



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
August 4, 2023**

Supervisors Present: Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman
David Cain
Gerald Chavez
Larry Gomez
Dale Rose

Absentees: Robin Dunn
Jack Lockridge

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Wendy Blackwell, SWCA
Aurelia Chavez
Roy Gibson, Associate Supervisor
Kenneth Lujan, NRCS
Katie Mechenbier, NMDA
Codi Stropki, SWCA
Ernest Taylor, Mountainair Ranger District
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 8:05 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

PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS Lincoln County Hazard Mitigation Plan – Adding an Addendum to include Claunch-Pinto SWCD

Wendy Blackwell, a consultant from SWCA, Environmental Consultants was introduced to make a presentation on the annex of Claunch-Pinto to the Lincoln County Hazard Mitigation Plan. SWCA was hired by the Village of Ruidoso to update the Lincoln County Hazard Mitigation Plan. She explained that the district has an annex to the Torrance County Hazard Mitigation Plan and will do something similar for Lincoln County and the five incorporated entities within the county. A draft was sent to the state for review a few weeks ago.

A draft of the plan will be presented at the next meeting of the board of supervisors.

The presentation described what a natural mitigation plan accomplishes and its advantages and functions.

“The planning process results in a federal government-approved and locally adopted plan which will support funding requests to implement natural hazard risk reduction projects – The approved plan is a

requirement for FEMA hazard mitigation grant funding – The USFS Community Wildfire Defensive Grant recognizes the approved plan as meeting the planning requirement for funding.”

Ms. Blackwell reviewed previous planning, where information can be found on community input, federal requirements for hazard mitigation and for receiving funding. She said that the annex will describe what the Claunch-Pinto SWCD has done that is different from county-wide planning.

Ms. Blackwell gave an overview of the plan including:

- Jurisdictional Adoption and FEMA Approval
- Introduction
- Planning Process
- Community/ Entity Descriptions
- Hazard Identification
- Mitigation Strategy
- Plan Maintenance Procedures

Further descriptions and explanations regarding sources of information covered:

- Screening for hazards for the Lincoln County participating towns
- Hazard profiles for the towns
- Vulnerability profiles
- Goals and actions the plan defines
- Tasks of the SWCA planning team
- Prioritization of mitigation actions
- Identification of the groups of people involved in updating the plan
- The timeline for the update.

The district manager mentioned that the district was funded to update the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

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

The regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the CPSWCD commenced at 8:25.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The board reviewed the agenda. **ACTION TAKEN:** Dale Rose moved to approve the agenda. David Cain seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; David Cain, aye.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

ACTION TAKEN: David Cain moved to approve the minutes. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; David Cain, aye.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

Treasurer’s Report for July 2023:

The board reviewed the treasurer’s report for the month of July, 2023 with accounts payable for August. **ACTION TAKEN:** Dale Rose moved to approve the treasurer’s report for July, 2023 and accounts payable for August. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; David Cain, aye.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

No report.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture:

The NMDA's written report for August was provided to the board members. Katie Mechenbier highlighted items relevant to the Claunch-Pinto SWCD.

- Deadlines for placing positions on the Regular Local Election ballot are available.
- Description of and dates for the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) Agricultural Workforce Development (AWD) Program grant application period.
- NMDA invitation asks SWCD staff and board members alike to email their Healthy Soil Program suggestions to hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu.
- New Mexico 30x30 Committee's release of its 2023 Annual Report on July 18 is announced.
- The Farmer Stress Summit is to be hosted by the Here to Help NM Initiative on August 24, 2023.
- New Mexico State University is to host 10 listening sessions at locations throughout New Mexico to gather input on what the university should look for in its next leader.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) seeks proposals for the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership to improve forest health on public and private lands, due by September 2, 2023 or fiscal year 2024.
- The Brackish Groundwater National Desalination Research Facility's 6th Annual Water Innovations and Networking (WIN) Workshop will be held October 24th -25th 2023.
- The Surface Water Quality Bureau is seeking public input on protecting water quality in New Mexico's rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands.
- The Biden-Harris Administration Announces Investments in Urban Agriculture, Food and Market Access through President Biden's Investing in America Agenda. One of the new Urban Service Centers is in Albuquerque.
- Orders for the Fall 2023 Conservation Seedling Sale will begin July 3rd and will end October 6th. Distribution will begin September 11th and will go through October 13th.
- Hannah Riseley-White is named by the governor as Interstate Stream Commission Director.
- The registration for the South West Drought Learning Network 2023 annual meeting is now available. The meeting will be held at the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico on September 27 & 28, 2023.
- New Mexico Fire Information (<https://nmfireinfo.com/information/>) is an interagency effort by federal and state agencies in New Mexico to provide timely, accurate, fire and restriction information for the entire state.

