



Santa Cruz Natural Resource Conservation District

Santa Cruz NRCD Regular Meeting May 25, 2024 Draft Minutes

Location: Wild Horse Restaurant, Patagonia, AZ

Board Supervisors & Clerk: Stephen Williams, Dan Bell (Via phone), Bill Schock, Christin Peterson, and Chris Postel (Clerk).

Agencies & Guests: Heather Spieth, Mynesha Holliday & Samantha Yazzie (Natural Resource Conservation Service – NRCS), Rodolfo Martinez Morales & Ashley Wright (UofA Cooperative Extension), and Nick Schobinger (AZ Game & Fish Dept).

Called to Order: 12:30 pm

Review/Approval of February 28, 2024 Minutes: No questions were asked. Chris Peterson moved to approve the minutes. Bill Schock seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 3-0.

Treasurer's Report (See Attached Report): Dan Bell presented the Treasurer's Report. The SCNRCD State account balance is \$16,877.33 and the Local account balance is \$152,459.63. Stephen Williams asked about the status of the NRCWAY check, per Dan it had been deposited. Bill Schock made a motion to file the Treasurer's Report. Chris Peterson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 4-0.

Administration Update and Clerk's Invoice: Per the Clerk, he has been updating the website, (adding more pictures), <https://santacruznr.cd.org/> and he will send the link to the Board for their review. Labor & expenses for Feb-May (\$1,908.43) were reviewed. No questions were asked. Chris Peterson moved to approve the Clerk's invoice. Bill Schock seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 3-0.

Agency Updates:

NRCS (Samantha Yazzie): Samantha reviewed the attached report. Per Stephen Williams, he reviewed the SCNRCD's key resource concerns (Noxious plants, inadequate water & soil erosion) with Alisha Phipps (NRCS) earlier this week. Per Alisha, these are the same resource concerns for 2023 and 2024. See the attached document.

Arizona Game & Fish Department (Nick Schobinger): Per Nick, the Landowner Relations program funding requests are due July 12. The HPC partnership program has \$3-4 million available in funding and the requests are due in September. Both of these programs funds can be used as an EQIP (NRCS) match. Brad Fulk, Section 8 supervisor, is retiring. Big game auction tags are being eliminated next year and raffle tags will replace them. The AGF Commission will not establish Mearns Quail season dates until after the Department determines the results of the summer monsoon moisture on quail reproduction.

UofA Cooperative Extension (Ashley Wright): Per Ashley, their funding level is OK but still have a hiring freeze. They just hired 2 statewide, range specialists and are in the process of hiring a state veterinarian. By July 1, the hiring freeze will be lifted. She is planning beginning ranching workshops.

She introduced Rodolfo Martinez Morales as the new Director of the Santa Cruz County Extension office.

OLD BUSINESS

Signs: Per Stephen Williams, the vendor that made the signs is no longer in business. He will check with other Districts to see who they are using.

Conservation Action Plan: Per Stephen Williams, no funding from AACD is available for Kyle Thompson to write Chapters 4,5, and 6. Lamar Smith wrote Chapters 1-3. Bill Schock with contact Deborah Smith (AACD) to get copies of Chapters 1-3 to review.

CBD/UFS Lawsuit Update & Board's Potential Action: Per Dan Bell, there is a new 150-day stay on the Lawsuit until August 29. There is a new schedule of orders but with no resolution. Nothing will happen until March 2025. The fundraising has been going well and all bills are currently paid. More fundraising is being done at the Marana Stockyard. Stephen Williams asked if the District should donate funds now. Per Dan, we still have time to make a donation and should wait until next year.

Rangeland Monitoring: Per Stephen Williams, our past monitoring has had an emphasis on gathering upland data that would be available for the record in a lawsuit. The District should consider also monitoring riparian areas. Bill Schock asked "What is riparian?" Do they need to have running water? Per Stephen Williams, proximity to water is considered. The monitoring protocols are very different for riparian areas versus other habitats.

Board Vacancy: Per Stephen Williams, the Board still has an open vacancy. Stephen encouraged those present to solicit a Cooperator to fill the vacancy.

NEW BUSINESS

2024 Election Update:

- **Select Temporary Chairman:** Bill Schock made a motion to appoint Stephen Williams as the temporary Chairman. Chris Peterson seconded. The motion passed unanimously 3-0.
- **Submit 2 Appointed Supervisor Nominees to the State Land Department:** Stephen Williams made a motion to submit the appointed supervisors, Dan Bell and Stephen Williams, to State Land. Chris Peterson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 3-0.

2024 Santa Fe Ranch Days & Nogales Water Festival (Project WET):

Santa Fe Ranch Days: Per the Clerk, 44 students from Desert Shadow Middle School attended the Ranch Days.

Project WET: Per Stephen Williams, Project WET was held on May 14 at the Nogales High School. Two high school science teachers worked with Junior high school students for 2-3 months to prepare them for teaching to the younger students. The UofA sponsors are considering using the Nogales model statewide. Bill Schock was wondering if the District could get a below ground water display for use at the Fair booth.

Review/Approve F2024 AACD Due Request: Per Dan Bell, the 2023 dues were \$1,500. Dan Bell made a motion to pay up \$1,500 for the 2024 AACD dues. Chris Peterson seconded. The motion passed. 3-1.

Review & Approve Plan of Work & Funds Request: The Clerk reviewed the Santa Cruz NRCD's Plan of Work and the one Funds Request. Bill Schock made a motion to approve the Plan of Work and the one Funds Request. Chris Peterson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 3-0.

Supervisors & Clerk Reports

Bill Schock: He got BLM approval to remove mesquite and brush. He is talking to NRCS regarding establishing formal guidance for building One Rock dams. He used staff from Quail Forever to build One Rock dams on his ranch.

Chris Peterson: She is trying to determine how to put in poles and concrete (5x5x4) to hold solar panels for a well to comply with her EQIP contract. She is waiting on archeological surveys and approval.

Stephen Williams: The Legislation to create a separate NRCD board has gone through the House and Senate. This Board will be comprised of District Supervisors and other personnel to review submitted projects for funding. By the end of the legislative session, it should be sent to the Governor for her signature.

Call to the Public: None

Adjourn: Bill Schock moved to adjourn the meeting. Chris Peterson seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. 3-0. The Meeting adjourned at 1:37 pm.

Planned next meeting date: July 17, 2024 (Teleconference)

Draft Minutes Submitted by: Chris Postel

Date: May 28, 2024

Approval of Minutes: _____

Date: _____