



# Santa Cruz Natural Resource Conservation District

Santa Cruz NRCD Regular Meeting

February 26, 2025

Draft Minutes

**Location:** Wild Horse Restaurant, Patagonia, AZ

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

**Agencies & Guests:** Heather Spieth & Austin Urcadez (Natural Resource Conservation Services – NRCS), Ashley Wright & Rodolpho Martinez (UA Cooperative Extension).

**Called to Order:** 12:00 pm

**Review/Approval of 12/11/24 Minutes:** Dan Bell moved to approve the final minutes. Chris Peterson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 4-0.

**Treasurer's Report:** Dan presented the Treasurer's Report. The State Account balance is \$18,732. The Ed Center Account balance is \$18,792. The SCNRCD Local Account balance is \$151,587. Bill Schock made a motion to file and accept the Treasurer's Report. Chris Peterson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 4-0.

**Clerk Invoice & Administration Update:** The next meeting date will be May 28, 2025. The next newsletter will be in March, 2025.

- **Clerk's Invoice (Jan-Feb, 2025):** The Clerk reviewed the invoice. Bill Schock moved to pay the invoice, \$1,196.74. Chris Peterson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 4-0.

## **AGENCY UPDATES**

**UofA Cooperative Extension (Ashley Wright):** She has to use all of the program funds by March 15. The Range Livestock workshop has been rescheduled to the Summer or Fall. They are still doing the beginning farmer workshops in March & April. The livestock specialist position is still open. Dan Bell got the Beef Quality Assurance program certificate and was wondering if continuing education credits would be earned by attending the workshops. She said that the education credits would be earned.

**NRCS (Heather Spieth NRCS report is attached):** The funding for fiscal year 2025 is unknown and IRA funding has been paused; so, no new contracts. 2025 local work groups need to be held.

### **Team 7 Staffing Updates:**

- Tucson Office – Natural Resources Specialist selected Austin Urcadez (transferring from Sells Field Office), started 1/12/2025.
- Douglas Office – Soil Conservationist, new employee, Tania Hanline, will be starting 1/27/2025.
- Sells Office – Iris Francisco resigned 11/1/24
- Team Lead – Tom Reis has taken a new position with Arizona NRCS serving as the Resource Conservationist for Ralph Ware, Assistant State Conservationist-Field Operations (ASTC-FO) effective 12/15/24. He will no longer be supervising the Field Offices in Team 7.
- Team Lead- Heather Spieth has been appointed Acting Supervisor

**UofA Cooperative Extension-Santa Cruz County (Rodolfo Martinez Morales):** He gave the Mesquite presentation at Yavapai College.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Signs:** Per Stephen Williams, he contacted Wicked Limitz (Sierra Vista) and 3 signs would be \$1,478. He will finalize the signs which includes graphics and determine where to install them.

**Board Vacancy:** Per Stephen Williams, he talked to Parker Mejia, Arizona Ag Flyers (provides drone services) but he does not own any land in the District. Dan Bell will talk to Jim Peachy, he has pasture and boards horses.

**Conservation Board Status:** Per Stephen Williams, the Governor's office is in the final stages of forming and announcing the new NRCD Commission board. After the board has been formed, they will start meeting to define the structure.

**Conservation Action Plan (CAP) Update:** Per Stephen Williams, AACD has contractors to do the work, but no grant money to pay them. Amber Morin will work on the remaining chapters.

**Jim Koweek Invoice for 2024 Monitoring:** Bill Schock moved to pay the invoice, \$4,250. Chris Peterson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. 4-0.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**2025 AACD Dues:** Tabled until May 28, 2025 meeting. Paid \$1,500 dues in 2024 & 2023.

**Grants Update:** Reviewed during NRCS report.

**Local Work Group (LWG) Update:** Per Stephen Williams, he attended a Local Work Group training in Willcox with NRCS team 8 and AACD in early February. New written LWG instructions will be distributed to the District. The Districts will chair the meetings to identify and discuss resource concerns; then, projects will be identified to address the resource concerns. In the past, the Winkelman, Pima & Santa Cruz Districts conducted joint LWG meetings. Bill Schock will revise & simplify the Santa Cruz NRCD resource concerns questionnaire which should address both rancher and farmer concerns. The revised District questionnaire will be sent to the Cooperators.

**Babacomari Watershed Water Sampling Project (See attached Writeup):** Per Bill Schock, Jonathan Hasenstab (UA graduate student) is conducting a study to determine water quality and potential recharge areas in the Babacomari Creek watershed. He needs \$2,000 to complete the study. Dan Bell suggested that the Board has a zoom call with Jonathan to discuss the study and funding requirements. Bill Schock will contact Jonathan to suggest possible dates in the late afternoon.

## **Supervisor & Clerk Reports**

- **Bill Schock:** He has removed mesquite on 53 acres.
- **Dan Bell:** The Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) lawsuit will not be decided until Dec-Jan. A lot more steps need to be completed. Two more species were added. He is still working with US Forest Service on a virtual fence project for 170 cows. He has collared 100 cattle at a cost of \$50/cow. Since collars do not stay in place on a bull's neck GPS ear tags will be used instead. Overall, he thinks that virtual fencing will reduce his liability and help with managing the cattle better, such as during gathering. Per Heather Spieth, virtual fencing now is a practice that can be cost shared. The base stations and the first year subscription costs would be paid for by NRCS.

- Christin Peterson: Her projects are in limbo. She is using META glasses (\$300) to take videos.
- Stephen Williams: Need dates and funding for Project WET & Santa Fe Ranch days.

**Adjourn**: Chris Peterson moved to adjourn the meeting. Dan Bell seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. 4-0. The Meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm.

Planned next meeting date: May 28, 2025

Draft Minutes Submitted by: Chris Postel

Date: March 2, 2025

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

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