



MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING January 7, 2011

Supervisors Present: Felipe Lovato, Jr. – Chairman
Jerry Melaragno
J. Brian Greene
Richard Shovelin
William Caster

Absentees: LeRoy Candelaria
Dan Williams

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Louis King, District Conservationist, Natural Resources
Conservation Service (NRCS)
Kenneth Lujan, Soil Conservationist, NRCS
Brent Van Dyke, Government Affairs Director, New Mexico
Association of Conservation Districts (NMACD)
Katheryn Taylor, District Volunteer

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, at the Mountainair United Methodist Church, Fellowship Hall, located at the corner of Sunset and Third Street in Mountainair, NM at 8:20 a.m. Chairman Lovato welcomed those present and thanked them for taking the time to attend the meeting.

Welcome Guests:

The Chairman introduced Brent Van Dyke and asked him to tell a little about himself. Mr. Van Dyke stated that he retired in July, 2010 after 31 years teaching agriculture in Hobbs. He was then hired in July as the part-time Government Affairs Director for the NMACD. One of his assignments is to visit each of the 47 SWCDs. CPSWCD is his 39th visit. He is the parliamentarian for the National Association of Conservation Districts, the Board Chairman of the Lea Soil and Water Conservation District, and represents New Mexico issues on the Farm Bill Task Force. He said he will facilitate six NRCS regional meetings and the meeting for Region 2 will be held on February 24 from 9:00 to 3:00 at

the Edgewood SWCD office with lunch provided. He will be inviting input regarding what works and doesn't work in the Farm Bill. In addition, Mr. Van Dyke works part-time for the State Department. He recently returned from his 15th trip to Russia.

ABSENTEES:

LeRoy Candelaria
Dan Williams

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The Board reviewed the agenda as presented. **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to approve the agenda as amended. Brian Greene seconded the motion. Motion carried.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

ACTION TAKEN: Jerry Melaragno moved to approve the minutes. Richard Shovelin seconded the motion. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT AND APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

The District Manager presented the Treasurer's Report for the month of December, 2010 with the accounts payable for December, 2010. Discussion followed. **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to accept the report and pay the accounts payable. William Caster seconded the motion. Motion carried. A copy is attached.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

The District Manager announced that the new bookkeeper Sandy Shadwick had started work. Ms. Shadwick retired as a bank vice president after 35 years. Besides carrying out assigned bookkeeping duties, she will create spreadsheets to simplify monitoring of District finances.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) Report:

The District Manager stated that Roy Todd, NMDA Field Specialist, was working with a new NMDA field specialist, Katie Mechenbier, to help get her started in her job. The District Manager then pointed out several sections of the NMDA Report:

- The Soil and Water Conservation Commission's legislative agenda is included.
- The NMDA and New Mexico Conservation District Employees (NMCDE) are planning for a three-day Grant Writing workshop on March 28-30 in Moriarity.
- New Mexico State University's Southwest Hay & Forage Conference will be held on January 13-14 in Ruidoso.
- Wildlife escape ramps are available from Carrizozo SWCD.
- New Mexico State University's Cooperative Extension Service is requesting that anyone who suspects damage from hickory shuckworms in pecans or hickory nuts should contact the local Extension agent.

(The written report is attached.)

NRCS Field Office Report:

Louis King presented the NRCS Field Office report to the Board. He reported that he has been working as the acting District Conservationist (DC) in the Estancia NRCS office until a new DC begins work on January 18. Mike Jones, the Soil Conservationist in Las Vegas, NM has been selected for the position.

There are many applications for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Most of December was spent finalizing conservation plans and completing required paperwork.

The deadline for the Conservation Security Program (CSP) has been extended to January 26. Also, a change in the CSP payment schedule for some designated landowners is being made. These landowners will receive a minimum of \$1,000 per year. Outreach efforts are being developed to inform landowners of this change.

The EQIP signup period has ended and the initial allocation will be contracted fairly quickly.

