



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

## MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING April 1, 2022

**Supervisors Present:** Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman  
David Cain  
Leroy Candelaria  
Robin Dunn  
Larry Gomez  
Jack Lockridge  
Dale Rose

**Absentees:**

**Others Present:** Dierdre Tarr, District Manager  
Joshua Archuleta, NRCS  
Roy Gibson  
Ernest Taylor, Mountainair Ranger District  
Katheryn Taylor, volunteer CPSWCD  
Jim Wanstall, USDA  
Dan Williams

### 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, 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.

### APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF AGENDA:

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

### APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

**ACTION TAKEN:** Jack Lockridge moved to approve the minutes of March 4, 2022 as read. Dale Rose seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Leroy Candelaria; David Cain, aye.

### TREASURER'S REPORT:

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

**ACTION TAKEN:** Jack Lockridge moved to approve the treasurer's report for March, 2022 and pay the accounts payable for April, 2022. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Leroy Candelaria; David Cain, aye.

Mr. Lockridge mentioned that he met with the manager of United Business Bank who said that she will resolve the issue of the bank charges to Claunch-Pinto.

#### **OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

The district manager said that all required information has been posted on the state auditor's website for fiscal year 2022. She will review it and submit it to the state auditor. It won't be necessary to go out for bids for an auditor because Mr. Austin was selected last year and his bid is in force for three years. In addition, she will prepare the quarterly financial report for the DFA, after which she will contact the district budget committee members so they can begin work on the budget.

#### **REPORTS:**

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

The NMDA's written report for April was provided to the board members. He commented on legislation that affects SWCDs – the zoning of conservation districts that may come up in the next legislative district. He suggested to try to get ahead of this effort. Also, three million dollars of state funds have been allocated through house bill 2 with few restrictions to SWCDs. Mr. Wanstall's position will be filled eventually, but he is available to the district when needed.

Mr. Wanstall highlighted several of the items in the report.

- The RFPs for the 2022 Water Quality and Conservation Grant are due Thursday, April 8 by 5:00 p.m.
- Mil levy Rate Resolutions and appointed supervisor nominations are due to the SWCC by June first.
- The NMDA is accepting FY23 Healthy Soil Program applications until May 12. Some SWCDs may apply for a grant of up to \$100,000.
- The FY21 Point System Worksheet is due to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission by July 15.
- The NMSU Extension will host NM Youth Ranch Management Camp June 12 – 17 at the CS Ranch near Cimarron, NM.
- A NM Water Data Initiative Update webinar will be held on April 13 at 10:00 a.m. mountain time.
- The new Forest Service strategy – “Confronting the Wildfire Crisis” outlines the agency's plan for increasing fuels and forest health treatments to create healthier forests and reduce the risk of fire to communities.

##### **NRCS Mountainair Field Office Report:**

The NRCS Mountainair Field Office written report for April is included in board member's packets.

Mr. Archuleta pointed out that the ranking deadline for CSP applications is April 1. Within team 5 there are more than 40 applications. The EQIP deadline is May 6.

He will serve as acting DC for about three more weeks when Kenneth Lujan will return to his post.

Several positions are vacant with the range con position in Santa Rosa being the main post that needs to be filled.

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

The district manager commented that the healthy soils initiative is not a new one, and she still has materials that she took into the Mountainair elementary school to present to students when she first started in her position as district manager.

She also reported that she and Jody in the NRCS office have been working on a risk mitigation plan for the district and for NRCS. For example, everyone who comes into the office has to sign in. She also said that she met with the sheriff and a sergeant so that they both know where the district office is located, and the 911 office will also be made aware.

She reported on the NRCS lease renewal that needs to be reviewed for items to include in the budget.

**CORRESPONDANCE:**

The NM Environment Department's Ground Water Discharge Permit Application was received but nothing affected Torrance County.

**UPDATE ON GRANTS, APRIL 1, 2022**

**Watershed Health Grant – Water Trust Board (WTB):**

The district manager reported that she is continuing to write contracts and request reimbursements.

There have been some problems with an HOA in La Cienega related to a project approved by the association because some members didn't want the ditch cleaned. She explained her positive cooperation with the acequia association, what is being done and the care being taken to address concerns.

At the Pueblo of Sandia, one contractor is still working on the project.

**New Mexico State Forestry:**

Work is being done on the Highway 42 project. One of the landowners didn't want any of the trees in the right of way to be cut. The district manager explained his concerns and what she did to address them. She will visit the project during the coming weekend to make sure that the work proceeds as planned. Ms. Rose commented that the work being done is excellent. Mr. Candelaria said that Representative Castellano was interested in seeing the project and that George Dodge should be contacted, too.

The Box Canyon project is complete and all of the reimbursement funds have been received, so the grant is closed out.

**Collaborative Forest Restoration Projects:**

Romero Wood, LLC has still only completed 41 acres on the Bartolo Canyon project of the Manzano Mountains. It has been too muddy to work.