NRCS Mountainair Field Office Report:

The NRCS Mountainair Field Office written report is included in board member's packets. Mr. Lujan reported that they were still in the process of obligating EQIP. He mentioned the amounts of funding being obligated. He did receive the additional one million dollars that he requested. The district manager pointed out that the Local Group meeting for the 2024 EQIP funding is sponsored by the Edgewood SWCD and scheduled on Thursday, August 31, 2023 at the Encino Community Center at 1:00 p.m.

District Manager's Report:

The district manager introduced Aurelleia Chavez to make her presentation on her participation and achievements in Future Farmers of America (FFA).

Ms. Chavez introduced herself saying that she is 16 years old and a junior in high school. Last year was her third year in FFA, her third year judging Forestry and her second year judging Land. She placed first high individual in Land at the State FFA Contest and second high individual in the Forestry State FFA Contest.

She then described what FFA is committed to doing for individual students, quoted its motto and explained what she has learned about agriculture and gaining life skills in FFA.

She noted what both the state forestry judging competition and the state land judging competition consisted of and ended by stating her goals for participating in FFA in the coming year.

The district manager provided the background for the award and presented Ms. Chavez with a check for \$175 from the Southwest Quay SWCD in recognition of her achievements.

In addition, the district manager said that district employee, Jake Zamora, has worked his last day, and she talked about his educational and career plans for his future. She said that high school student Omahne Nieto has been hired to work on Fridays and school holidays as his time permits. Omahne, Jake, and Aurelleia have finished their monitoring project with SWCA on the Bartolo CFRP project. A presentation on the monitoring project will be made in October or November.

CORRESPONDANCE:

No Report:

UPDATE ON GRANTS:

The District Manager's Report to CPSWCD Board – Update on Grants, August 4:

Comments:

The district manager called attention to the last item in the report: She and Dale Rose have worked with the Tri-County Committee and NM Foundation to obtain \$50,000 in funding for some small projects for the small acreage landowners. This funding will need to be spread across the three SWCDs. They are still working out the criteria for this funding.

Written Report:

Watershed Health Grant – Water Trust Board (WTB):

2021 EBWHRM WTB Funds – The District is preparing thinning contracts for signature. Claunch-Pinto has four contracts ready for signature; East Torrance has two contracts ready for signature; and Edgewood has three contracts ready for signature. Claunch-Pinto is working on a 150 acre project off Moho Trail in Deer Canyon Preserve; the Manzano Hill Cemetery in Manzano. The cemetery project is almost completed – we are just hauling all of the slash from the project to the District property. We are being asked on a regular basis for our crew to complete the landowner projects or the Ramah crew to complete the projects. If we can find contractors for the projects we are contracting we should be able to spend the remaining funds for the FY2021 Water Trust Board Grant by November 19, 2023.

2021 GRGWA WTB Funds – We are in the process of starting a 32 acre project in the Glorieta area. We will be asking for bids to spray re-sprouts on various riparian projects that have been completed. We are having some excellent success with these re-sprouts treatments. An example for you to see would be the re-sprout treatment we completed in the late winter in the Abo Watershed. This was the first re-sprout treatment in this area since we completed the project over 10 years ago. The funding for this grant has to be expended by November 19, 2023.