Mr. King answered questions regarding CSP, the guidelines for monitoring rangeland published in "Bullseye! Targeting your Rangeland Health Objectives," and funding for NRCS. He stated that funding for year two is expected to remain stable. Mr. Van Dyke said that funding priorities for the Farm Bill will change but that the funding is expected to be status quo.

District Manager's Report:

The District Manager highlighted the meetings she had attended:

- December 7 --The Planning and Zoning meeting which she attended with the District Field Technician --
A wind farm is planned for the Encino area, the section that borders the District. Also, a wind farm is proposed for the Corona area. Lincoln County officials indicate that they will include the District in negotiations with the wind farm representatives.
- December 13 -- The Water Trust Board meeting in Santa Fe --
Estancia Basin project is on the list to be submitted to the legislature for recommended funding.
- December 14 -- The Soil and Water Conservation Commission, which she attended with Supervisor Shovelin.
- December 15, 16, 17 -- A Department of Finance and Administration Workshop.
- December 20 -- The Estancia Basin Watershed Health, Restoration and Monitoring (EBWHRM) Core Steering Committee Meeting in Edgewood --
The Core Steering Committee voted to freeze East Torrance's remaining funding until an agreement is reached to reimburse the District for incentive payments. A motion was also made and seconded to restore the funding when an agreement is reached, but the motion died for a lack of vote.

The District Manager reported that district employee Graham Basha worked with the SWCA on erosion control structures in the Deer Canyon subdivision, which is the upper part of the Abó watershed.

She also reported that Field Technician Vern Kohler had been busy on the thinning project in Chilili. She said that 75 cords of Ponderosa pine had been cut from six acres and had been removed to a staging area to allocate to landowners. District employees Graham Basha and Gabe Ramirez helped the wood cutters by pulling brush.

Both district chippers were down and being repaired. Seven hundred hours have been logged on the chippers since April.

The District newsletter was prepared by Graham Basha, Elaine Chavez and Gabe Ramirez and will be ready to print next week.

The District Manager announced that District employee, Francesca Lucero has gotten a job as a receptionist for the SWCA Environmental Consultants.
(The written report is attached.)

CORRESPONDENCE:

The correspondence was reviewed with the Board. The District Manager mentioned that according to a media release from the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, Tom Bagwell will take over as the interim Director/ Secretary of the Department. She drew attention to the "NMACD Winter Newsletter" and the "Corona Range and Livestock Research Center Newsletter." Supervisor Greene raised a question regarding an article in the newsletter on improving mule deer habitat. Concern was expressed about the declining deer population. Discussion followed on prescriptions for improving the habitat.

PERSONNEL MATTERS:

The District Manager said that there was no report.

UPDATE ON GRANTS:

The District Manager reported on grants listed below, meetings attended, progress on projects, status of proposals to funding agencies, and RFPs issued by funding agencies for 2011.

- EBWHRM Project– Water Trust Board --
East Torrance SWCD Incentive –
The District Manager reported that she had contacted the District's legal counsel at the Board's request to find out how to get reimbursed for the amounts deducted by the NM State Forestry for incentive payments. She was told to issue three invoices to East Torrance SWCD for projects that the District had paid landowners in full before the District received letters from NM State Forestry saying that the amounts for incentives would be deducted from District reimbursements. She prepared invoices and sent them to the attorney for review. The attorney observed that the landowners had failed to notify

CPSWCD of participation in another cost share program on their applications for funding. Therefore, she advised the District Manager to seek compensation from landowners for the incentive payments rather than from East Torrance SWCD.

The District Manager called attention to two letters prepared by the attorney, one to the three landowners who have already been paid (subsequently referred to as Letter A). Letter A seeks reimbursement for the amounts of the incentive payments already made. The second letter (subsequently referred to as Letter B) was addressed to landowners who have not yet been paid and notifies them that the amounts of the incentive payments would be deducted from their payments.

The District Manager was advised to update the New Mexico Finance Authority, so she has sent copies of the letters from the NM State Forestry regarding the deductions from the District's reimbursement requests as well as copies of the two letters prepared by the District's counsel. The New Mexico Finance Authority has taken this matter under review. The attorney's letters will also be sent to NM State Forestry to inform them on how the attorney has directed the District to proceed.

