that SunZia never contacted the district concerning the extent to which its mitigation plan complies with the district's land use plan. She emphasized that the district's interest is in having the opportunity to review SunZia's mitigation plan.

She also said that the Claunch-Pinto board supports renewable energy.

Loralee Hunt, Manager of Project Development for Pattern Energy, offered some perspectives on the meeting. She said that the company has reached agreements with most landowners and all are being treated fairly. She said that they are close to agreements with the three who have not signed contracts, are trying to address their concerns and are making a lot of progress. She said that now that the district has an agreement with the PRC, all the documents associated with agreements with the landowners are available for review.

Chairman Lovato stressed the sacred importance of the land to people who live on it.

Ms. Hunt said that there are stringent environment rules already in place and that the district's concerns are heard, and the appropriate company's employees will meet with the district to discuss issues.

Mr. Candelaria emphasized that the district supports going forward with the project, but the district needs to be involved and informed so that it can answer to its constituents.

Adam Renz, representing government relations and external affairs for Pattern Energy, stressed that having good communication and transparency going forward and ensuring good conservation and stewardship of the land are of utmost importance to Pattern Energy. He wants to ensure good relations with the communities where people have a stake in power generation.

Mr. Gomez mentioned board members who are involved in agriculture and represent farmers and ranchers who want to be sure the land is protected and that they are a part of the discussion. Ms. Hunt said that representatives of Pattern Energy agree with the land use plan, and she asked the district to provide specific guidelines about what are considered best practices. They want to merge their best practices with the district's best practices, and she suggested a plan going forward. Kim Kostelnik clarified that the present discussion concerned the SunZia line and the need for a reclamation plan in response to the district's land use policy. The windmills are a separate issue. She said that private land owners do need to be concerned about possible effects on "down-stream" users. She emphasized that the district is not trying to stop any energy development but wants to ensure that plans to protect the environment are in place prior to implementation. Discussion followed on the need for prior knowledge on mitigation plans and on the energy company's committed intentions to address the need.

The chairman continued with the **New Business** item: Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy, Corona Wind Companies at this time.

Ms. Hunt distributed copies of a PowerPoint presentation and commented on its contents. She talked about who Pattern is and what the company is trying to do. She explained that the Corona Wind project will produce 3,000 megawatts between the SunZia line and the Western Spirit line. The company has about 425,000 acres under lease that cross perhaps five soil and water conservation districts. She described how the company operates and how the development and operational teams work together. She also described hers and Adam Renz's roles in bringing the projects about and named the rest of the in-house development teams and identified who should begin to communicate with the district and why.

Ms. Hunt then turned to the approved route map of the SunZia line. She talked about her meetings, beginning eight months ago, with land owners whose property the line crosses and what their concerns have been. She said that these land owners are also committed to progress in the state of New Mexico and the company hopes they will also feel re-assured about line's effects on them. This line will be the first privately owned line, which is 515 miles in length.

She described her own and her family's background in ranching in New Mexico and how she became involved in these projects. She reiterated her commitment to working with the district in a positive manner.

Next, she took up the Western Spirit transmission line which Pattern Energy has acquired the rights to develop and which may go through Mountainair. She said that Adam Renz is the contact person regarding this line, and the Western Spirit team will come in to meet with the district. He will organize all the meetings that need to be set up with the Western Spirit team. He said that the route is not confirmed yet and may change. Initial meetings will begin July 10 and 11 and the intention is to hold the first one in Moriarty, which has a big facility available. The plan is to first talk with land owners who are along the possible route.

Mr. Lovato strongly suggested that the first meeting be held in Mountainair (since the line may go through the town and not through Moriarty) and said that otherwise there is a potential for alienating area residents and creating opposition. Mr. Renz will take to heart the suggestion and explore the option of holding a meeting at the Dr. Saul Recreation Center.

Travis Lightfoot from Corona Schools said that Corona school system has dealt with both Pattern and Clean Line and that Clean Line did not communicate well, and Pattern has had to intervene and do the work to create lines of communication that should have been created from the beginning. He said that Pattern has been notably better. Also, Pattern's reclamation plans are far more stringent than ordinances enacted by Lincoln County to protect land owners. He mentioned that wind farms may save some ranches and preserve them for future generations.

Mr. Shovelin asked for clarification on the projects and companies involved. Mr. Renz explained Pattern's relationship with SunZia as the anchor tenant generating energy from the wind farms and sending it through the transmission lines. He explained what SunZia is and does and that Pattern realized what needed to be done to get its power to market. Pattern is working on behalf of SunZia because it needs the transmission line to get its power to market. He said that Pattern wants to apply more consumer focused communication and do right by the land owners. He said that Pattern can now deliver power both to New Mexico as well as California. He enumerated long term benefits to New Mexico, for instance energy and jobs, as well as the investment. Ms. Hunt said that in the past, Pattern

has paid other companies to hire and bring in workers, but that practice is changing. Pattern will hire its own local employees in the future. Mr. Renz elaborated on Ms Hunt's comments and mentioned the stimulus to communities that the energy companies will prompt. In response to Mr. Shovelin's question, Mr. Renz explained the origins and current status of Pattern. Mr. Lovato thanked Ms. Hunt, Mr. Renz, the ranchers, and Mr. Lightfoot for attending and participating in the board meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan:**

The district manager included the current Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan FY 2019 – 2023 in board members' packets and asked members to review it. The next board meeting will be a public meeting at which time the plan will be discussed.

**Drug Policy in Personnel Policy:**

The district manager included in board members' packets the alcohol and drug abuse policy that is part of the district personnel policy. Board members felt it to be adequate.

**Additional Signature on Bank Accounts – Resolution No. 13 – 2018 – Additional Signature on Bank Accounts:**

**ACTION TAKEN:** Mr. Shovelin moved to include all board members as signatories on the signature bank accounts, as well as the district manager, who would sign checks on an emergency basis only. LeRoy Candelaria seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote as follows: David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Dan Williams, aye; LeRoy Candelaria, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Richard Shovelin, aye.

**Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy, Corona Wind Companies – Presentation by Lorelee Hunt, manager, project Development Pattern Energy:**

The district manager asked board members for direction as to whether she should file as an intervener on behalf of the district with the PRC concerning the wind energy companies. She said that as an intervener, the district would have access to pertinent information and discussions. She reported on a meeting at the Pete Dominici Law Firm with Lorraine Hollingsworth, who will file for intervener status for the district concerning the wind companies, with the board's approval. Discussion followed on the importance of taking action and on the choice of the Dominici Law Firm **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to authorize the district manager to work with the Dominici Law Firm's Lorraine Hollingsworth to file for intervener status with the PRC. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**REPORTS:**

**New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts (NMCCD):**

No report.

**South Central Mountain RC&D:**

No report.

**EBWPC:**

The district manager reported on receiving a confusing, outdated hydrologic report. A meeting should be held this month.

**ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:**

**OTHER:**

The district manager said that PRC hearings on SunZia will begin on the thirteenth and continue at least through the fifteenth.

**MEETINGS ATTENDED:**

**PLAN for NEXT MEETING:**

Claunch-Pinto SWCD

June 1, 2018

Regular Meeting

**NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:**

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, July 13, 2018 at 8:00 a.m. at the Natural Resource Conservation Center, 1206 South Highway 55 in Mountainair, NM.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to come before the board, the regular meeting of the Claunch-Pinto Board: **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:50. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

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FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

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RICHARD J. SHOVELIN, SEC. – TREAS.