2023 WTB Grants: The EBWHRM proposal was No. 1 for Water Trust Board - Watersheds Projects and the GRGWA is No. 4. The New Mexico Water Trust Board approved both of these projects for funding on May 3, 2023. We have received approval letters from New Mexico Finance Authority on both projects. We now have to prepare and submit the readiness items for both grants by September 29, 2023, so the grant paperwork can be prepared by the New Mexico Finance Authority's legal team.

NM State Forestry Grants:

2020 NFL Funding – The district has started submitting reimbursements for this funding. These funds must be spent by December 31, 2023. The district will be advertising a request for proposal for the first 31.9 acres of the highway right-of-way project on HWY 337. The project will be from the north boundary of the Chilili Land Grant to the village.

2022 NFL Funding – The work plan for this funding has been signed by the District. We are waiting for the final signatures from EMNRD – Forestry Division and a notice to proceed. We should receive this paperwork in the next couple of months.

2023 NFL Funding – The District has been notified their FY2023 NFL proposal has been approved for funding.

State Forestry – Funding for a Liaison – The district was requested by NM State Forestry to be the fiscal agent and contractor to hire a sub-contractor to act as a liaison for the EMNRD, Forestry Division with the Hermit's Peak-Calf Canyon Economic Recovery line of Effort's Timber Task Force. The district contracted with New Mexico Forest Industry Association to act as a liaison for EMNRD, Forestry Division. I will send out a couple of reports that have been submitted to EMNRD, Forestry Division for this funding.

BNSF Railroad Project:

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

Collaborative Forest Restoration Projects:

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

We are in Gosshawk nesting season, which is from March 1st to September 30th. Romero Wood has removed all of the wood from the project area for this year. A large truck was located on the project area or close to it on public land. The district Field Technician saw the truck had been removed from the project area. We will have a prework meeting with the Forest Service inspectors and Pablo Romero prior to work starting on the project after September 30th. Hopefully we will be able to work out any problems on the project during that meeting. SWCA Environmental Consultants worked with three high school students in to conduct the field monitoring on this project. The students will give a presentation of their findings in October or November. The district will need to request an extension for work to be completed in the fourth year to complete this project. We will start working on this extension right after the new Federal fiscal year starts in October 2023.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):

2018 RCPP Funding – The majority of the \$327,985.62 for the 2018 RCPP has been contracted. The district does have funding for SWCA to complete cultural resource surveys for the funded project.

2019 RCPP Funding – This is the renewal of the 2015 RCPP funding. There was \$1,781,286.43 available for producer contracting within the NCNMWRP during the EQIP sign up period that ended late year. The majority of this funding is in the process of being contracted. The district has \$416,404.62 available for cultural resource surveys, workshops and a RCPP brochure.

Additional RCPP Funding – The district was notified that NRCS found the 2017 RCPP renewal funding in the amount of \$969,225. The district manager has completed the district's portion of the Supplemental Agreement and is waiting for NRCS to complete their portion so we can get signatures and get the project started.

NRCS is advertising that they are seeking applications to expand conservation assistance to underserved producers and underserved communities about conservation programs and services. The cooperative agreements would be for two years for projects that encourage participation in NRCS programs, especially underserved communities and among urban and small-scale producers.

FEMA Grant Proposal:

Hazard Mitigation Project - HMGP 5281 Sub Grant Agreement: The Phase 1 agreement has been extended to June 30, 2023. The district has been notified to submit the paperwork for payment on Phase 1. We have also been told the Phase II funding is now available, so hopefully we will be moving forward on this phase.

Soil and Water Conservation Commission Grant:

Cody Stropki, SWCA, Joe Zebrowski, NM Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute and the district manager have met to discuss the project. The goals of the project are: 1) to develop a planning document to guide CPSWCD over the next decade and beyond; 2) Development of an electronic capacity building document that will benefit future managers of CPSWCD. The template will provide a road map for the district when looking to grow their capacity to get projects on the ground. It will also provide the tools and ability to chase and leverage alternative funding. They will soon be doing work sessions with the Board.