The District Manager said that Brian Greene had attended a meeting with East Torrance Board Chairman, East Torrance District Manager and Butch Blazer, State Forester. Mr. Greene stated that the East Torrance Board Chairman had asked him to introduce him and his District Manager to Mr. Blazer. Discussion followed on Supervisor Greene's position on the incentive program and on his role in attending the meeting with East Torrance representatives and the State Forester.

The District Manager reviewed the establishment of the incentive program. She said that she had been trying to follow directives from State Forestry, the District's Board, and the District's legal counsel.

At this point, Brent Racher, former District Board member and District Representative to the EBWHRM Core Steering Committee called to express his concern that the District Manager was meeting with East Torrance representatives and land owners without legal representation, and he cautioned the Board that the District Manager should not meet with them by herself. The decision was made that, for the time being, Supervisor Richard Shovelin will accompany the District Manager whenever she meets with East Torrance landowners.

The District Manager reported that the Core Steering Committee approved contract extensions to some East Torrance SWCD land owners providing the landowners would not be receiving incentives from East Torrance SWCD. The District Manager has written amendments to contracts with land owners to reflect the conditions of the extensions. Chairman Lovato said that the Districts should continue to support their constituents. Discussion followed on the landowners' reaction to deductions and on East Torrance's response to requests for reimbursements to Claunch-Pinto for incentive amounts. Also, consistency in payments was considered to be an issue among the districts.

The District Manager submitted the District legal counsel's letters to the Board for approval.

ACTION TAKEN: Richard Shovelin moved to approve the District legal counsel's letter A. Jerry Melaragno seconded the motion. Motion carried.

ACTION TAKEN: Richard Shovelin moved to approve the District legal counsel's letter B. Jerry Melaragno seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Supervisor Melaragno suggested that copies of the letters be sent to other entities like East Torrance as appropriate.

The District Manager also reported that the Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee has sent out an RFP for its monitoring program. The EBWHRM Core Steering Committee has requested that the Claunch-Pinto District submit a proposal on the Committee's behalf. **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to approve the request from the Core Steering Committee to submit the proposal. William Caster seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- Non Federal Land (NFL) Proposal
- Wildlife Urban Interface (WUI) Proposal
- Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance aka Upper Rio Grande Salt Cedar Project:
The District Manager reported that the Watershed Alliance Technical Committee is currently inspecting projects along the Rio Grande in preparation for the funding process. The Claunch-Pinto Board will again be signing agreements with New Mexico State Forestry to spend \$300,000 on projects that will probably be carried out in Santa Fe Pojoaque, East Rio Arriba, Valencia and Ciudad SWCDs.
- New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) – River Ecosystem Restoration Initiative
More work on erosion control structures has been done in the Deer Canyon subdivision since the last Board meeting, and that grant is nearing the end of its funding. More funding may be sought to continue work on the Abó watershed.
- Central New Mexico Cooperative Weed Management Area (CNMCWMA):
The District Manager reported that she and Brenda Smythe, District Manager of the Edgewood SWCD will finish the budget of about \$15,000 to submit to New Mexico State Forestry. The Edgewood SWCD will be the fiscal agent.
- Collaborative Forest Restoration Program
 - Ojo Peak Restoration
 - Red Canyon ProjectThe District Manager reported the four-man crew that she and President Orlando Lopez, President of the Manzano Land Grant selected for thinning on the monitoring project will be trained on mechanical thinning in Red Canyon. Two of the crew will work on the Ojo Peak project and the other two will work on the Red Canyon Project. The mechanical training for this crew lowers the costs of workman's compensation. District Field Technician Vernon Kohler is in charge of this crew.

New Proposals:

- Government Service Fund – DFA

- NM State Forestry – Wildland Urban Interface
- FY2011 Appropriations Request to U.S. Senators Bingaman and Udall
The District Manager reported that a new appropriations request for the Information /Education Building at the Resource Conservation Center will have to be submitted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Future Directions Committee – Property, Loan, Grant, Capital Outlay Monies

GSA Solicitation Package:

The District Manager reported that the “Proposal to Lease Space for Solicitation for Offers (SFO) No. 9NM2109” was submitted on time and that she expects to hear from Malik Harris of Jones Lang LaSalle Americas Inc. soon regarding its status.

