



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

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
November 3, 2023**

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

Absentees:

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Roy Gibson, Associate Supervisor
Katie Mechenbier, NMDA
Ernie 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 8:00 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

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF AGENDA:

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

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

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

TREASURER'S REPORT and APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

Treasurer's Report for October 2023:

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

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve the treasurer's report for October, 2023 and accounts payable for November. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote:

Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

The district manager said that she is working on the quarterly report and expects to complete it today or by Monday. She described the new entries to the Department of Finance and Administration's system that were required to complete the report.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture:

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

- The first quarterly budget report is due on October 30.
- Adopt the Open Meetings Act Resolution for next calendar year.
- The NMDA announces a full-time position with NMDA as a natural resources policy and planning analyst plus a position as a program specialist.
- The sixth national Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy Workshop will be held on November 6 – 10 in Santa Fe.
- The NM Water Resources Research Institute Water Conference will be held November 8 – 9 in Albuquerque at the Embassy Suites Hilton.
- The New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, Forestry Division accepts grant applications for invasive plant management projects year-round.
- The NMDA announces a request for proposals for the Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund 2024.
- The BLM is seeking nominations for three advisory bodies in New Mexico.
- A Request for Proposals has been released for the 2024 River Stewardship Program.
- The New Mexico NMDA Agricultural Workforce Development Program grant application period opened June 19, 2023 and will continue until funds are fully allocated or by March 29, 2024, whichever comes first.

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. The deadline for applications for IRA funds is not until April 26. Different rules apply to IRA money. When individuals bring in their applications, the NRCS staff will clarify the rules. He put \$500,000 into watershed funding, and more money is available. He encouraged board members to refer interested applicants to his office.

On top of the regular funding, there is an additional nine million dollars for CSP. It's more money than has ever been spent in New Mexico. Twice the amount of work may be required to spend the funds.

The post inflation supplement funding payment has been extended to December first, so producers who are working on practices will be eligible to receive payment for them.

Mr. Lujan described a program called Act Now and what work is involved for staff to help applicants access the funds. He stated that his staff have a good plan to accomplish the work.

District Manager's Report:

The district manager reported on her conversation with A. Blair Dunn regarding the issues that SWCDs have with the election process. He would like to meet with Senators Soto Ivy and Grantley to discuss possible solutions to resolve the issues.

CORRESPONDANCE:

No Report:

UPDATE ON GRANTS, November 3, 2023:

The District Manager's Written Report to CPSWCD Board – Update on Grants

Vernon Kohler, the District Field Technician, will be having hip replacement surgery on Tuesday, November 7, 2023. Vern will be retiring on December 29, 2023.

Fred Rossbach, our EBWHRM project inspector and the project coordinator for the GRGWA will not be renewing his contract at the end of November, 2023.

[The district manager described the personnel she has contracted with to do the work that was being done by Vernon Kohler and Fred Rossbach. She has contracted with John Fornby to handle the work involved in the Estancia Basin project plus laying out projects, writing practice plans and inspecting projects for Claunch Pinto. She described his educational background and work experience. She will be able to charge grants for his services.

For the Greater Rio Grande Watershed Health Restoration Monitoring project, she has contracted with Todd Haines who was the district forester for the Bernalillo office of State Forestry.

The district manager described the work that will be done and how Mr. Formby and Mr. Haines will work together and how she will orient them to the projects.

The district manager made additional comments on the written report on the grants. She said that the Ramah-Navajo crew is working on a 36-acre project on the Tajiue loop on the Torreon side.

The district lost one of its hand crew who has gone to work for the BIA fire crew. He will work for the district whenever he is laid off from the fire crew. To fill in, a certified sawyer from Ramah will work for the district.

Concerning the projects for the Greater Rio Grande grant, with the completion of the two projects for the Pueblo of Sandia and the re-sprout treatments, funding for this grant will be expended by November 19, 2023.

The district manager projects that the Estancia Basin funds will also be spent.

On the State Forestry funding, \$76,000 remains to be spent before the end of the year.

