



Santa Cruz Natural Resource Conservation District and Education Center

Santa Cruz Regular Meeting April 26, 2023 Final Minutes

Location: Wild Horse Restaurant, Patagonia, AZ

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

Agencies & Guests: Karen Riggs (Guest Note Taker)

Called to Order: 12:05 pm

Review/Approval of Minutes, February 22 & April 7, 2023: The minutes were reviewed. Dan requested two changes to the February 22 minutes. The first, under Open Board Position, is to change "Layman" to "Lyman." The second, under his Supervisor's Report, is to strike "dropped their lawsuit" and insert "filed their Notice of Intent to Sue." Dan moved to approve the minutes as amended. Bill seconded. The motion passed 3-0.

Treasurer's Report: Dan presented the Treasurer's Report. The State Account balance is \$7,076.34. The Ed Center Account balance is \$10,220.26. The SCNRCD Local Account balance is \$151,176.54 consisting of \$120,209.91 in the District Account, \$15,556.05 in CD1, and \$15,410.58 in CD2. Bill made a motion to file the Treasurer's Report. Stephen seconded. The motion passed 3-0.

Administration Update (See Attached Invoice):

a. Clerk's Invoice: Action was deferred due to the Clerk's absence.

b. Santa Fe Ranch workday: A new battery will be needed for the watershed trailer. Dan moved to allocate up to \$250 for repairs and parts for the watershed trailer. Bill seconded. The motion passed 3-0. The workday is scheduled for Tuesday, May 16, at 8am.

AGENCY UPDATES

NRCS: The NRCS Team 7 Report, as provided by Alisha Phipps for SCNRCD, was accepted as written for the record.

OLD BUSINESS

SC NRCD Scholarship: Dean reported that the applications will be ready for review by May 15. He will advise us of any applicants who merit our assistance. An entity called Kaleidoscope gathers and manages the applications.

Open SCNRCD Board Position Update: Dan approached Shane Lyman, a retired Nogales Ranger District employee, about filling the vacancy. He is considering it and will let Dan know of his decision soon.

Signage Update: Dan will check with a Nogales sign shop about making signs for the District's north and east boundaries, and the Santa Fe Ranch. He will also check with the Hereford NRCD about who made their signs.

2022 Monitoring Update: Heather Knight, NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist, is working on a written report that summarizes the District funded rangeland monitoring done in the Fall of 2022.

Updated Bank Signature Cards: Dan and Stephen signed updated signature cards for all District accounts on February 22, 2023 at the National Bank of Arizona branch in Sonoita.

Santa Fe Ranch Field Day: This is scheduled for Friday, May 19, at 8:30am. The same stations we have had in the past will be repeated, except a possible replacement of the plant identification station with a soil texture station. Two NRCS employees, and potentially some UofA range management students, will be participating, too.

Santa Cruz County Fair Booth: The Vendor Form was filed electronically by Stephen. Dan had a check in the amount of \$175 ready for Stephen to deliver to the Fairground to pay for the booth rental. He will let Vendor Coordinator, Mary Wood, know that we would like the space we had last year again this year.

AACD Board Meeting and Legislative Day: Stephen reported on the April 2 and 3 meeting and visit to the Legislature. The focus was HB2444, which is the NRCD Commission Funding bill. April 2 was a discussion about implementing rules and project application review procedures. April 3 was appointments with select House and Senate members to provide information about what the Districts do in the way of conservation activities. The bill is currently awaiting final approval in the Senate, as it has already been approved in the House.

Dean raised the issue about reimbursement for expenses for any District representative who attends meetings on behalf of the District. Stephen stated that would be a worthy topic for discussion at a future Board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Conservation Action Plan: Stephen inquired of the Board how they would like to proceed, or not, on the Conservation Action Plan after listening to AACD's Deborrah Smith's tutorial on April 7's teleconference. She told us that Lamar Smith is working on Chapters 1-3 for the SCNRCD. Chapters 4 and 5 would be the obligation of the District to complete. Chapters 4 and 5 are the current situation (needs) and coordination and funding, respectively. A contractor to perform the tasks to complete the Chapters could run up to \$4,000.

Dan stated that based on the land status in our District the Forest Service is an important partner to coordinate with. He has already asked Nogales R.D. range conservationist Shawn Lockwood what plans the FS has that the District should be aware of. He is awaiting a response. He is O.K. with a \$4,000 contractor fee and noted we have those funds available.

Bill supports proceeding to find a contractor and emphasized that person has to be competent and able to provide a credible work product. He also emphasized the need to find funding sources outside of the usual funding sources for conservation practices.

Andy sent an email indicating there needs to be a way to manage the planning effort since the money for projects is coming. He is concerned about who and how the Plan will be managed. He is for the effort as it fits our charter and therefore needs to be a planning priority.

Dean suggested using Arizona Land and Water Trust as a contact for finding a potential contractor.

Stephen offered to contact Deborrah Smith about what contractor might be available for assisting our District.

Call to the Public: None

Supervisor & Clerk Reports

Dan Bell: Fire season has officially started. He told us about a fire which caused fire crews to cut the fence around the Gooding Research Natural Area. This allowed his cattle to enter the Area. This resulted in a nasty letter from Western Watersheds, even after he removed the cattle. He expects the Center for Biological Diversity to file its lawsuit against the Forest Service soon for alleged damage to riparian areas and Yellow-billed Cuckoo habitat.

Bill Schock: He attended a Drought Response Workshop in Patagonia on March 22. It explored use of LIDAR for water recharge projects.

Next Possible Teleconference Dates: These will be for preparing a District Plan of Work and a Year-End Report for the ASLD. Suggested dates are June 14 and July 12. A morning meeting on June 14 is not preferred due to early morning cattle work in June.

Adjourn: The Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Final Minutes Submitted by: Chris Postel

Date: September 6, 2023

Approval of Minutes: _____

Date: _____