



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
March 10, 2023**

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

Absentees:

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Roy Gibson, Associate Supervisor
Jody Cornwall, NRCS
Katie Mechenbier, S&W Cons. Spec., NMDA
Arlene Perea, 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 8:10 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; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

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

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of February, 2023.

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve the treasurer's report for February, 2022. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Actual Income/Expenses as of March 8, 2023 to the FY 2023 Budget:

Mr. Lockridge commented that the district is doing well, but that due to the amount of money spent on the trucks, the district should consider asking for capital outlay funds for new, rather than used, trucks. Discussion followed on the amount of work and heavy loads that the vehicles handle and the hard use and possible abuse that the vehicles and chippers are subjected to. The district manager explained the efforts that are made to prevent abuse and preventative maintenance done on the equipment. She said that she provided the report for information comparing the actual income and expenses to the FY 2023 budget.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture:

The NMDA's written report for March was provided to the board members. Katie Mechenbier highlighted the relevant items for the district.

- In April the board should pass the annual mil levy rate resolution and submit it to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission.
- Water Quality and Conservation grant proposals are due April 7th.
- In June, the budget and budget resolution for the coming fiscal year are due to the Department of Finance and Administration.
- In July the Point System Worksheet is due.
- Districts are encouraged to stay in touch with county clerks regarding supervisor elections.
- The Healthy Soil Program grant application period is now open for individual applicants.
- The application deadline has been extended by the NMDA to March 15 for anyone wishing to apply for the position of a Natural Resource Policy/planning Analyst.
- Applications for Congressionally Direct Spending projects for FY24 are due on March 16.
- Those interested in attending the Preparedness for Animals in Disaster Training on March 14 and 15 may still be able to register.
- The BLM has released its final environmental impact statement for the SunZia Southwest Transmission project.
- Livestock scale owners who want to have their livestock scales checked for accuracy should submit requests by March 31st.

NRCS Mountainair Field Office Report:

The NRCS Mountainair Field Office written report is included in board member's packets. Ms. Cornwall said that there is a lot of new funding tied to the inflation reduction act. She explained that it is geared more toward crop farmers. She explained how the funding is intended to help reduce carbon emissions and what producers would need to do to qualify for the funding. Discussion followed on the ways that ranchers are farmers too. The apparent mismatch between rules governing funding and the needs of western farmers and ranchers in the context of their land and the weather was also discussed. Ms. Cornwall said they would do their best to help producers interested in applying fit the requirements for the funding, including small farmers and ranchers, if they are willing to do the necessary paperwork. The District Manager said that she and Ms. Cornwall will meet with Frank Luna, who is representing small area ranchers, to talk with him about how they could qualify for the funding.

District Manager's Report:

The district manager reported that she is working with Lawrence Crane from New Mexico State Forestry; he is the new District Forester at the Bernalillo District. Mr. Crane wants to have an agreement with the district to house fire crews on the district's property if there is a fire in the area. The district manager explained what she will have to figure out in order to propose a fee for this service. Mr. Crane will attend a board meeting to discuss an agreement.

In addition, the District Manager said that the district should indicate to state and federal legislators a need for solar panels that would cover the top parking area.

CORRESPONDANCE:

No report.

UPDATE ON GRANTS:

The District Manager's Update on Grants Report to CPSWCD Board, March, 2023:

The district manager updated her written grants report for March. She pointed out that NRCS has identified additional RCPP funding for 2017 of \$965,000. She is working with her RCPP coordinator to prepare the draft paperwork for this funding. She thinks that the underserved/ small rancher/farmer can receive funding under the new agreement.

A list of all the district's projects is included at the end of the report. The list shows that there are several large projects, not just projects of one or two acres. The report also shows the cost of the projects. The district manager added that there are four more applications for projects that Vern Kohler needs to complete an assessment in the field, with the land owners. Two of the projects are in the Corona area. Ms. Rose thanked the district for supporting Corona landowners.

March 10, 2023

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

Watershed Health Grant – Water Trust Board (WTB):

2021 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. Claunch-Pinto has 3 projects ready to contract and 11 pending projects. Ken Leiting, East Torrance SWCD has contacted his landowners who have contracts to find out the progress on their projects. We are working with Edgewood SWCD, NM State Land and NM State Forestry on the Bear Cat 50-acre project. The wood from the Bear Cat project will be delivered to Chilili Land Grant by a contractor contracted by NM State Land Office. The Land Grant Counsel will then distribute the wood to the area land grants. The District Manager is working with two East Torrance SWCD landowners on project extensions. The District Manager is also working with one Edgewood SWCD landowner and contractor on a project extension. The District's field technician conducted a contractor site visit for the Chilili thinning project. The funding for this grant has to be expended by November 19, 2023.

2021 GRGWA WTB Funds – Our contractor has completed the Seboyeta-Moquino Creek project. Our contractor has completed all but 7 acres of the San Cristobal project. This project should be completed in the next couple of weeks. Fred Rossbach, GRGWA Project Coordinator and the District Field Technician took a contractor to the Glorieta project to see if the contractor would be interested in completing that project for us. We haven't heard from the contractor. The GRGWA has completed re-sprout treatments on the Abo Arroyo and Seboyeta – Michaels projects. We will look at both projects again next year.

2023 WTB Proposals: The EBWHRM proposal is No. 1 for Watersheds and the GRGWA is No. 4. The Water Trust Board meets in May, so we will know then if these projects will be funded.

