



Santa Cruz Natural Resource Conservation District

Santa Cruz Regular Meeting August 24, 2022 Final Minutes

Location: Wild Horse Restaurant, Patagonia, AZ

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

Agencies & Guests: Alisha Phipps, Heather Knight, Yisell Martinez, & Melanie Stephanovic (Natural Resource Conservation Services - NRCS), Gerry Berthelette (Arizona Game & Fish), and Cameron Becker & Andrew Quarles (Arizona Land & Water Trust), Ashley Wright (University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Tess Wagner (Borderlands Restoration), Amber Morin (Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape) and Nick Dekhtyur (Guest Presenter - Patagonia High School Senior).

Called to Order: 12:12 pm

Review/Approval of Minutes, July 13, 2022: The minutes were reviewed. Dan Bell moved to approve the minutes as written. Bill Schock seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 3-0.

Treasurer's Report (See Attached Report): Per Dan Bell the checking account balances are: (State) \$21,394.27, (Education Center) \$5,785.25, (Local) \$150,994.48. 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 (April-July) was \$1,751.00 (86 hours plus expenses). Dan Bell moved to pay the invoice. Bill Schock seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 3-0. Per the Clerk, the next newsletter should summarize initiatives accomplished over the past 3 years. The signage for the booth needs to be redone.

Ed Center Update: Dean not in attendance. Per Dan Bell, nothing is planned for the next few months but Santa Fe Ranch Days and Project WET are planned to be held Spring, 2023.

AGENCY UPDATES

NRCS (Alisha Phipps See Attached Report): Alisha reviewed the report:

FARM BILL PROGRAMS: EQIP (Environment Quality Incentive program). Taking applications, deadline will be in December 2022.

TEAM 7 STAFF:

- Emilio Carrillo has taken a position as State Conservation Planning Specialist - 3/14
- Alisha Phipps selected as RMS GS-11 – 5/9 start date
- New Rangeland Management Specialist hire, Heather Knight, for the Tucson Field Office. Heather is a recent graduate from the University of Arizona and majored in Natural Resources, Range Management. She will be shadowing Dave Womack and Alisha Phipps over the next year.

- New Civil Engineer hire, Melanie Stephanovic, for Team 7 (Tucson, Douglas, Sells). Melanie will be working with Trevor Towers to assist Team 7 with engineering needs. Melanie previously worked for the Bureau of Reclamation for 2 years in Yuma.
- Brett Myers is now the Watershed Planner

Stephen Williams and Dan Bell are interested in Virtual Fencing programs. Bill Schock is looking for information on: the nutritional value of different grasses, electric fencing, and what is involved to complete the archeological certification. Alisha will research these items.

University of Arizona (Ashley Wright): She discussed that 3 specialists were just hired. She is working on grants and is planning to have a conference in Tucson in October.

Arizona Game & Fish: Per Gerry Berthelette, he works in Landowner Relations and with Quail Forever to develop habitat that would benefit wildlife. They work on big and small projects. Recently, they removed mesquite on 5,000 acres in partnership with Altar Valley. Dan Bell asked if projects can be done on Federal land (Yes, per Gerry) and if signage is available (Per Gerry, in Region 5 contact Matt Walton). Per Bill Schock, he is trying to get permission to remove mesquite on a BLM lease (Per Gerry, Bill should call him to discuss the situation).

Arizona Land and Water Trust: Per Cameron Becker (Director of Land Programs), Andrew Quarles (Conservation Program Associate) was just hired. They just did a soils workshop with Whitewater Draw NRCDC and are looking for other organizations to partner with to have soils workshops. Bailey Kinnett (Director of Desert River Programs) is still there and focused on water rights. They are using consultants for archeological surveys. Bill Schock is interested in soil surveys on ranch lands.

Borderlands Restoration: Tess Wagner is the manager for the restoration program. They can assist in areas such as funding, workshops and staffing.

Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape Program: Per Amber Morin (Program Coordinator), she is working on 4 new grant programs with a focus on work on the ground. On October 18, a partnership meeting will be held in Benson. Per Stephen Williams, our District Cooperators need to take advantage of such grant application services and solicit help with the grant writing.

OLD BUSINESS

SC NRCDC Scholarship: Dean Fish was absent. No business was conducted.

Santa Cruz County Fair Update: Per Stephen Williams, he filed an on-line application for a 10x10 booth for the County Fair. Per Dan Bell, he has ordered pencils and erasers. The County will provide free busing for the students. Rain gauges were too expensive, \$40 each; so, rain gauges will not be available. Mike Crimmins, UofA Cooperative Extension, has instructions for making a rain gauge. Dan will get a demonstration gauge and will contact the County to get the rolling rivers demo. Per Stephen Williams, he will change the District's application from a 10x10 to a 10x20 booth space.

Open SCNRCDC Board Position Update: Per Stephen Williams, he talked to Jim Koweek about the position and have not heard back from him.

Monitoring Update for 2022: Per Dan Bell, the US Forest Service is planning to do monitoring. Alisha Phipps and Jim Koweek will put together the monitoring list. The property owner needs to be a

Cooperator to get the monitoring service. Dan Bell moved to fund the monitoring for \$6,250. Bill Schock seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 3-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Borderlands Earth Care Youth (BECY) - (Nick Dekhtyr, Arizona Representative – High School Youth SRM Forum): Nick gave a presentation on the BECY Program (See attached Presentation). The program focuses on restoring Southern Arizona rangelands by educating students that work with environmental science professionals. The focus is on preventing erosions by building One Rock dams, dispersing seed & plants, and removing invasive species.

2022 AACD Summer Meeting Update: Per Stephen Williams, the meeting was in Phoenix covered topics such as: Arizona water, public lands grazing, climate change impact on Arizona, and soil health. The following are the newly elected officers:

- Tina Thompson, President (Willcox-San Simon NRCD)
- Dawn Salcito, 1st Vice President (Triangle NRCD)
- Tim Grandy, 2nd Vice President (Buckeye Valley NRCD)
- Frank Krentz, Whitewater Draw NRCD, Past President
- Ray Martinez, Parker Valley NRCD, Secretary
- Daric Knight, Apache NRCD, Treasurer

Call to the Public: none

Supervisor & Clerk Reports

- Dan Bell: No fire has been on his side of the valley. Nogales has had significant flooding
- Bill Schock: He is doing brush removal. The Lehman lovegrass is getting very high; so, there is a lot of forage for the limited cattle. This extra forage could make next year's fire season bad. The catclaw is growing and his one rock dams are still doing well.
- Stephen Williams: He will cover grants in the next newsletter.

Adjourn: Dan Bell moved to adjourn the meeting. Bill Schock seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. 3-0. The Meeting adjourned at 1:56 pm.

Planned next meeting date: Oct 19

Final Minutes Submitted by: Chris Postel

Date: November 3, 2022

Approval of Minutes: _____

Date: _____