



# Santa Cruz Natural Resource Conservation District

Santa Cruz Regular Meeting      April 27, 2022      Final Minutes

Location: Wild Horse Restaurant, Patagonia, AZ

Board Supervisors & Clerk: Stephen Williams, Daniel Bell, Bill Schock (Absent), Fox Johnson (Absent), Andy Jackson, Dean Fish (SC NRCD Ed Center Director), and Chris Postel.

Agencies & Guests: Alisha Phipps & Tom Reis (Natural Resource Conservation Services - NRCS), Gerry Berthelette (Arizona Game & Fish), and Bob Schmalzel (Biologist).

Called to Order: 12:08 pm

Review/Approval of Minutes, February 23, 2022: The minutes were reviewed. Dan Bell moved to approve the minutes as written. Andy Jackson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 3-0.

Treasurer's Report (See Attached Report): Per Dan Bell the checking account balances are: (State) \$9,107.93, (Education Center) \$5,985.26, (Local) \$150,991.69. Andy Jackson 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 February & March was \$860.48 for 36 hours for pay and expenses. Dan Bell moved to pay the Clerk. Andy Jackson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 3-0. Per the Clerk, a June 16 teleconference will be held to approve Arizona State Annual Reports and form the District board.

Ed Center Update (Dean Fish): Per Dean, it is still very quiet due to Covid concerns. The Nogales Water Festival will not be held this year. He is working with Borderlands Restoration Network on mesquite workshops for control, food processing, etc. Santa Fe Ranch Days will be held for students (Desert Shadow middle school) with 6-8 stations from 8:30 am to 2 pm on May 12. Potential topics for future workshops were mentioned, natural resource concerns, pasture irrigation practices, or wildlife related.

## AGENCY UPDATES

Arizona Game & Fish: Per Gerry Berthelette, he needs to identify a grubbing contractor. Per Dan Bell, Jim Coon does grubbing for the Forest Service. Per Dean Fish, Derek Knight does grubbing also. Please contact him if you have access issues.

NRCS (Tom Reis See Attached Report): Tom reviewed the report:

**EQIP-General:** (Environmental Quality Incentive Program). Obligations May 6, 2022. Initial allocation of \$1,272,363.15 applications to be obligated (\$1,273,804). Additional 13 applications to be obligated using other funds (\$980,842). Total obligations \$2,254,646.

- **EQIP-CIC and Urban Initiative:** (Conservation Incentive Contracts). Obligations July 1, 2022. Urban = \$250,000, CIC = \$ 550,000.
- **EQIP-Border Initiative:** Damage from border activities. Focus on fence, pipeline, watering facilities and pumping plants (382, 516, 614, 533). \$400,000 allocated to Arizona. Application cutoff was April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

- **Coronavirus Agricultural Relief Payments (CARP):** Extended through 3/31/2022. Irrigation pipeline, livestock pipeline (430, 516). Team 7 processed 17 payments for an additional \$26,955.51
- **CSP:** 9 applications in process for 4/22 ranking deadline

### **LOCAL WORKING GROUP MEETING (LWG)**

The Local Working Group Meetings needs to be held by June 1st this year. Historically Pima, Winkelman, and Santa Cruz NRCDs have held a joint LWG meeting. The Winkelman NRCD has chosen to hold a separate meeting. The Santa Cruz and Pima NRCDs will be holding their joint LWG meeting on May 10th, 9-11am at the NRCS Tucson Field Office. Per the Clerk, a LWG email has been sent to the Cooperators. Also, a LWG notice will be in the Spring Newsletter which will be mailed by Saturday to the Cooperator list.

**Team 7 Staff:** Emilio Carrillo has taken a position as State Conservation Planning Specialist - 3/14. Alisha Phipps selected as Rangeland Management Specialist GS-11 (5/9 start date). Tucson FO Rangeland Management Specialist 5/7/9 selection in process.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**Monitoring Update:** Per Stephen Williams, Alisha Phipps presented Jim Koweek's report at the last meeting. He was concerned about how to insure that Monitoring is done only for Cooperators within the District. Also, due to ranch sales, how does the District identify and reach out to the new owners. Per Dan Bell, monitoring was not finished due to violence along the board on US Forest Service allotments. Per Alisha Phipps, we can hand out NRCD information to the new owners. The Clerk will research to determine if a NRCD brochure has been already developed.

**SC NRCD 2022 Elections:** Per Stephen Williams, the board officers will be elected during the June 16 teleconference.

**SC NRCD Ed Center Sign (Santa Fe Ranch):** Dan Bell displayed the sign design. The sign will be a laminate 3x4 and should cost about \$200.

**SC NRCD Scholarships:** Per Dean Fish, he is attending a Los Charros Foundation meeting this afternoon to discuss scholarships. According to him, the Foundation has very few applicants from rural Pima, Santa Cruz, and Cochise counties.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**2022 Arizona State Land Annual Reports:** Per the Clerk, last year's report forms and processes have not changed for this year. The Plans of Work are due June 20 and the Annual Reports are due July 20. For the Annual Reports, the Local Work Group and the Santa Fe Ranch days could be used as the programs conducted during this fiscal year. The Plans of Work could use the Nogales Water Festival and other topics such as natural resource & wildlife concerns or the Conservation Needs Assessment, for the planned future workshops.

**Call to the Public:** Per Bob Schmalzel, he discussed the following topics:

- **Jackrabbit Population:** He believes that their population is on the decline due to diets, especially in the Altar Valley. He suggested a monitoring study could be conducted. Per Stephen Williams, a publication on Jackrabbit disease (by Kerry Baldwin) is available.
- **Riparian & Forest Land:** He believes that the Center for Biodiversity is using wrong information, such as cattle grazing harms fish. Per Bob, cattle grazing does not harm fish.

- **Soil Grubbing:** If you take out the mesquite, cattle should not be returned to the land because it can take cattle 3+ weeks to pass and disperse the eaten seed. So, cattle should be kept out of cleared land for at least a month. Also, grubbing should not impact ancient soils.

Supervisor & Clerk Reports

- Dan Bell: He attended a riparian meeting with Forest Service on April 6 regarding the notice of intent to sue by the Center for Biological Diversity. It is drying up and have had several fires which were fought by US Forest Service. These fires are caused by illegal's camp sites. He suggested that we could have a workshop on buying-selling carbon credits.
- Andy Jackson: It is hotter and windy, drying things out. There are not as many roadrunners.
- Stephen Williams: Selling carbon credits could be questionable. The next meeting (Teleconference) is on June 16 at 4 pm.

Adjourn: Andy Jackson moved to adjourn the meeting. Dan Bell seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. 3-0. The Meeting adjourned at 1:55 pm.

Next meeting (TELECONFERENCE): June 16 at 4 pm.

Final Minutes Submitted by: Chris Postel

Date: July 13, 2022

Approval of Minutes: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_