



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

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING July 15, 2022

Supervisors Present: Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman
Leroy Candelaria
Robin Dunn
Larry Gomez
Jack Lockridge

Absentees: David Cain
Dale Rose

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Roy Gibson
Kenneth Lujan, NRCS
Katie Mechenbier, S&W Cons. Spec. NMDA
Ernest Taylor, Mountainair Ranger District
Katheryn Taylor, volunteer CPSWCD

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District (CPSWCD) was called to order by Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman, both in person and via Zoom at 8:05 a.m.

Welcome Attendees:

The chairman welcomed those present and thanked them for joining the meeting. The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence.

OATH OF OFFICE:

Chairman Lovato issued the oath of office to Jack Lockridge.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The board reviewed the agenda. **ACTION TAKEN:** Leroy Candelaria moved to approve the agenda. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Leroy Candelaria, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve the minutes of June 10, 2022, as read. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote with one abstention: Felipe Lovato, aye; Leroy Candelaria, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of June 2022 with accounts payable for July, 2022.

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve the treasurer's report for June 2022 and pay the accounts payable for July 2022. Leroy Candelaria seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice

vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Leroy Candelaria, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Review 4th Quarter Report for FY 2021—2022:

The district manager reviewed revenue, grant reimbursements, and the general plus federal and state grant expenses. She commented on the amount of income generated by wood sales and income from State Forestry. She pointed out that the chipper repair and vehicle maintenance represented the greatest expense.

Quarterly Report Resolution No. 01 – 2023:

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve Quarterly Report Resolution No. 01 – 2023. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Leroy Candelaria, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

Budget Revision Resolution No. 02 – 2023:

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve Budget Revision Resolution No. 02 – 2023. Leroy seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Leroy Candelaria, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

FY 2022 – 2023 Budget:

The district manager reviewed the budget revenues and expenses for FY 2022 – 2023. Mr. Lockridge commented on increased expenses due to mandatory wage increases.

Budget Resolution No. 03 – 2023:

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve Budget Resolution No. 03 – 2023. The resolution concerns the budget year beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 20, 2023. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Leroy Candelaria, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture:

The NMDA's written report for July was provided to the board members. Soil & Water Conservation Specialist, Katie Mechenbier commented on several items that affect SWCDs:

- Ms. Mechenbier said that an on-line mandatory training for SWCDs which are implementing and/ or supporting a Healthy Soil Program grant will be held on Thursday, July 21. A signed Memorandum of Agreement is due on August 15.
- The NMDA Agricultural Workforce Development Program grant application period opened June 10. Ms. Mechenbier pointed out requirements and financial support for qualified agricultural businesses who hire interns.
- Livestock owners missing animals due to wildfires should call the New Mexico Livestock Board or their county sheriff.
- The 28th Annual Southwestern Noxious Invasive Plant Short course will be held July 19 – 21 in Farmington
- The USDA is seeking proposals for the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership. The due date is August 5.
- The River Stewardship Program funds projects that enhance the health of rivers by addressing the root causes of poor water quality and stream habitat. The request for proposals opened on May 26 and will close on July 26.

NRCS Mountainair Field Office Report:

The NRCS Mountainair Field Office written report for July is included in board member's packets. Mr. Lujan reported that Josh Archuleta is working on EWP and is still working on the Calf Canyon Fire. There are other staff shortages in various team offices: Fort Sumner and Santa Rosa.

Mr. Lujan was told that only Team 5 met the July 1 deadline to submit EQIP contracts and was awarded \$1,700,000. His initial allocation was \$1.2 million. He got an additional \$500,000 and has requested another million dollars. If the request is funded, the whole amount will be 2.7 million dollars. The Mountainair office got four contracts funded, but if more money is awarded, perhaps more contracts can be funded.

There are seven CSP contracts funded in the Mountainair office for over a million dollars. Steven Ferguson and Jody Cornwall have been busy with a huge workload taking care of field work for 28 CRP contracts, half of which are in the Estancia area and half are in the Claunch-Pinto area.

District Manager's Report:

The district manager said that where masticating is taking place, algerita may be cut at the same time, causing a proliferation of the plant. She mentioned a chemical pellet that she hopes will work to control the algerita. Mr. Lujan added that he has observed algerita coming in where trees are being pulled out and may grow where there is a disturbance in the soil.

The district manager will combine her report with comments on her written update on grants.

CORRESPONDANCE:

No report.

