



Santa Cruz

Natural Resource Conservation District

Santa Cruz Regular Meeting October 23, 2019 Final Minutes

Location: Wild Horse Restaurant, 277 McKeown Ave, Patagonia, AZ 85624

Board Supervisors & Clerk: Stephen Williams, Daniel Bell, Fox Neville Johnson, and Chris Postel (Clerk).

Agencies & Guests: Brett Meyers (Natural Resource Conservation Services-NRCS), Alanna Riggs (Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape Coordinator), and Robert Proctor (Friends of Sonoita Creek).

Called to Order: 12:20 pm

Review/Approve Minutes: Reviewed the August 28 and the September 30 teleconference meeting minutes. It was moved by Dan Bell to approve the minutes. Fox Neville Johnson seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report (Dan Bell): The account balances were: \$5,454.31 (State) and \$150,561.86 (Local). Reviewed financial reports. Stephen Williams moved to accept and file the Treasurer's reports. Fox Neville Johnson seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Administration (Chris Postel):

- Clerk's September and October invoices was reviewed. It was moved by Stephen Williams to approve the invoice (\$984.78). Fox Neville Johnson seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.
- Newsletter: The newsletter draft was reviewed. An Arizona Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) Update will be added to the News Briefs Section. The main NRCS color laser printer is disconnected; so, options will be to be investigated to get the newsletter printed.

Agency Updates:

- Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS – Brett Meyer - See Attached Report): Brett is now the acting District Conservationist. No real changes since the last report. The two completed conservation plans will be reviewed during the Executive Session later today. Alvaro Compos will be back on Nov 25. Jim Koweek is continuing doing his monitoring project.

OLD BUSINESS

Supervisor Appointment Update (Stephen Williams): Fox Neville-Johnson is a new supervisor. We still have one vacancy on the board. Dan Bell talked to Cody Hereford but he is too busy to be on the Board. Cody's partner, Andy Jackson, might be a candidate to be on the Board. Andy just bought the old Rio Rico gold course.

Biological Assessment (BA) for Coronado National Forest Livestock Grazing Program Update:

Per Stephen Williams, the US Coronado National Forest used outdated science to update their NEPA documents. The Pima NRCD (Jim Chilton), George Ruyle, and other Permittees (Dan Bell) met with Coronado National Forest management to review the data and comments submitted by the

Permittees. Some of the comments were drafted by a biological consultant, Robert Schmalzel, on three species in the Santa Cruz District (Pima Pineapple cactus, Huachuca water umbel, and Canelo Hills ladies' tresses. Per Dan Bell, the revised Coronado National Forest document is out but not yet a public document. So, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has requested a 90-day extension to have enough time to review the document. Dan met with James Heitholt and other biologists, one is from Sierra Vista. The Forest Service supervisor's office (Tucson) has been involved and has visited some of the local sites. Per George Ruyle, the Forest Service should recognize the gains that have been made in the range management area during the previous implementation period.

Water Rights Workshop (Stephen Williams – See draft outline): The workshop will be in February 2020 and will cover water rights, land and water connectivity, conservation easements and the Desert Rivers Program. Jeff Eisenberg (UA Natural Resources Users Law and Policy Center) will cover ground and surface rights. A panel discussion on Land and Water Conservation experiences will be conducted. The District will provide lunch and Stephen will contact Tina LaTargen regarding the lunch.

Vendor Payment Form: Per Dan, the information has been sent to Deborah Smith (AACD).

Status of DUNS Number: Per Dan, the information has been sent to Deborah Smith.

Sant Cruz County Fair Report (Stephen Williams): Less students attended the fair on Friday due to limited school funding for bus transportation but about 700 pencil & eraser bags were handed out. Several cooperator agreements were also given out.

Scholarship Program Update (Stephen Williams): Students will have to submit essays for review and grading by the Board. The FFA advisors and school counselors will have to be contacted. Dean Fish will be contacted to see if he has an application form that can be used. Chris Postel will contact Sheryl Christianson (AACD Education Committee Chair). The scholarship is \$500/student.

NEW BUSINESS

Sentinel Landscape Background & Joint Chiefs Request (Alanna Riggs, Coordinator – See Handout): The Sentinel Landscape program is a joint effort by Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) and the United State Forest Service (USFS) to protect Fort Huachuca and the foot print around the Fort (See Appendix 1), with the goals of: preserve the open space, conserve natural resources, and keep ranching and farming. One third of the area is private land. The Joint Chiefs Request is an effort to get more funding for the area to use for NRCS (EQIP projects) and conservation easements for ACUB (Army Compatible Usage Buffer). They have a Military Operations Agreement with Davis Monthan Air Force base and are considering expanding the area to Douglas. The Santa Cruz District has provided a letter of support for the Join Chiefs Request.

Supervisor Reports

Dan Bell: He is busy with the Coronado National Forest Biological Assessment and plans to meet with the USFWS. He is on the Ground Water Board.

Stephen Williams (See Attached Document): AACD has received grants resulting in more funding for them. They will provide Training, Legislature Representation, Grants and Administration support. Deborah Smith is the Operations Director and will work with all the federal, state, etc., agencies. Sharma Torrens is the Conservation Education Director will assist District NRCD's Education

Centers, manage fundraising activities, and represent the Districts at the Legislature meetings. Brooke Gladden is the Outreach Coordinator and will manage the website, social media, statewide communications, and the New-Young Ranchers-Farmers program.

Call to the Public:

Robert Proctor is the Chairman of the Friends of Sonoita Creek (<https://sonoitacreek.org/>). They partner with Borderlands Restoration, The Nature Conservancy, and the Town of Patagonia. They are focused on conserving and protecting water, maintaining trails, coordinating with other watershed groups, grant applications, and working with the Town of Patagonia Flood & Flow Committee. They are concerned about the mines wanting to draw water, up to 1,000,000 gallons/day.

The Board went into an Executive Session at 1:29 pm.

Adjourn: Motion made by Stephen Williams to adjourn the meeting. Dan Bell seconded the motion. The Meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Next meeting on February 26, 2020

Final Minutes Submitted by: Chris Postel, Santa Cruz NRCD Clerk

Date: February 26, 2020

Approval of Minutes: _____

Date: _____