

New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) Meeting

Approved Minutes

Ruidoso Convention Center

111 Sierra Blanca Drive

Ruidoso, New Mexico

October 27, 2015, 10:00 am

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: Commissioners Pipkin and Norris were absent. All other Commissioners were present (see roll call).
2. Approval of Agenda: Commissioner Glass moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Varela López seconded and the motion was passed by all present Commissioners.
3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (06/24/2015): Commissioner Glass requested 2 corrections. Commissioner Varela López moved to approve the amended agenda. Commissioner Sanchez seconded and the motion was passed by all present Commissioners.

New Business

4. Introductions of new staff: Julie Maitland introduced specialist Katie Kruthaupt and program coordinator JoAnne Contaldo from the NMDA APR division.
5. Legislative Priorities: Commissioner Estrada stated he was concerned about the District Court of Appeals ruling against the state or public entities working with the Forest Service for forest thinning because it restricts SWCD stewardship ability. Since it's a federal ruling, this would be an issue to bring to the congressional delegation.
Chairman Hunt asked NMACD if there was a legislative agenda. Debbie Hughes (NMACD) stated there is no legislative agenda yet but NMACD will try to address the ruling that farmers will be required to have workers compensation insurance.
Brent Van Dyke (NMACD) stated the upcoming legislative session is a 30-day session and unless it's a funding issue, it comes on the call of the governor.
Ms. Hughes stated there may be legislation regarding Hidalgo SWCD and thermal and water pollution. The Oil Conservation Division is currently the regulatory body, but wants to move it to another agency. Commissioner Glass suggested asking for funding for state and regional water plans. Kenny Salazar (NMACD) stated NMACD makes sure recurring funds continue and don't get reduced. Ms. Hughes

stated this session there is talk of state government cuts because of the oil and gas slump, so it isn't a year to ask for increases, but to keep what we have. The way the Water Trust Board legislation reads is you get a lot of points if watershed projects are in the regional water plan, so it's critical to put funding priorities in regional water plans.

6. San Francisco SWCD board vacancy appointments: Commissioner Glass asked for resumes of the board members proposed by the San Francisco SWCD before approval. Chairman Hunt suggested approval of the candidates conditional upon San Francisco SWCD submitting qualifications of the SWCD board candidates. Commissioner Sanchez moved to accept the proposed board members pending a summary of qualifications of the candidates. Commissioner Glass seconded and the motion was passed by all present Commissioners.
7. Letter of Support for Guadalupe SWCD: Vincent Cordova (Guadalupe SWCD) presented a draft letter of support for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) project proposal (see attached). After discussion, Commissioner Estrada moved to sign the letter of support. Commissioner Sanchez seconded and the motion was passed by all present Commissioners.
8. WQ&C Grant FY17 RFP approval/SWCC funding priorities: Patricia Depner (NMDA) presented the FY17 WQ&C grant RFP for approval. Commissioner Varela López moved to approve the RFP. Commissioner Glass seconded and the motion was passed by all present Commissioners. Ms. Depner asked if the SWCC had any funding priorities for the FY17 WQ&C grant. After discussion, hydrogeology projects were suggested as a funding priority for the WQ&C grant RFP review committee.
9. Point System worksheet FY16 approval/potential changes: Johnna Bruhn (NMDA) presented the FY16 point system worksheet for approval. Commissioner Glass moved to approve the worksheet. Commissioner Varela López seconded and the motion was passed by all present Commissioners. Ms. Bruhn presented a letter requesting a committee to review the point system for potential changes (see attached). Commissioner Glass moved to appoint a point system review committee. Commissioner Varela López seconded and the motion was passed by all present Commissioners. Commissioner Glass volunteered to be on this committee.

10. Riparian/Wilderness Management: Commissioner Estrada described the lack of proper wilderness management in New Mexico and how the lack of adequate forest thinning is harming the watershed. Commissioner Estrada called upon the SWCDs to continue to work with the congressional members for watershed management and stressed the need to attend the forest revision meetings.

