



Santa Cruz Natural Resource Conservation District

Santa Cruz Regular Meeting February 23, 2022 Final Minutes

Location: Wild Horse Restaurant, Patagonia, AZ

Board Supervisors & Clerk: Stephen Williams, Daniel Bell, Bill Schock, Fox Johnson (Absent), Andy Jackson (Absent), and Chris Postel

Agencies & Guests: Alisha Phipps (Natural Resource Conservation Services - NRCS), Carolyn Shafer (Town of Patagonia Flood & Flow Committee) & Bob Proctor (Friends of Sonoita Creek).

Called to Order: 12:06 pm

Review/Approval of Minutes, December 15, 2021: The minutes were reviewed. Bill Schock moved to approve the minutes as written. Dan Bell seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 3-0.

Treasurer's Report (See Attached Report): Per Dan Bell the checking account balances are: (State) \$16,842.65, (Education Center) \$6,485.26, (Local) \$150,987.81. Bill Schock moved to accept and file the report. Stephen Williams seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 3-0.

Administration Update (See Attached Invoice): The Clerk's Invoice for December and January was \$1,123.64 for 24 hours for pay and expenses (\$323.64 for webhosting-3year). Stephen Williams moved to pay the Clerk. Dan Bell seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 3-0.

Ed Center Update (Dean Fish): Dean was absent due to an out -of-state engagement. Santa Fe Ranch Days will be held in May assuming that the school district will allow field trips. No update on the upcoming 2022 Nogales Water Festival.

AGENCY UPDATES

NRCS (Alisha Phipps See Attached Report): A written report was submitted and reviewed by Alisha. Per Alisha, Josh Grace has replaced Chris Lowman as the lead for the Range program at the Arizona State Land Department. At Arizona Game & Fish, Gerald Berthelette is the new Land Owner Relations person. Ashley Hall (UofA Cooperative Extension) will be conducting range workshops in Willcox, Safford and Holbrook.

NEW BUSINESS

Patagonia Flood and Flow Committee (Carolyn Shafer): The committee:

- advises the Town of Patagonia on their jurisdictional water issues,
- looks at the Sonoita Creek watershed area to influence upstream conditions and to minimize negative downstream consequences
- informs the public about watershed activities

Overall, the committee's focus is on the quality & quantity of the watershed's water and to create an alliance of stakeholders. Also, to establish a municipal watershed plan. Per Bob Proctor, monthly water samples are taken to test for E.coli and metals. Also, the USFS has setup 6 flow meters on the

Harshaw watershed. To date, the committee has been unsuccessful in obtaining grant funds to develop a Watershed Management Plan.

OLD BUSINESS

SC NRC D 2022 Elections (See Attached Checklist):

- The 2022 Election Notice will run in the Nogales International during March. The notice has been posted on the <https://santacruznr.cd.org/> website. The notice will also be posted on the SACPA (Southern Arizona Cattlemen's Protection Association) website.
- Election Board: Dean Fish (Inspector) and Stephen Williams & Dan Bell (Judges) were the members of the 2020 election board. Stephen Williams moved to nominate them as members of the 2022 Election Board. Dan Bell seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 3-0.
- Cooperator Mailing List: The list still needs more updates and will be tabled for now.
- Supervisors: Andy Jackson is up for re-election and Stephen Williams and Dan Bell will be nominated in May for the Appointed Supervisor positions.

SC NRC D Ed Center Sign (Santa Fe Ranch): Tabled. Dan Bell needs to finalize size & design.

SC NRC D Scholarships: No update on the Los Charros Foundation scholarship plan. Patagonia High School and 4H should be contacted regarding scholarships. Per Stephen Williams, the NRCWAY camp will be held this summer according to Kim McReynolds. In the past, the District has donated \$500 to NRCWAY. Dan Bell moved to donate \$500 to the NRCWAY camp. Stephen Williams seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The motion passed 3-0.

Monitoring Update & Monitoring Invoice (Alisha Phipps (NRCS) – See attached report):

2021 Monitoring Season: October 2021 – January 2022: This monitoring season Jim Koweek completed monitoring on 25 transects. The data for 2021 (collected after the 2021 monsoon season) shows a significant increase in litter cover due to the increase in annual forbs and grasses. Some sites showed mortality of mature perennial grasses; however, a lot of seedlings of perennial grasses were noted as coming back in. Some sites showed an increase of Lehmann lovegrass and other invasive species were noted as increasing or occurring for the first time, especially African lovegrass and Yellow bluestem. The western side of the Santa Cruz NRC D showed more significant impacts due to the drought. Some sites showed significant decreases in native perennial grasses and an increase in Lehmann lovegrass. Per Bill Schock, several ranches are under new ownership; so, a letter should be sent before monitoring to the new owners to inquire as to whether they are interested in becoming a Cooperator. The ranchers must be a Cooperator to partake of the District sponsored monitoring. Dan Bell moved to approve Jim Koweek's monitoring invoice (\$6,250). Bill Schock seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The motion passed 3-0.

Call to the Public: Per Bob Proctor, a symposium (Science on the Sonoita Plains) will be held on May 7 at the Empire Ranch with themes such as: Watershed, Community, Restoration, mesquite removal.

Supervisor & Clerk Reports

- Dan Bell: The US Forest Service (USFS) is preparing for litigation with the Center for Bio Diversity concerning the Yellow-Billed Cuckoo. The Coronado National Forest is planning on having a meeting with their Permittees, possibly in Sonoita. If so, the District will request a place on the program to explain our monitoring program. Our District ranches have carbon credits that could benefit the rancher through the sale of carbon credits.
- Bill Schock: He attended a Water Protection Fund (WPF) meeting. A grant was closed out for an Apache County project. WPF has a new grant cycle coming up. Non-cooperator ranchers or new

owners within our District should be contacted about becoming a Cooperator. The next newsletter should have an article on the benefits of grazing. He is cutting down mesquite with a chain saw and tagging the location via GPS; so, he can later spray the sprouts in the spring time.

- Stephen Williams: The next newsletter should have an article on monitoring. The Patagonia Times should also be contacted regarding publishing articles.

Adjourn: Stephen Williams moved to adjourn the meeting. Dan Bell seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. 3-0. The Meeting adjourned at 1:52 pm.

Next meeting: April 27, 12:00 pm at The Wild Horse Restaurant in Patagonia

Final Minutes Submitted by: Chris Postel

Date: April 27, 2022

Approval of Minutes: _____

Date: _____