The District Manager's Written Report to CPSWCD Board Plus Comments – Update on Grants, July 15, 2022:

Watershed Health Grant – Water Trust Board (WTB):

[The district manager commented that she is still trying to spend the Water Trust Board money. She has a couple of contracts with East Torrance and Edgewood that she hopes will finish up. She should be able to start on Greater Rio Grande projects if contractors who have been working on the fires in the Las Vegas area can finish there and begin work on the GRGWA projects funded for 2021.]

2020 EBWHRM WTB Funds:

The District is preparing thinning contracts for signature. Claunch-Pinto and East Torrance have a couple of projects that work is being completed on. Claunch-Pinto has 3 projects ready to contract and 11 pending projects. This grant will have to be expended by September 2022.

2020 GRGWA WTB Funds:

The San Cristobal, Seboyeta-Moquino Creek, and Glorieta projects are all on hold because of fire restrictions. The District Manager is in the process of preparing a contract with Santa Fe-Pojoaque SWCD to complete a project that was started with their State Forestry grant. This grant will have to be expended by September 2022.

The District met with Adam Clark and Cody Winner (the ranch foreman) from Pattern Energy to look at a salt cedar project on the Dripping Springs Ranch. Vern will be working with the ranch foreman to prepare a practice plan for the project. The District is also working on resprout treatments for the previously completed GRGWA projects.

2021 WTB Proposals:

The EBWHRM and GRGWA grant documents have been signed and the district has been notified the grants have closed, so we can proceed to start projects.

NM State Forestry Grants:

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[The district manager commented that Mr. Candelaria would like to invite Representative Castellano to a “show and tell” in the next couple of weeks to see the completed HWY 42 project. She added that Andrew Aldrete has also expressed an interest in attending. Because of that project, Claunch-Pinto may be doing highway right-of-way work from Chillili to the Dunn’s ranch. The main problems are getting contractors to do the work.]

2019 NFL Funding:

The District has a work plan in the amount of \$276,000. This funding will need to be expended by 12/31/2022. The HWY 42 project has been completed. The second project is the Chillili Land Grant project in the amount of 40 acres.

2020 NFL Funding:

The District has just signed a work plan in the amount of \$276,000. This funding will need to be expended by 12/31/2023.

2022 NFL Funding:

The District has been notified their FY2022 NFL proposal has been funded.

BNSF Railroad Project:

The district will continue to monitor the area for any erosion issues.

Collaborative Forest Restoration Projects:

[The district manager commented that Pablo Romero has completed his portion of the thinning for this year. This morning three high school began working with SWCA to complete the monitoring for Bartolo Canyon. She said that the area is extremely dry.]

Watershed Restoration and Fuel Reduction in Bartolo Canyon of the Manzano Mountains:

The District has 3 or 4 High School students to work with SWCA Environmental Consultants and NM Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute to complete the monitoring for the first year on this project. Tentatively the monitoring will start on July 15 - 16, 2022 if weather conditions permit.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):

[The district manager commented that she has submitted reimbursements for both the 2017 and 2018 funding, which should clear those projects up. The funding was over spent on the 2017 cultural surveys, but the overages will be covered by the Water Trust Board grant. The funding that she is working on now is actually the renewal of the 2015 money which she refers to in the 2021 funding. Submitting the supplemental agreement continues to be a challenge because there are no written instructions. She is also waiting to receive wage costs from SWCA.]

2017 RCPP Funding:

We have submitted the reimbursement for the outstanding cultural resource report for Pueblo of Acoma. This is the final reimbursement. All of the technical assistance funding has been drawn down on this project.

2018 RCPP Funding:

All of the cultural resource survey reports for Mountainair have been approved by SHPO. The EZGrants.gov portal for Claunch-Pinto SWCD was set up incorrectly as Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water **Conversation** District. As of today, this has not been corrected. The District Manager is submitting the financial and written reports to the NM NRCS RCPP Project Manager who makes sure the reports are added to the portal, so the district doesn’t show past due. The district has finally located the final signed authorization from the State Historical Preservation Office for the last cultural resource survey report completed with this funding.

2021 RCPP Funding:

The supplemental agreement has been returned for the third time from the Washington D.C. office. We are in the process of reworking the deliverables and values required for the supplemental agreement. NRCS staff will review our work before we upload the information in the portal and re-submit for final approval.

Additional RCPP Funding:

The District has received notice that the fiscal year 22 Regional Conservation Partnership Program Renewal proposal in the amount of \$967,000 has tentatively been selected to become a RCPP project.

FEMA Grant Proposal:

[The district manager commented that she turned in her quarterly report yesterday. She reported on a conference call that took place in May. She also talked about what is necessary to do to be ready to start the work on the ground.]

