



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
October 6, 2023**

Supervisors Present: Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman
Gerald Chavez
Robin Dunn
Jack Lockridge
Dale Rose

Absentees: David Cain
Larry Gomez

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Wendy Blackwell, SWCA
Katie Mechenbier, NMDA
Kenneth Lujan, NRCS
Katheryn Taylor, volunteer

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 8:00 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

PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS THE DRAFT CPSWCD ANNEX TO THE LINCOLN COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN:

Wendy Blackwell from SWCA, Environmental Consultants explained that one of the purposes of today's meeting was to receive feedback on the Draft of the CPSWCD Annex to the Lincoln County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Dale Rose commented that she was glad of the disclaimer which said that accomplishing the proposed work depended on available resources; however, because of limited resources, she was concerned that the proposed mitigation actions would not be accomplished. Discussion followed on what could be done if funding is available and what has been accomplished already with FEMA money. Ms. Blackwell said that among local entities, only Claunch-Pinto made use of current funding.

Ms. Blackwell continued by explaining what will happen over the upcoming months. The Annex will be submitted to New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management for review and possible changes. It will then be sent to FEMA which may review the Annex at the same time the Lincoln County plan is reviewed. Upon approval FEMA will send a letter of Approval Pending Adoption to the district. The board will then adopt the plan and FEMA will issue a letter of final approval, perhaps in January or February.

Robin Dunn expressed her concern that the Buford Fire could spread onto private land or further into the forest and secondly, in the spring, significant erosion may occur. She asked what can be accomplished by the mitigation plan and annex to affect these possible occurrences? Ms. Blackwell pointed out the second mitigation action for Claunch-Pinto that addresses watershed stabilization. Discussion followed on how submitting the annex will change and improve the status quo. Obtaining funding from Homeland Security and FEMA in case of such occurrences as erosion on private land depends on having the annex in place and approved.

The question was raised as to whether there is a ban on burning in Lincoln County. The District Manager said that she has not received information on a ban in Lincoln County. A discussion occurred on the Forest Service plan for its actions following the end of the resource burn. The District Manager will refer this question to Jay Turner, her contact at the Forest Service. He is the planning officer for the Cibola. She also thanked Lawrence Crane for help and information that he provides to the district.

Ms. Blackwell concluded her presentation.

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the CPSWCD:

The regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the CPSWCD commenced at 8:30.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The board reviewed the agenda. **ACTION TAKEN:** Jack Lockridge moved to approve the agenda. Gerald Chavez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve the minutes for September, 2023. Gerald Chavez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye.

TREASURER'S REPORT and APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

Treasurer's Report for September 2023:

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of September, 2023 with accounts payable for October.

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve the treasurer's report for September, 2023 and accounts payable for October. Gerald Chavez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture:

The NMDA's written report for October was provided to the board members. Katie Mechenbier pointed out possible items of interest:

- The first quarterly budget report is due on October 30.
- Important election dates for local government entities participating in the Local Election Act.
- NMDA will provide a SWCE Operations Training on October 13, 2023.
- Application materials will be available in early 2024 for the NMDA's Healthy Soil Program grants projects for 2025.
- Funding will continue to be available for the NMEDA Agricultural Workforce Development Program until the money is fully allocated or until March 29, 2024.
- Edge will hold Public Purchasing Foundation Classes and Test for State CPO October 10 – 13. Recertification classes will be offered during October.

- The NM Vegetation Management Association annual conference will be held on November 1, 2 at the Ruidoso Convention Center.
- The River Stewardship program will release the FY 2024 Request for Proposals in fall 2023.
- The NM WDOC fall conference will be held October 4 – 6 at Isleta Resort & Hotel.

NRCS Mountainair Field Office Report:

The NRCS Mountainair Field Office written report is included in board member’s packets. Mr. Lujan said that November 3, 2023 is the deadline for FY 2024 applications for EQIP, CSP and ACEP. He broke down the Team 5 funded contracts for FY2023 for EQIP, CSP and RCPP that totaled \$7,404,693.00.

Mr. Lujan said that the total for the Mountainair office was \$1,716,849.00. He described the amount of work for the staff involved in receiving, reviewing and ranking applications and in handling the contracts as well as the size and scope of the projects. The district manager pointed out that the amount was about 25% of the total for Team 5.