Regarding the Collaborative Forest Restoration projects, the district manager will meet with Pablo Romero and the timber management assistant, who found problems in an inspection of the Bartolo project.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP): all the 2018 and most of the 2019 funding has been contracted. Cultural resource surveys on the projects will begin soon. There is another \$969,000 in funding, The area involved for projects extends from Taos to Bernardo to Gallup. The district manager will look for possible projects other than those in the Claunch-Pinto district.

FEMA grant: The district manager said that she has signed the supplemental agreement for phase 2, but it hasn't been returned signed by Homeland Security, so work cannot start.

The Soil and Water Conservation Commission grant: Joe Zabrowski is working on the maps and NM Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute is working on the portal. The Claunch-Pinto board will work with Kim Kostelnik to update the Land Use Plan beginning at the December meeting.

The NM State Land projects: The 70-acre mastication project in the Bear Cat project is complete.

The NM Department of Transportation project: The district manager is working on a letter of approval from the Torrance County SWCD giving Claunch-Pinto permission to work in their district on the highway 337 project. She is also waiting on a traffic control roadway permit.

NM Association of Counties: The first core team meeting on updates to both Community Wildfire Protection plans for Claunch-Pinto and Torrance County will be held at the end of November in McIntosh.]

Watershed Health Grant – Water Trust Board (WTB):

2021 EBWHRM WTB Funds –The Ramah-Navajo crew has completed 50 acres of a planned 150-acre project off Moho Trail in Deer Canyon Preserve. The Ramah-Navajo crew is working on a project in the East Torrance SWCD off of the 4th of July Loop Road. The Claunch-Pinto thinning crew has completed 4 acres of a 6-acre project off Moho Trail. This is clear cut area on Deer Canyon for a potential helicopter landing area. We are asked on a regular basis for our crew to complete the landowner projects or the Ramah crew to complete the projects. We are working with the Edgewood and East Torrance SWCDs to complete projects along with our projects to spend the remain Water Trust Board funds for FY2021.

2021 GRGWA WTB Funds – We have completed a 32-acre project in the Glorieta area. We have completed re-sprout treatments in the Abo Arroyo and have start treatment on We have started re-sprout treatment in the Lagunitas – Guicu Creek in Santa Fe. We are having some excellent success with these re-sprouts treatments. The two projects for the Pueblo of Sandia have been started and the project coordinator is planning an interim inspection on November 3, 2023. With the re-sprout treatments and the Sandia projects the funding for this grant will be expended by November 19, 2023.

I have contracted with Forestry Consultant and Camp Books, LLC (Todd Haines) to be the project coordinator on the Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance projects. Todd is retired from EMNRD – Forestry Division and is a certified forester.

2023 WTB Grants: The District has completed the final readiness to proceed documentation for the 2023 WTB Grants (EBWHRM - \$600,000 and GRGWA - \$600,000). We are now waiting on the NM Finance Authority's legal team to prepare the grant documentation for these two grants.

2024 WTB Grants: The two proposals for the 2024 WTB grant cycle are on the Water Trust Board list for legislative approval. This does not mean our proposals will be funded. We will be submitting the first set of readiness items in late December or early January for these two proposals.

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 has a contractor who will start a 70-acre mastication on the Bearcat Project. We have a contractor looking at a 100-acre project on the Chilili Land Grant.

2022 NFL Funding – The work plan for this funding has been signed by the District. The District has received the signed work plan and been given a notice to proceed on this grant. We will start expending these funds right after the first of the year.

2023 NFL Funding – The District has been notified their FY2023 NFL proposal has been approved for funding. State Forestry is waiting for the US Forest Service to release the funding for this grant before we have paperwork to sign.

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.

I have contracted with Formby & Sons ARBORPRO, LLC (John Formby) to lay out projects and prepared practice plans for Claunch-Pinto SWCD and complete project inspections for the EBWHRM and State Forestry Projects. John is a Forest Entomologist/Forester. He worked for 5 years at EMNRD – Forestry Division and one year at the US Forest Service Regional Office.