New Mexico State Land Projects:

The State Land Office has an additional 70 acres to complete in the Bear Cat project. We will be contracting this project in the next couple of weeks. The district has three additional State Land projects we are working on with the State Land Office.

New Mexico Department of Transportation Project:

The district is working with Lawrence Crane, District Forester for the Bernalillo Office, EMNRD – Forestry Division, NM State Land Office and the NM Department of Transportation on the remaining paperwork that needs to be completed prior to starting any work on the HWY 337 project. We are working on a report from the SHPO office, the traffic control roadway work permit, the State Land authorization to complete conservation work, and Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument on cultural authorizations for both the HWY 337 and 55 projects. Lawrence Crane has been given a verbal commitment for capital outlay funding to fund this project.

New Mexico Association of Counties (NMAC):

The District is working with Torrance County on updates of both Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP). Claunch-Pinto SWCD will be advertising for bids on this project in the next couple of weeks. The District and Torrance County will be working together over the next year to update both CWPP plans.

Funding for Small Acreage Landowners:

The District Manager has worked with the Tri-County Committee and NM Foundation to obtain \$50,000 in funding for some small projects for the small acreage landowners. This funding will need to be spread across the three SWCDs. We are still working out the criteria for this funding.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay:

FY2022 Capital Outlay Funded – Skid Steer:

The district manager still hasn't received the agreement for the funding. When she has the agreement and the notice to proceed, she will work with Roy Gibson to purchase the equipment.

FY2023 Capital Outlay Funded:

No report.

Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy:

Nothing additional to report, but the district manager did point out that the wind farms need to be taken into consideration in the development of the Claunch-Pinto annex to the Lincoln County hazard mitigation plan.

Land Use Agreement with Energy, Minerals, and National Resources Division (EMNRD):

Lawrence Crane told the district manager that they will be working with the agreement on a case-by-case basis. Showers and a place to camp will be provided. Payment will be based on the number of nights a crew will stay on the district property. The shop building could be used as a command center if necessary.

NEW BUSINESS:

New Information from Department of Finance and Administration:

The district manager received a letter from the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) saying that the district's audit had been reviewed. She explained the concern expressed in the letter regarding a failure to balance the New Mexico Authority's bank statements. The DFA requested a letter in response explaining why the bank statements were not balanced. The letter will show that the concern has been addressed. In addition, a resolution must be passed saying that the board reviewed the audit. The resolution will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

REPORTS:

NM Coalition of Conservation Districts:

No report.

South Central Mtn. RC&D:

No report.

EBWPC:

A meeting will be held next Thursday. A committee member, Manny Enciñas from the north eastern part of the county called the district manager regarding petroleum storage tanks on the north side of Moriarity. He was concerned that over a million gallons of water is to be used to clean out the tanks.

This issue will be on the agenda for next week's meeting.

The district manager also contacted Ted Barela, president of the Estancia Basin Resource Association and asked him to contact Mr. Enciñas to find out exactly what was going on and what was supposed to happen to all the water. She has asked that Mr. Barela be invited to the EBWPC meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Taylor reported several items regarding ongoing and future projects. Brent Racher is finishing up on a project in the Corona area, and Mr. Taylor hopes to collect the wood from it promptly. There has been a real problem with theft of wood in the Manzanos. About one third of the wood that was stacked on the Terrero project was stolen before it could be sold.

There will be a wood sale from the Corona project on the Bonita allotment.

Progress is being made on the dead and down project, and that wood will be made available.

Some surplus funding has become available to rehab some old, non-viable mines in the Gallinas.

Mr. Lovato thanked wildland fire fighters for promptly and effectively responding to a fire next to his son's property caused by a line arcing. He asked Mr. Taylor to pass on his appreciation.

OTHER:

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

PLAN for NEXT MEETING:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, September 8, 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, Dale Rose moved to adjourn. Larry Gomez seconded the motion.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

DAVID CAIN, SECRETARY