NM State Forestry Grants:

2020 NFL Funding – The District has started submitting reimbursements for this funding. These funds must be spent by December, 2023.

2022 NFL Funding – The District has been notified their FY2022 NFL proposal has been funded. The District Manager is working with State Forestry on the work plan for this funding. It should be signed within the next couple of months.

State Forestry – Funding for a Liaison – The District was requested by NM State Forestry to act as 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 has signed all of the necessary paperwork associated with this project and we will get bids from contractors on this work.

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:

Romero Wood, LLC has completed 45 acres on the project. As well as an additional 20 acres last year that they will be paid for in this project year. Gosshawk nesting season is from March 1st to September 30th, so Romero's will only be allowed to load and haul during this time frame. Romero's will start cutting and skidding on the project after September 30th. We have a plan to have a pre-work meeting with the Forest Service inspector prior to Romero's starting work in the fall. Hopefully we will be able to work out any problems on the project during that meeting. The District will need to request an extension for work to be completed in the fourth year to complete this project.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):

2018 RCPP Funding – There was \$327,985.62 of 2018 RCPP funding available for producer contracting within the NCMWWRP during the EQIP sign up period that ended late last year. 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 NCMWWRP during the EQIP sign up period that ended late year. 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. This past week the District worked with the RCPP coordinator to prepare all of the draft paperwork for this funding. The District Manager should have the paperwork to review within the next week.

In working with the RCPP coordinator on these two projects the District Manager became aware if she had answered a question on the Programmatic Partnership Agreement correctly the underserved/small rancher/farmer might have received additional ranking points on their application when the application was being ranked. The District Manager will make sure the question is answered correctly for the new agreement.

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 March 31, 2023. The District is waiting to hear if FEMA has approved the additional funding that was spent to complete the NEPA work on the two projects. The district is also waiting to hear if FEMA has approved the Phase 2 funding. This funding is to complete hazardous fuel reduction projects on the Aceves ranch and Twin Peaks ranch.

Soil and Water Conservation Commission Grant:

The Memorandum of Agreement has been signed by all parties on this funding and we have received a PO from NM State University for the funds. 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.

New Mexico State Land Projects:

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 NM State Land Office has found some funding to hire a contractor to buck the wood and move it to a designated place on the Chilili Land Grant. The wood will then be divided among the area Land Grants. 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 has met with Lawrence Crane, District Forester for the Bernalillo Office, EMNRD – Forestry Division and the NM Department of Transportation Cultural Resource Office to discuss the two highway right-of-way projects the district has been working on with Andrew Alderete, NMDOT. The HWY 337 has been selected as the priority project. We are working on a report from the SHPO office and the traffic control roadway work permit. Lawrence Crane has been given a verbal commitment for capital outlay funding to fund this project.

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

Project Status	Acres	Project Cost
Approved	5.3	\$7,775.10
Approved	2.0	2,001.00
Approved	10.5	5,239.50
Approved	50.0	58,285.00
Approved	409	600,003.00
Approved	92.6	190,200.40
Approved	2.5	5,000.00
Approved	36.0	20,220.00
Approved	48.0	70,416.00
Approved	1.5	1,330.50
Approved	3.2	1,596.80
Approved	8.0	7,096.00
Approved	5.0	7,510.00
Approved	274.0	294,002.00
Approved	45.0	17,955.00
Approved	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

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
Capital Outlay:**

The district manager said that she didn't have any new information on possible capital outlay funds for the district; however, a capital outlay bill that she had read didn't contain any capital outlay funding for Torrance County. She has made efforts to contact Senator Lord about funding and hopes that she will hear from her after the legislative session ends.

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

A discussion occurred on the impact on Corona that a large number of wind farm workers temporarily living in the area will have during construction, such as damaged highways and

overwhelmed trash services.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mil Levy Rate Resolution No.09 – 2023:

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge move to approve Resolution No. 9 – 2023. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

Permission to sell 2004 Ford Truck:

This district manager asked permission from the board to sell the 2004 Ford 250 truck. Discussion followed on its condition, service and asking price.

ACTION TAKEN: David Cain moved to grant permission to the District Manager to sell the district's 2004 Ford truck as is. Jack Lockridge seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts:

The district Manager said that she continues to work on disseminating information on fire preparedness. A lobbyist was hired to keep the coalition informed on pertinent information from the legislature.

South Central Mountain RC&D:

No report.

Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee:

The committee will continue to meet. The current secretary agreed to remain in office until a replacement could be found. The chair and secretary positions still need to be filled.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Arlene Perea reported that fire season is quickly approaching.

Adrian Padilla was hired in December/January as a Fire Management Officer. Michael Meyrick was hired as the Assistant Fire Management officer. Ms. Perea said that there are only enough fire fighters to staff one full engine. There aren't any applicants, especially in lead positions. They will start to discuss bringing in severity crews from out of state.

Ms. Perea said that the office is aware that wood poaching continues to be an issue.

She commented that there wasn't even enough snow this year to close Capilla Peak.

A cooperators meeting was held last month and was well attended.

On a prescribed burn area of eight acres, stumps are being checked to make sure the fire is completely out.

OTHER:

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

PLAN for NEXT MEETING:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, April 14, 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. Jack Lockridge seconded the motion.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

DAVID CAIN, SECRETARY