Old Business

11. Guadalupe SWCD election update: Ms. Bruhn stated the Guadalupe election process is complete. There was only one candidate for each position, so the election was cancelled per SWCD election rules.
12. SWCC Election/Referendum Rules Advisory Committee: Commissioner Varela López presented the committee findings and proposed changes to the election rules. After discussion, it was decided to have the committee draft language to change the election rules.
13. SWCC logo Zia Pueblo letter update: Ms. Depner stated the Zia pueblo replied to the SWCC letter requesting permission to use the Zia sun symbol in the SWCC logo by granting permission on the condition of receiving a donation to the Zia Community Development Fund. Ms. Depner stated NMDA has asked for government-to-government courtesy in lieu of a donation and is waiting for a response from the Zia Pueblo.

Reports/Verbal Highlights (5 min. each; written reports required 72 hours in advance)

14. Commissioners: Commissioner Sanchez had no report at this time.
Commissioner Glass reported the San Juan SWCD is working on phreatophyte control, forest thinning, and water sampling on the Aminas. San Juan SWCD also received funding from 604 B and from a state severance tax grant. Coronado SWCD is working on watershed restoration demonstration in the Placitas area and the Piedra Liza dam issue. Ciudad SWCD has new board member that replaced Dale Kennedy. The RiverXchange program is reaching 70 elementary schools with watershed education. Commissioner Glass is giving a presentation on SWCD and watersheds for the NM Infrastructure Finance conference in Albuquerque this Friday.
Chairman Hunt reported the Deming and Hidalgo SWCDs are providing Representative Pierce with info for the bill to return Wilderness Study Areas to multiple use status. Quemado SWCD is clearing brush. The Grant SWCD is applying for Natural Resource Trustee funding to restore a portion of the Cienega in the Mangas watershed to what is once was.

Commissioner Varela López reported most of the region 2 SWCDs have had or are preparing to have their annual meetings and the attendance has been good.

Commissioner Estrada reported the region received rains which caused an influx of weeds and a grasshopper infestation. Commissioner Estrada attended Forest Service plan revision meetings and calls for all SWCDs to attend and provide input. The Canadian watershed project has done very well, eradicating over 10,000 acres of non-native plants.

15. Governor's Office: none

16. New Mexico Department of Agriculture: Julie Maitland (NMDA) gave an update on the dam rehabilitation project and reported the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) is open for comment until November 2, 2015.

17. Natural Resources Conservation Service: Xavier Montoya (NRCS) reported the EQUIP program is obligated for 19.8 million, which is a funding cut off 2-3 million. NRCS total payment for this year were 28.8 million to producers. The CSP and RCCP are big programs in New Mexico.

18. New Mexico Environment Department: none

19. Water Quality Control Commission: Howard Hutchinson gave a report on the WQCC tri-annual review of the New Mexico water quality standards, which focused of the temporary standards proposed by the Environment Department in response the EPA rule making for states water quality standards adoption that would allow for dredge-and-fill and operations that SWCDs are involved with such as watershed and forest restoration.

Commissioner Sanchez stated we all need to learn more about the lessons learned from the Animas river mine spill. John Arrington (San Juan SWCD) stated they will give a presentation at their annual meeting on December 8th, but will give a summary to anyone that's interested.

20. New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts: Kenny Salazar presented the NMACD report.

21. New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts: Commissioner Varela López presented the NMCCD report.

22. NMSU College of Agriculture: none
23. New Mexico Conservation District Employees (NMCDE): Emma Deyo reported in increase in paid dues, and the NMCDE gave several well-attended trainings.
24. Public Comment: none
25. Next Meeting: TBA
26. Adjourn: Commissioner Sanchez moved to adjourn. Commissioner Estrada seconded and the motion was passed by all present Commissioners.