

New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) Meeting
Final Minutes (Approved 6/15/2017)
Farmington Courtyard by Marriot
Farmington, New Mexico
October 25, 2016, 8:00 am

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: Commissioner Estrada was absent at the beginning of the meeting. All other commissioners were present (see roll call).
2. Approval of Agenda: Commissioner Sanchez moved to approve the agenda and Commissioner Glass seconded. The motion was unanimously passed by all present commissioners.
3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (06/03/2016): Commissioner Glass moved to approve the minutes and Commissioner Varela López seconded. The motion was unanimously passed by all present commissioners.

New Business

4. Hagerman-Dexter request to hold mil levy referendum: Commissioner Varela López moved to approve the referendum and Commissioner Norris seconded. The motion was unanimously passed by all present commissioners.
5. Carrizozo request to become a 7-member board and appointed supervisor approval: Commissioner Norris moved to approve the request and Commissioner Varela López seconded. The motion was unanimously passed by all present commissioners.
6. Appointed Supervisor approval
 - Central Curry: Madeline Hettinga (6), Aaron Scott (7)
 - Hidalgo: Meira Gault (6), Walt Anderson (7)
 - Taos: George Long (6)

Commissioner Sanchez moved to approve the appointed supervisors and Commissioner Glass seconded. The motion was unanimously passed by all present commissioners.

Old Business

Commissioner Estrada joined the meeting.

7. WQ&C RFP approval, WQ&C FY18 Grant cost share guidance, FY18 funding priorities: Johnna Bruhn (NMDA) presented the WQ&C draft RFP. After discussion it was determined cost share proposals

need to be very specific regarding the nature of the cost share program and with a maximum 70/30 split. Commissioner Glass moved to approve the RFP and proposed cost share proposal guidelines and Commissioner Varela López seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Point System survey results and potential change approval: Johnna Bruhn presented the point system survey and responses. After discussion, the item was tabled until the next SWCC meeting.
9. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with U.S. Department of Agriculture and Forest Service: Chairman Hunt is working with Erica Luna to reactivate the MOA. The document is at the Forest Service contracts department, so the MOA should be signed soon.

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

10. Commissioners: Commissioner Glass: Many of the Region 1 districts have submitted their annual reports. Valencia SWCD is working on a Land Use Plan (LUP) and is also working on the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area restoration project on 12 acres of the bosque. Valencia SWCD is also advocating a rural climate policy platform. San Juan SWCD received an award from NMED for their involvement in the gold king mine spill disaster. Over 2 million gallons in hazardous fuel has been removed. San Juan SWCD has projects including microbial source tracking, Envirothon, Youth Conservation, and Rolling Rivers. Coronado SWCD finished their LUP and is involved in the Mid-region Council of Governments Water Resources board. Coronado SWCD has made great strides with their erosion control project in the Placitas area using volunteer help. Ciudad SWCD received a Non-federal Lands (NFL) grant to continue work on the east mountains watershed improvement. Ciudad SWCD is putting reflective house numbers on homes for fire safety. They received a WQ&C grant for conducting integrated conservation workshops that reached 150 people. They also run 3rd and 4th grade school watershed education programs, and have a Rolling Rivers display at the current Water Festival. Ciudad SWCD is involved with Mid-region Council of Governments Water Resources board, and Ciudad's representative was elected chair of that board.
Commissioner Varela López: Half of Region 2 have had annual meetings and the rest are preparing for them. Two SWCDs received NFL grants. Two SWCDs are forest plan leads for the Cibola national forest. Several SWCDs received funding from the Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance for forest and riparian projects. Santa Fe-Pojoaque SWCD has an issue with one of their flood control dams. It is at the end of its useful life, and needs 670 cubic yard of sediment removed at a cost of 10 million dollars. One large storm may cause water to go over the emergency spillway. The land below the dam was originally farmland, but now has hundreds of houses. The SWCD is researching interim measures to prevent flooding.

Chairman Hunt: Deming SWCD established drip systems on almost every farm in Luna County.

Deming SWCD is concerned the watching desert peaks monument may cause more monuments to be designated in Luna county. Sierra SWCD is facilitating forest planning meetings for Gila and Cibola in their district, and is the fiscal agent for the project derived from AZ Water Settlement plan. The goal is to establish permanent irrigation diversions on the Gila separate from the controversial larger diversion. The SWCD is in the process of selecting engineering firms to design irrigation structures.

Commissioner Estrada: The statewide conservation efforts by all the SWCDs have kept the soil intact during the ongoing drought. This includes riparian restoration, which is why it's more important than ever to continue to protect our watersheds. US water designations policies are negatively impacting Murphy Lake in the Western Mora SWCD.

Commissioner Sanchez: Commissioner Estrada is very knowledgeable and is a valuable asset to the state conservation effort, but Commissioner Sanchez wanted to provide a correction to his statements. The Clean Water Act isn't policy, it is federal law, as is the National Wetlands Protection Act. They are set forth to protect the waterways and without these laws, the waterways and streams would be stripped and the bedrock would be removed and there would be no watershed. Commissioner Estrada agreed we need laws and regulations but when they are used to the extreme it hampers people's livelihood.

Commissioner Norris: The southeast part of New Mexico had a nice summer with rain and the SWCDs were able to spray for mosquitoes in several counties. Several SWCDs are involved in cleaning up waste water coming off oil fields, and will continue to pursue these efforts.

11. Governor's Office: Julie Maitland (NMDA) provided a report for the Governor's office and NMDA. The Governor signed the budget bills from the special session that will result in a 5% cut for higher education and 5.5 % for other agencies. As NMDA is legislatively tied to New Mexico State University, the 5% budget reduction affects the SWCD operating funds, as well as TSP and general appropriations. Secretary Jeff Witte is anticipating additional cuts of between 2 and 4 %. NMDA is taking steps to adjust their budget, so there will be personnel reductions at certain meetings. There is no anticipated change in support to SWCDs for this year, but it may change next year depending on the budget reductions. NMDA will hold positions that become vacant for budget reasons and will fill them at later dates. The dam project received some Department of Homeland Security funding and the project is progressing well. Lacy Levine replaced Les Owen as Program Manager.
12. New Mexico Department of Agriculture: see governor's report.
13. Natural Resources Conservation Service: Xavier Montoya (NRCS) stated NRCS is under a continuing resolution, so is only funded for 22% of the fiscal year due to the upcoming Presidential election. The

resolution also cuts several programs such as EQIP by 7%. Some programs will undergo changes in the next year.

14. New Mexico Environment Department: Greg Hoffman discussed 2 grant programs that SWCDs can take advantage of, one federal and one state.
15. Water Quality Control Commission: Howard Hutchinson presented the WQCC report.
16. New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts: Jim Berlier gave the NMACD annual report.
17. New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts: Commissioner Varela López gave the NMCCD report.
18. NMSU College of Agriculture: N/A
19. New Mexico Conservation District Employees: Melissa May had annual meeting in April. There are some board vacancies but NMCDE is looking to fill the positions. Training scholarship available for SWCD employees.
20. Public Comment: Debbie Hughes (NMACD) Soil and Water Conservation day at the Capital is scheduled for February 7th, and Ag fest is in the evening of February 7th.
21. Next Meeting : TBA
22. Adjourn: A motion to adjourn was made and seconded and unanimously passed.