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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
December 6, 2024**

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

**Absentees:** Aubrey Dunn

**Others Present:** Dierdre Tarr, District Manager  
Jody Cornwall, NRCS  
Roy Gibson, Associate Supervisor  
Kim Kostelnik, SAKAK Natural Resource Consulting  
Jason Mondragon-Martin, Area Resource Conservationist, NRCS  
Shawn Martin, Mountainair Ranger District, Acting District Ranger  
Katie Mechenbier, NMDA  
Crystal Medina, NM Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute  
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 Chairman Felipe Lovato, both in person and via Zoom at 8:04 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:** David Cain moved to approve the agenda. Dale Rose seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

**APPROVAL/ DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The board reviewed the minutes of December 6, 2024. **ACTION TAKEN:** David Cain moved approval of the minutes of the November 1, 2024 meeting. Dale Rose seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote with one abstention: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge, abstained.

**TREASURER'S REPORT and APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:**

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of November 2024 with accounts payable for December.

**ACTION TAKEN:** Jack Lockridge moved to approve the treasurer's report for November with accounts payable for December. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

**OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

No report.

**REPORTS:**

**NMDA Report:**

The written report is in the board members' packets.

**FO Report:**

The written report is in board members' packets. Mr. Martin commented that there are 20 EQIP and three CSP applications. Applications are still being accepted for IRA, EQIP and CSP funding. Jody Cornwall asked whether the district manager had received any applications for the Healthy Soils grant, but the district manager said that none had been received. She and Codi Stropki have discussed submitting a proposal for the pollinator funding. It would make a good demonstration project for the district's grounds.

**District Manager's Report:**

No report.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

No report.

**UPDATE ON GRANTS:**

**Watershed Health Grant – Water Trust Board:**

The district manager has been working on reimbursements for the grant. The paperwork for the new grant that was previously approved by the board closes today, December 6.

**New Mexico State Forestry Grant:**

The Chavez project above Torreon has been finished. The Pachta project is also finished and will be inspected the week following this board meeting. The liaison plan with State Forestry ends on February 28, 2025.

**NFL Grants -- HWY 337 Grant, the HWY 55 Grant and the 2023 NFL Grant:**

The HWY 337 project is on hold until Andrew Aldrete of DOT gets employees hired for traffic control, which must be in place on the north side of Chilili to ensure the safety of the crew that will work on the project. Traffic may be reduced to one lane. There is a small piece of state land along the highway where the district manager also wants to coordinate with Andrew Aldrete. All the firewood will go to the Chilili Land-grant.

The work plan for the HWY 55 project has been submitted to State Forestry for final review and signature. Then a contractor(s) can be hired.

The work plan for the 2023 NFL grant will be written after the HWY 55 work plan has been approved and signed.

**The Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance (Upper Rio Grande Salt Cedar Project):**

The Greater Rio Grande will have a meeting in January, 2025 in Taos. The district manager has riparian projects in the Acoma area.

**Collaborative Forest Restoration Program – WTB (12/29/2025):**

The district manager is working with Pattern Energy on a land owner agreement for riparian work at the ranch in Dripping Springs.

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

The project has been started. Pablo Romero is cutting and hauling out wood. The district manager has seen good inspection reports.

**Regional Conservation Partnership Program Grant (RCPP):**

The district manager said that the renewal for the 2015 grant is pending clarification on what will happen with one landowner, so the cultural resource survey hasn't been done on this property. All the rest of the surveys have been completed.

Regarding the 2023 RCPP funding, it is the 2017 RCPP Renewal. One project is ready for the cultural resource survey. The district manager received a letter from the state conservationist saying that she could apply for another renewal, so she has submitted that proposal.

**FEMA Project:**

The district manager turned in a draft request for proposal to Homeland Security six weeks ago but hasn't gotten it back.

**SWCC Grant:**

Kim Kostelnik said that board has received a draft of the land use plan. She mentioned the updates that this draft includes. For example, Roy Gibson edited the storm water section, and reference pages have been created. She said that some maps will be edited so that they will be consistent with other maps in the plan. She asked the board to review the draft. The plan will be completed by January. Ms. Rose reiterated that she thinks that the plan is a powerful document.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:****Capital Outlay:**

The remaining FY2022/2023 Capital Outlay funding is \$49,475.60. Roy Gibson said that he wants to buy a trailer from a local vendor, but he still needs a price from him. He expects the purchase price to be under \$20,000. Under the procurement code, the district can purchase the trailer under a small purchase agreement, so it won't be necessary to go out with an RFP. He hopes to go forward with the purchase in January. He will bring a proposal with quotes to the board.

**Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy:**

The district manager said that Pattern Energy gave a presentation to the Local Preparedness Management Committee. The mayor from Willard was there. He expressed his concern about the possible lack of preparedness of the energy projects' employees in the event of fire or another emergency. The Pattern Energy representative tried to reassure him that the employees were well trained in case of a serious injury or fire. Ms. Rose expressed her disappointment in the lack of substance to the presentation. The district manager said that Angela Gonzalez would attend the next board meeting to give members an update on Pattern Energy. She will invite her to give a quarterly update. Jack Lockridge mentioned that now there will be two power lines running parallel to each other. The district manager said that the Western Spirit transmission line is now owned by PNM. She said that she talked to a representative of PNM who said that this area is not considered a high-risk area for fire by PNM, but rather a low to medium risk area. She will ask PNM to give a presentation to the board.

**Personnel:**

Five applications have been received for the temporary/full-time administrative assistant position. The district manager said that she has secured \$150,000 for five years through the New Mexico Foundation. She said that Kim Kostelnik, Codi Stropki and Victoria Sedillo will interview the candidates the following Friday. Then they will give a report at the next board meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:****Senator Stefanics' Draft Legislation for a Cannabis Moratorium for Review:**

The district manager said that Senator Stefanics told her at the Sun Flower Festival that she planned to write this draft so that counties could enact a moratorium on prospective cannabis businesses. She asked board members to read the draft and send her comments on it. She mentioned that some of the businesses are China based. The sentiment was expressed that the board should support the draft legislation.

**REPORTS:****South Central Mountain RC&D:**

No report.

**EBWPC:**

The district manager said that Ms. Rose sent her a letter regarding the proposed subdivision on the Campbell Ranch that is adjacent to the town of Edgewood. There will be a meeting of the Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee the following Thursday. She will distribute the last letter that was sent to Edgewood on the issue of water use by a new large subdivision.

She also said that whether the EBWPC should be terminated has been on the agenda twice because the state engineer is going to include the Estancia Basin in the Rio Grande. She said this attempt will have to be resisted. She described the tasks that the EBWPC is also supposed to be carrying out such as monitoring wells. She will protest the possible dissolution of the committee at its meeting next week. She mentioned that most committee members represent northern areas, for example Bernalillo and Santa Fe counties. She said that she is the only representative that is from the southern part of Tarrant County. No one represents East Tarrant. She has served on the committee since 1984. She mentioned several places that either have no water or the water is bad, Macintosh and Moriarity, for example. She said that Mountainair gets its water from the Estancia Basin and that the water table has been decreasing for some time, and the water is getting worse.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:****Jason Martin, Area Resource Conservationist -- Presentation on Climate Benefits of Conservation and How It Affects Claun-Pinto SWCD Cooperators:**

Mr. Martin said he wanted to share some new information that was received by NRCS on the inflation-reduction act. He provided copies of the publication on the agriculture and forestry mitigation activities for FY2025 as well as some maps based on annual precipitation data for the area. He reviewed information on the inflation-reduction act that provided additional funding for farm bill programs, including EQIP and CSP, but the funding for IRA must include increased carbon sequestration or reduced greenhouse emissions. NRCS has created a list of primary practices that achieve one of those goals. Other supporting practices can be added in. He explained further details on the supported practices. He went over the differences between 2024 and 2025, for example concerning brush management. A discussion occurred on what the annual precipitation map indicates and its inaccuracy and inapplicability to the area, especially since it relies on outdated data that shows more rainfall than has occurred in recent years. Also, the impact on cooperators of the changes and their confidence in NRCS that has been undermined was discussed. A suggestion was made for the district to write a letter in protest and to get signatures from cooperators. Ms. Kostelnik said that more recent and accurate data is readily available. Mr. Martin said that NRCS is trying to find creative ways to address the

implementation of the changes. He also said that it would be helpful to provide research in peer reviewed scientific papers that shows the benefits of brush management on carbon sequestration in semi-arid areas. Mr. Martin said that the changes present a new challenge that requires finding creative ways to meet that challenge. In addition, he said that cooperators should still be encouraged to apply for funding.

**ACTION TAKEN:** Dale Rose moved that a letter be written on behalf of the board to include signatures of cooperators objecting to the changes based on invalid data that affect funded practices for CSP for 2025. Jack Lockridge seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

**ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:**

Mr. Gibson said that he has received several quotes on a trailer from vendors. He mentioned the discounted quote from Four Rivers.

**OTHER:**

Mr. Lockridge said that this meeting would be his last board meeting. He explained his physical limitations resulting from Parkinsons that make it necessary for him and his wife to relocate to Arlington, Texas where their two daughters live. He said they decided to move with mixed emotions, but it was the best decision for them. He said they didn't know what to expect when they moved to the Mountainair, NM from Washington D.C., but on any bad morning when he looked out the window at the Manzanos, everything seemed to fall into place. The chairman and board members thanked Mr. Lockridge for everything that he has done and stated that he will be missed.

**NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:**

Regular meeting: Friday, 8:00 a.m. on January 10, 2024 at the Natural Resource Conservation Center, located at 1206 South Highway 5, Mountainair, NM.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to come before the board, the regular meeting of the Claunch-Pinto Board, moved to adjourn. Ms. Rose moved to adjourn. Mr. Cain seconded the motion.

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FELIPE LOVATO, CHAIRMAN

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GERALD CHAVEZ, SECRETARY