Mr. Lujan said that he was excited to welcome a new staff member, Felicia Speranske, the new soil conservationist for the Estancia Office. She will start work on October 23rd. He said that he submitted the new watershed proposal.

The District Manager mentioned that she will be working on the cultural resource surveys for RCPP. Mr. Lujan expressed his appreciation to her for doing them as it saves his staff a lot of time. She also said that she signed one renewal agreement for 2017 funds of around \$900,000, and she is waiting to receive the supplemental agreement from Washington D.C.

District Manager’s Report:

The District Manager presented a poster from the Mountainair FFA thanking the district for its substantial support for the Ranch Rodeo. The sign will be displayed close to the highway. She will submit her quarterly report to the Department of Finance and Administration. Almost \$3000 of wood has been sold during the current week. More wood is being stacked ready to sell. She will put a discussion of the price of wood on the agenda for the next meeting.

CORRESPONDANCE:

No Report:

UPDATE ON GRANTS:

The District Manager said that she is closing out both Water Trust Board Grants -- the Estancia Basin and the Greater Rio Grande. She hopes that both grants will completely close out. She gave a presentation on both proposals to the Water Trust Board on the previous Tuesday.

On Wednesday, the District Manager and Vernon Kohler met with Pablo Romero, the contractor on the Bartolo project along with two forest service representatives. The work is planned for the next two months on the project. Mr. Romero has been cautioned to inform forest service personnel in advance if he has to cut down marked trees. Mr. Romero has delivered 33 cords of wood to the Manzano land grant per the agreement with the forest service. This is the second delivery of wood to the land grant of more than 60 total cords of wood. The district manager said that a lot of trees have been severely damaged or killed by moths in the area; however, the Mountainair District Ranger doesn’t want those trees cut down because he thinks that they will revive.

NRCS had a little money left on the 2018 RCPP funding, and it has been contracted. Most of the 2019 funds (a renewal of the 2015 money) have been contracted. The District Manager has signed one part of the agreement for the 2017 renewal. She is waiting for the supplemental agreement to be approved by Washinton D.C.

The agreement with FEMA on two projects has been signed by the District Manager, Mr. Lovato, and Mr. Lockridge. When the signed agreement is returned from Homeland Security, work can begin on the projects.

Kim Kostelnik will facilitate discussion with the Claunch-Pinto board to update the District's land use plan as a part of the SWCC grant. Discussion will center on board members' planning for the district for the next five to ten years. The discussion on updating the land use plan will start at the December meeting. The District Manager will send the district's land use plan to board members for their review before the first meeting with Kim.

The District Manager has submitted the first quarterly report for the New Mexico Counties Grant. The core team is being identified. The first meeting of the core team will be held during the next quarter.

The 2022 work plan for State Forestry has been signed. The Forest Service needs to release the funds so that the work plan for 2023 can be signed. The District Manager and Veron Kohler have both reviewed the work plan for the Highway 337 project (96 acres). After the plan is reviewed by the State Forestry legal department, it can be signed. The District Manager has to get a separate MOU with the East Torrance SWCD for the work that will be done in that district. Subsequently, the work plan for Highway 55 can be written. That project will start at the intersection of Highway 55 and Highway 41. The district manager described the scope of the project and the rationale for the reduction of trees on the easement.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay:

FY2022 Capital Outlay Funded – Skid Steer:

The District Manager said that the state has released the capital outlay funds. The memorandum of agreement will be signed by Mr. Lovato today. Roy Gibson will help in purchasing the equipment.

FY2023 Capital Outlay Funded:

No report.

Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy:

The District Manager noted that wind farm employees are starting to move into the area. Dale Rose reported that area residents are concerned about the condition of roads to Gran Quivira. Robin Dunn said that accidents have been occurring on the road to Gran Quivira. Discussion followed on expected consequences to the road due to weather and traffic.

NEW BUSINESS:

REPORTS:

NM Coalition of Conservation Districts:

No report.

South Central Mtn. RC&D:

No report.

EBWPC:

The Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee will meet the following week.

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:

PUBLIC COMMENT:

OTHER:

The District Manager reported that she and Robin Dunn discussed the challenges faced by the district and candidates for the board of supervisors because of how the local election is conducted. Ms. Mechenbier reported that Carrizozo has had the same problems.

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

PLAN FOR NEXT MEETING:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, November 3, 2023, 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, Mr. Lockridge moved to adjourn. seconded the motion.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

DAVID CAIN, SECRETARY