Site Preparation Work:

The District Manager reported that Padilla Industries, Inc. has submitted a final invoice but that she had received an email from him requesting his final payment when the work has been completed. She is waiting for District architect Lee Gamelsky to approve the final payment. Mr. Gamelsky recommends that Padilla Industries be released from approximately \$5,000 in cement work. Mr. Padilla has said he does not have the funds left on his contract to complete this work.

SWCD Mil Levy Authority:

The District Manager said she had not yet received a letter from the Attorney General giving an opinion on the issue. She said that she is in constant contact with State Representative Rhonda King.

District Computer System:

The District Manager reported she expects to receive one more bid on a system.

Consideration of a Mil Levy Referendum to include Municipalities:

The Board decided to remove this item from the agenda until the economy improves.

NEW BUSINESS:

Hub Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Alternate Representative

William Caster is the District’s representative. It was verified that Richard Shovelin is the alternate representative to Hub.

Kids, Kows and More – April 28, 2011

The District Manager will coordinate with the Corona and Mountainair schools to provide money for gas for the bus, for a driver and for lunches for the participants.

Purchase of Additional Property from Sy Sisneros

The Board decided to remove this item from the agenda.

Letter from Debbie Hughes, Executive Director of NMACD

Richard Shovelin expressed his concerns with the tone and with some content of the Executive Director's email response to the "open letter" from Preston Stone, Commissioner of region 6 to the New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Commission (NMSWCC) regarding New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts (NMACD) lack of support for the NMSWCC's attempt to seek funding for the 47 SWCDs. Discussion also took place on the way resolutions from the floor have been presented and how they are supposed to be presented. The role of NMACD in administering grants and how transparent its activities have been was also discussed.

In her email, the Executive Director asked for a response from the SWCD to two items. Extensive discussion followed on the content of the District's response. Jerry Melaragno stated that communications from NMACD should be sent to all SWCDs. He also said that he hasn't seen any clear evidence of how NMACD's actions have benefited our District. He suggested ways that the State association can benefit the SWCDs.

Suggestions followed for the content of the District's response. The District Manager pointed out the number of subdivisions in the District and the apparent emphasis of the association on farming and ranching to the exclusion of urban agriculture. She suggested that the association needs to pay attention to issues other than those dealing solely with farming and ranching. Richard Shovelin also made suggestions to address in the response. Jerry Melaragno suggested that the State association could publicize successful projects carried out by the SWCDs. He volunteered to help the District Manager draft a letter responding to the Executive Director's email. He suggested that the letter should be positive and forward looking. It should offer suggestions regarding how the Association can benefit the SWCDs, and it should try to build cooperation with the State association.

Executive Order No. 4 – Governor Susana Martinez

Brian Greene stated that the Executive Order No. 4 does not apply to the SWCDs. Discussion followed.

Federal Property Assistance Program

ACTION TAKEN: Richard Shovelin moved to authorize Chairman Lovato to sign the paperwork necessary to purchase items on sale through the Federal Property Assistance Program. Jerry Melaragno seconded the motion. The motion carried.

REPORTS:

Hub Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D):

William Caster reported Hub RC&D had not had a meeting.

South Central Mountain RC&D:

Brian Greene referred to the South Central Mtn report to Soil and Water Conservation Districts dated December 2010 in the Board packet. He pointed out the item regarding co-ops that may affect the District.

Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee (EBWPC):

Minutes of the EBWPC are attached.

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:

OTHER:

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

PLAN FOR NEXT MEETING: Action Plan

A Budget Committee will need to be appointed at the February meeting. This committee will need to start working on the budget for FY2012.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, February 11, 2011 at 8:00 a.m. at the Mountainair United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, Mountainair, New Mexico.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the Board. **ACTION TAKEN:** William Caster moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:10 a.m. Jerry Melaragno seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

RICHARD SHOVELIN, SEC. – TREAS.