Hazard Mitigation Project - HMGP 5281 Sub Grant Agreement:

SWCA has completed all of the cultural resource surveys. SWCA should submit the cultural resource survey reports on the projects to NMSHPO by August 1, 2022, for a 30 day review. The draft NEPA document will be ready to submit to NMEMHS and FEMA by August 1, 2022, for their review. If we can keep to this schedule, we should have the funding for phase 2 secured before the end of the year.

Soil and Water Conservation Commission Pre-Proposal:

The District submitted a pre-proposal for the SWCC request for pre-proposal. This grant proposal if funded would develop a planning document to guide the CPSWCD over the next decade and beyond looking at the changing climate and watershed conservation dynamics in prioritized areas for treatment. The document would not only benefit the future managers of CPSWCD but also benefit all SWCDs across New Mexico.

New Mexico State Land Projects:

[The district manager commented that she has a site visit on this project on Monday. She has been talking to Lawrence Crane of State Forestry. A youth crew was supposed to move the wood from the project, but that is not going to happen, so she will have to get a bid to move the wood (about 150 cords), which will either go to Chilili or Tajique. She estimates that the cost will be from \$15,000 to \$20,000. Funding may be available from State Forestry to thin 170 acres on the David Cain's property and 274 acres on the Sharp ranch. Cultural resource surveys may be required. Aaron Johnson from the Cibola Forest told her that they may want wildlife surveys on Capilla; however, she told Mr. Johnson that the agreement with the Cibola has expired. Mr. Taylor will look into the issue. The district manager said that there is a lot of work to be done, but the challenge is finding contractors and workers to do it. Someone from Ramah has applied for a job, so a sawyer may be added to the district's crew.]

The Edgewood SWCD will be using some of the Water Trust Board allocation to complete a 50-acre State Land Project known as the Bear Cat Project. Claunch-Pinto SWCD will match the funding with their State Forest NFL funding.

The District Manager has met with staff from the State Land Office to talk about a potential partnership and an MOU. In the meeting the District Manager learned the State Land Office has memorandum of understandings with 14 SWCDs but doesn't have one with Claunch-Pinto SWCD. Claunch-Pinto has two projects they have planned for State Trust lands. One project is for David Cain and the other project is the Sharp ranch at Corona. The District Manager has sent both practice plans to the State Land office for their review. State Forestry has told the District there might be some capital funding to match these projects.

The District has \$775,406.55 in projects either contracted or ready to contract as soon as we have the funding and a contractor. All but two of the practice plans for the work have been approved by State Forestry.

[The district manager said that she and Vernon Kohler met with representatives from Pattern Energy to look at an area overlooking an arroyo where there is salt cedar. Vern will work with the ranch manager to develop a practice plan to remove the trees. Pattern also wants some re-planting done.

She added that work will be starting to remove re-sprouts from the Chilton ranch heading west, probably in September.]

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay:

New Chipper RFP:

A new chipper won't be available until March of 2023. It will cost \$90,000, but the district only has \$75,000.

FY 2022 Capital Outlay Request Funded – Skid Steer:

The district manager talked with someone at Kuboda Tractor. They don't sell skid steers, but they sell tractors, which start at \$40,000.

Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy, Corona Wind Companies, Western Spirit Transmission Line:

The district manager said that she received a certified letter from Lincoln County regarding Lincoln County New Mexico taxable industrial revenue bonds, Pattern SC holdings LLC in the project series 2022 in the aggregate amount of three billion, six hundred million dollars. The bonds, if approved, will be issued on or before September 21, 2024. Final action on the ordinance regarding the issuance of the bonds will be at the Lincoln County meeting of August 16, 2022.

The district manager mentioned that Adam Clark of Pattern Energy said that the company is in negotiation to buy the first Sun Zia line. Two lines will run side by side. There will be three lines in all. Discussion followed on money from wind energy to go to local schools and PNM's fire plans in the Corona area. The district manager says that Pattern wants separate work by different entities to be done on a remediation plan for wind farms, but she told Mr. Clark that an agreed-on plan should be developed cooperatively among the entities.

Sun Zia Transmission –Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

Comments on the draft will be due August 1, 2022.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution No. 04 – 2023 – ICIP:

The district manager reviewed the priorities for the ICIP, unchanged from the last meeting.

ACTION TAKEN: Mr. Lockridge moved to approve Resolution No. 04 – 2023 – ICIP. Mr. Candelaria seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Leroy Candelaria, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

IRS Mileage Rates:

From January to June, 2022, the mileage rate is \$.585/mile. From July – December, 2022, the rate is \$.625/mile.