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

**2017 Funding** -- Approval on the cultural resource survey has been granted by the Acoma Pueblo, so SWCA can finally be paid.

**2018 Funding** – Three surveys need to be paid for, and then the district will be finished with its responsibility. The district manager will continue to make reports until all of the projects are complete and all of the money has been spent.

**2021 Funding** – The district manager explained that the funds (approximately \$2,300,000) are an addendum to the 2015 contract. She and Cody Stropki worked on the information needed by NRCS to complete the second part of the contract. She will submit additional required information, and she hopes that the district will be awarded the contract.

Also, additional money (\$965,000) was added to the 2017 RCPP contract. Although, the paperwork hasn't been started on that funding, the district manager has been notified that funding has been approved. If all the paperwork can be completed and submitted, about 4.1 million dollars can be used on EQIP projects. It is a large project area that extends from Cimmaron and Taos down into Cuba, East Rio Arriba, and Santa Fe, goes to the Continental Divide on the west side, and Bernardo, on the east side to the East Torrance office and up through Mora.

**FEMA Grant:**

The district manager has written a contract to SWCA who will be doing the NEPA work on the three projects. She has been given permission to go onto the Aceves and Swenka ranches to complete the NEPA work, all by August because the on-the-ground work needs to be contracted and started by December 31. She commented that the funding for FEMA comes down through Homeland Security.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

### **Capital Outlay:**

#### **New Chipper RFP:**

The district manager reported that she is working on getting a new chipper, but there are none available at the present time, so it may take six months to receive one. It may cost more than the amount received from capital outlay funds, too. She also said that the 2018 chipper is at the Vermeer shop waiting on repairs.

### **FY 2022 Capital Outlay Request:**

The district manager has been working with NMDA on the district's capital outlay request for a tractor that was the FY2023 priority ICIP project for 2023. The district will receive \$40,000 in capital outlay funds to purchase a new skid steer, but it may cost more than \$40,000.

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

No report.

### **Sun Zia Transmission Line:**

No report.

The district manager sent a video that she got from David Cain to energy company representative Jeremy Turner. The video showed an electric spark arcing from one of Mr. Cain's gates beside the power line to his daughter's hand. The district manager requested that action be taken to ground the power line properly. Mr. Turner texted the district manager that he had contacted employees in the field to correct the problem. After Mr. Cain described the problem of the ineffective grounding, the district manager said that she will contact Mr. Turner again and ask him if all the gates have been grounded properly.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **"30 X 30 Land Grab" Discussion:**

Mr. Candelaria said that he brought this item to the board because the county commission approved a resolution opposing the presidential executive order to conserve at least 30 percent of U.S. lands and freshwater and 30 percent of U.S. ocean areas by 2030, in an initiative commonly referred to as 30x30. The commission's concern was the possible effect of the initiative on ranchers and others who use public lands. He explained the background of the adoption of the resolution and brought the issue to the board's attention so that members could become informed. Discussion followed on concerns about the groups behind some of the resolutions. Members also asked that specific questions and issues be brought to the board that it might address. Whether the political nature of the initiative made it an appropriate topic to take up was also mentioned. The district manager said that she would contact Laura McCarthy, state forester, to find out information and specific, future plans on the issue.

## **REPORTS:**

### **New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts:**

As a representative of the coalition, the district manager is working with public relations personnel from the Forest Service to publish information on being prepared for wildfire.

### **South Central Mountain RC&D:**

The district manager said that she thinks that South Central is mainly interested in hazardous fuel reduction in the area of Cloudcroft and Ruidoso.

**Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee:**

The district manager spoke with Cody Stropki the day before the district board meeting. He will be attending the Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee meetings with her to help closely monitor efforts by a new subdivision to bypass the state engineer's office to use Estancia Basin water in spite of a moratorium.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**OTHER:**

The district manager explained that an EMWT water board was established by people from EMW Gas Association to show the beneficial use in the Estancia Basin in order to keep the water in the basin. An effort is being made to get water to people east of McIntosh who have to haul water. The county commission supports this effort and has provided one million dollars from the American rescue plan as a loan/grant to fund some of the work that needs to be done. Showing beneficial use supports the argument that water should not leave the basin.

Mr. Wanstall asked for names of people from one of the land grants who might serve on the Healthy Soils Grant Review Committee. The district manager said that she would send him contact information for someone from Chilili who is active with several groups.

Mr. Taylor spoke about some changes in the Mountainair Ranger District. Work in Bartolo Canyon has been shut down. He reported on wood sales as well as staffing in the district, which is getting a 20-person fire hand crew to fight fires in the district and to do project work. A zone archaeologist and a fire prevention officer have also been approved.

**MEETINGS ATTENDED:**

**PLAN for NEXT MEETING:**

**NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:**

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, May 6, 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, Dale Rose moved to adjourn. Robin Dunn seconded the motion.

---

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

---

DAVID CAIN, SECRETARY