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:

SWCA Environmental Consultants worked with three high school students to conduct the field monitoring on this project. The students will give a presentation of their findings in October or November. The District Field Technician and District Manager met with the forest health program coordinator for EMNRD Forestry Division to look at some bug problems we had on

some private land, and we also looked at the Douglas Fir moth on the Bartolo CFRP. We have decided to add the Douglas Fir moth infestation to our Bartolo monitoring in the early summer. The forest health program coordinator will be coming out to work with our student monitoring crew. **The District Manager is working with the Timber Management Assistant on a couple of problems he found in an inspection of the project on November 1, 2023. We will be meeting with our contractor, Pablo Romero the week of November 6th to discuss these problems and look at the next area Pablo will be working in.** The District Manager is working with the Forestry Program Manager for the Cibola to get an extension on this project for the 4th year. The Forestry Program Manager is planning to start working with the contracting officer within the next month.

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. We have a meeting set up with the NRCS State Archeologist and SWCA on November 13, 2023 to get on survey request ready for the survey crew to go at the end of November.

Additional RCPP Funding – The district was notified that NRCS found the 2017 RCPP renewal funding in the amount of \$969,225. The District has received the agreement with all of the signatures.

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 2 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. Kim Kostelnik will be working with the Board to update the Land Use Plan – she plans to start at our December meeting.

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. The EMNRD – Forestry Department legal department has approved the draft work plan for the HWY 337 project. We are waiting on the traffic control roadway permit so the information can be added to the District’s practice plan.

New Mexico Association of Counties (NMAC):

The District is working with Torrance County on updates of both Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP). The District and Torrance County will be working together over the next year to update both CWPP plans. SWCA will be the contractor for these updates. They have been working on the maps need for the update and a CORE team meeting is planned for the end of November. This meeting will be held in McIntosh.

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, etc for this funding.

Project Status	Acres	Project Cost
Approved	5.3	\$7,775.10
Contracted	2.0	2,001.00
Contracted	10.5	5,239.50
Approved	50.0	58,285.00
Approved	409	600,003.00
Approved	92.6	190,200.40
Contracted	2.5	5,000.00
Approved	36.0	20,220.00
Approved	48.0	70,416.00
Contracted - Completed	1.5	1,330.50
Approved	3.2	1,596.80
Approved	8.0	7,096.00
Completed	5.0	7,510.00

Approved	274.0	294,002.00
Approved	45.0	17,955.00
Completed	38.0	33,706.00
Approved	10.0	15,020.00
Approved	21.0	10,479.00
Approved	13.0	11,537.00
Approved	170.0	182,170.00
Approved	33.5	35,945.50

The district has the following projects either contracted or ready to contract as we have the funding and contractors available:

Completed	2.0	2,146.00
Approved	19.0	7,986.00
Approved	69.0	45,295.00
Completed	38.45	31,098.15
Contracted	166.0	183,680.00
Approved	136.0	234,872.00
Approved	143.0	246,961.00

TOTAL PROJECTS	1,851.55	\$2,329,765.95
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The District has 10 more projects to plan.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay:

FY2022 Capital Outlay Funded – Skid Steer:

The district manager said that the state has released the capital outlay funds. 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 there is no information available about the initiation date.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution No. 07 – 2024 – Open Meetings Resolution:

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge move to approve Resolution No. 07 – 2024. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

Wood Sales:

The district’s price for wood was discussed. **ACTION TAKEN:** Robin Dunn moved to charge \$225 per cord of wood + \$50 for delivery, the change to be implanted after the first of the new year. David Cain seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

Charges for renting the chippers will be discussed during the next meeting.

REPORTS:

NM Coalition of Conservation Districts:

No report.

South Central Mtn. RC&D:

No report.

EBWPC:

The Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee is still working on how to pay for well monitoring. The district manager said that water levels are dropping.

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:

PUBLIC COMMENT:

OTHER:

Mr. Lovato began a discussion on wolf sightings in the area. Several sightings were reported, including Pablo Ramirez' experience seeing five wolves eating a deer. The appearance of the wolves and their extensive ranges were discussed.

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

PLAN FOR NEXT MEETING:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, December 1, 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, David Cain moved to adjourn. Larry Gomez seconded the motion.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

DAVID CAIN, SECRETARY