

New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) Meeting
Valencia SWCD office
Whitfield Wildlife Center
2424 Hwy 47
Belen, NM
March 31, 2018 10:00am
Approved Minutes

All items for discussion and possible action

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: Commissioner Norris was absent; all other commissioners were present.
2. Welcome Commissioner John “Cyle” Sharp: The SWCC welcomed commissioner Sharp.
3. Approval of Agenda: Commissioner Glass moved to approve the agenda; Commissioner Varela López seconded and the motion passed unanimously by all commissioners present.
4. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (10/25/2017): Commissioner Varela López moved to approve the minutes; Commissioner Estrada seconded and the motion passed unanimously by all commissioners present.

New Business

5. Western Mora request to fill 2 vacancies: Commissioner Estrada moved to appoint Johnny Espinosa to position 1 and Jerry Martinez to position 3 per Western Mora’s recommendation. Commissioner Varela López seconded and the motion passed by all commissioners present.
6. Upper Hondo request to fill 2 vacancies: After discussion, Commissioner Varela López moved to fill the vacant positions with Lela Wright and Clark Taylor. Commissioner Estrada seconded and the motion passed by all commissioners present.
7. Appointed Supervisors: Commissioner Glass moved to approve the appointment of Sue Small to the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). Commissioner Varela López seconded and the motion passed by all commissioners present.
8. Edgewood Boundary Modification: David King (Edgewood SWCD) stated Edgewood SWCD has been operating for years with all the Chilili Land grant in their SWCD. Juan Sanchez (Chilili Land Grant) stated the Chilili Land Grant wants to be only in the Edgewood SWCD. Chairman Hunt explained the process, per the SWCD Act, needed to modify the boundary to include the disputed area of the Chilili Land Grant currently in East Torrance SWCD in the Edgewood’s boundary. Mr. King maintained the entire Chilili Land Grant has always been in the Edgewood SWCD, and the district may have to pursue other options to resolve the issue. After further discussion, Chairman Hunt advised Edgewood SWCD to bring the paperwork required by the SWCD Act to the next SWCC meeting.

9. Mil Levy resolutions: Commissioner Estrada moved to approve the following mil levy resolution.

- Western Mora \$1.00

Commissioner Glass seconded and the motion passed by all commissioners present.

Old Business

1. Move Public Discussion to beginning of meeting: After discussion, Commissioner Glass moved to move public comment to the beginning of the meeting with a 2 minute limit per person. Commissioner Sharp seconded and the motion passed by all commissioners present.

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

2. Commissioners:

Commissioner Estrada: Met with Western Mora regarding an 80-year-old dam that needs significant repairs/reconstruction. Commissioner Estrada is also very involved in forest planning and proper forest management to maintain a healthy forest, and the current plans need to be updated. .

Chairman Hunt: Upper Gila Watershed District was challenged in its ability to collect taxes. The district was taken to court and prevailed, but the defendant has appealed to the New Mexico appellate court. San Francisco SWCD is active in the Arizona water settlement plan attempting to capture 14,000acre feet of water. Dona Ana SWCD has formed the La Union watershed district. Grant County is working to develop forest industry as part of the Gila Forest plan.

Commissioner Varela López: Edgewood held a crop production clinic, and is planning a beekeeping workshop. Claunch –Pinto has installed water catchment tanks at the Mountainair fire station and are working with NRCS for the 2018 RCCP project. They are also waiting for FEMA approval for a hazard fuel project. Santa Fe-Pojoaque is working on phreatophtye removal at the Leonora wetland preserve and is awaiting the final draft of the environmental assessment for the rehabilitation for Santa Cruz Site 1 dam. Commissioner Varela López was at the Roundhouse during Session and represented the SWCC’s neutral position in a committee hearing for HB 163, which approves a lower tax assessment for agricultural land. The bill died in committee but will probably be pursued in future legislative sessions. The major supporter of the bill, Leslie Ellison (Western Landowners Alliance) wants to be on the next SWCC agenda to speak about this issue. The Local Election Act, HB98, also passed.

Commissioner Glass: Several SWCDs attended the SWCD day at the Legislature. San Juan, Valencia, and Ciudad have grants from NACD for agricultural conservation. Commissioner Glass toured Valencia’s sites and they look good. San Juan’s program, Farm Farmington, is also going well. Ciudad had some staff issues and is behind the other programs but are getting up to speed. Ciudad’s new program manager is Shawn Ludden. Ciudad is supporting Bernalillo County’s Grow the Growers

program. San Juan has almost completed riparian restoration on almost 400 acres. Lava is revisiting the Mount Taylor Salt Cedar Removal project. Lava has a new supervisor, Christine Loeffler. A Coronado supervisor resigned and the SWCD is looking for a replacement from the Sandia Pueblo to build a relationship with the pueblo. A walkthrough of the Piedra Lisa dam was done last year and was deemed to be the best kept dam in NM.

Commissioner Sharp: No report at this time.

3. Governor's Office
4. New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA)
Julie Maitland updated the SWCC on the dam rehab project. The final reports are being completed and a project recap will be given at the next SWCC meeting. Patricia Depner reminded the SWCC and ex-officio members to submit names for the Water Quality and Conservation grant review committee.
5. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): Alicia Rodriguez reported NRCS has 38 vacancies, but was only approved to fill 4 positions, which should be filled soon. The 2018 finding will be similar to the 2017 funding.
6. Farm Service Agency (FSA)
7. New Mexico Environment Department (NMED)
8. Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC): Chairman Hunt reported the Supreme Court held up the WQCC decision on the copper rule that polluted water within a copper pit doesn't have to be reclaimed, but if the water is outside the pit, it does. Chairman Hunt will contact Howard Hutchinson for WQCC reports for the SWCC.
9. National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD): Brent Van Dyke: The Farm Bill is tentatively set for markup on the 29th, and the Spring fly in is the 20th so NACD will have an opportunity to have a positive impact. 12 or 13 New Mexico SWCDs are going. It's been a challenge to get appointments with congressmen, especially Michelle Lujan Grisham. NACD is advocating for no Farm Bill cuts above the 2014 level, locally lead conservation, and ensuring agriculture is economically viable. NACD has 3 videos on their website and YouTube that promote national conservation. These videos may be used by the SWCDs for outreach events.
10. New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts: see report

11. New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts (NMCCD): Commissioner Varela López presented the NMCCD report, and stated 18 SWCDs in NMCCD completed their Land Use Plan and more are working to complete theirs.
12. NMSU College of Agriculture
13. New Mexico Conservation District Employees (NMCDE):
14. Public Comment
15. Next Meeting-June
16. Adjourn: Commissioner Varela López moved to adjourn; Commissioner Glass seconded and the motion passed by all commissioners present.