ACTION TAKEN: Mr. Candelaria moved to approve the higher mileage rates. Mr. Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Leroy Candelaria, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

FY 2021 – 2022 Annual Report:

The report is included for information.

REPORTS:

Presentation on Procedures for Applying for and Disbursing Grant Funds:

The district manager described the procedures for applying and disbursing NFL grant funds, which she said is the easiest of the grants to administer.

- State Forestry sends out a request for proposals with a timeframe of about two months for submission. Information meetings are held on grant requirements and on how to write the

proposal. Funding is limited to \$300,000, with some of the money going to State Forestry for its expenses and about \$20,000 going to the grantee for its administrative costs. The rest of the funds have to be spent on on-the-ground projects.

- The proposals are reviewed and successful applicants are notified within three to six months.
- Costs per acre have to be submitted and then a work plan has to be submitted to State Forestry for approval, at which point a notice to proceed is issued. The funding has to be spent within two years.
- After the notice to proceed is received, contracts with landowners have to be prepared for their signature. The work may be done by the landowner or a contractor. Trainings for landowners or contractors may take place on what is expected on the project. The trainings may be used as matches for the grant, and there are requirements on how the trainings are conducted to qualify as a match.
- Work is started on the project. A detailed time sheet has to be kept to track hours worked by district employees on the projects funded by the grant.
- When the project is completed, Vernon Kohler does a preliminary inspection of the work. If he thinks the work will pass inspection, he calls the forest contract inspector, who carries out the final inspection on the project. He then writes up his report and emails it to the district manager. She contacts with the land owner, who has to sign off documentation confirming certain details on the project and acknowledges the dollar amount that he is being paid per acre on the project. If Claunch-Pinto does the work, a document has to be signed saying that the landowner wants the district crew to do the work. The agreement has to be approved by State Forestry and the Water Trust Board. If the district gets the wood from the project, a separate form has to be signed by the landowner agreeing to the arrangement.
- After the project is finished and the paperwork is completed, the district manager has to submit a request for reimbursement, including all the paperwork involved with the project from start to finish. Documents such as the check, the approved final inspection etc. have to be submitted on the agency's forms to verify the match. The district is paid on the cost per acre for the project. There are usually from three to five reimbursements per month. The district manager may write as many as 17 contracts per month.
- Individual files with each project's paperwork have to be kept, which the auditor inspects.

Board members praised the district manager for the amount and quality of work that she accomplishes without substantial support. Mr. Candelaria stated that the Claunch-Pinto district is acknowledged by people across the state for being the best in the state, and this status can be attributed to the efforts of the district manager.

New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts:

As a representative of the coalition, the district manager continues to work with public relations staff from the Forest Service, NM State Forestry and the Forest Stewards Guild on sending out information on wildfire preparedness in New Mexico. She commented that fire season is 12 months a year.

South Central Mountain RC&D:

No report.

Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee:

The district manager said that she participated in a call with the committee earlier in the month to go over the draft letter to be sent to the Edgewood planning and zoning committee regarding concerns about the new Campbell Ranch subdivision. When the letter is signed, the district manager will send it to Claunch-Pinto's board members.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Taylor said that a pause in prescribed fires has been implemented for three months. He commented on the recent fire in the Manzanos that he was going to allow to burn because of the lightness of the burn plus the burn scars around it and defensible space on one side, but he was ordered to put the fire

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out, so fires for beneficial use will be paused as well. Therefore, the Forest Service will be in full suppression mode. He described challenges he faces in getting thinning projects on the ground.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Chairman said he would hear a motion for closure of the meeting to enter into Executive Session. Jack Lockridge moved the Board of Claunch Pinto SWCD be closed. The authority for closure of the meeting is Section 10-15-1(H)(2) for limited personnel matters pertaining to the District Manager Position. The motion was seconded by Larry Gomez. The motion was made and seconded. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Leroy Candelaria, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

The motion is approved by a majority vote of a quorum of the Board. The board of Claunch-Pinto SWCD went into closed session at 9:45 a.m.

The Board of Claunch-Pinto SWCD came out of closed session at 10:15 a.m. The Chairman announced the time as 10:15 a.m. The Chairman asked for a statement regarding the closed meeting. Jack Lockridge said the Board of Claunch-Pinto SWCD discussed in their closed session only those matters specified in the motion to close. No action needs to be taken in the open meeting.

OTHER:

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

PLAN for NEXT MEETING:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, August 5, 2022, 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, was adjourned.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

DAVID CAIN, SECRETARY