

COMMISSIONERS  
Steve Glass, Region I  
Ross Garcia, Jr., Region II  
Vacant, Region III  
Boe Lopez, Region IV  
Vacant, Region V  
Eddie Vigil, Region VI  
Cyle Sharp, At-Large

*Soil and Water Conservation Commission*  
*MSC APR*  
*P. O. Box 30005*  
*Las Cruces NM 88003-8005*  
*Telephone (575) 646-2642*



---

**New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) Meeting**  
**Via Teleconference**  
**August 1, 2024**  
**9:00 am**  
**Minutes**

All Items for Discussion and Possible Action

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: Commissioner Lopez was absent; all other commissioners were present-see roll call.
2. Approval of Agenda: Commissioner Glass moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Garcia seconded and the motion passed by all commissioners present-see roll call vote.
3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (6/18/2024): Commissioner Garcia moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Glass seconded and the motion passed by all commissioners present-see roll call vote.

**New Business**

Public Comment (*2 minutes per person*) Chair Vigil reported on the SWCC letter sent to the New Mexico Attorney General's office, requesting information regarding the SWCC liaison. New Mexico Assistant Attorney General Daniel Rubin, introduced himself to the commission. The New Mexico Attorney General's Division Director, Blaine Moffatt will be assigning another attorney as liaison, and will contact Lourdes Saenz (NMDA) after establishing the new liaison. Chair Vigil received a response from Mr. Moffatt and will meet with members of the Attorney General's office between August 12, 2024 through September 13, 2024.

4. SWCD Supervisor Appointments:
  - Otero: Richard Baish (6), James Evrage (7)
  - Central Curry: Rachel Armstrong (6), KC Schooley (7)

- Deming: Jamie Viramontes (6), Russell Johnson (7)

Commissioner Glass moved to approve the SWCD supervisor appointments.

Commissioner Garcia seconded and the motion passed by all commissioners present-see roll call vote.

5. Ciudad: Mil Levy Referendum

Commissioner Glass reported Ciudad's SWCD board had adopted a referendum supporting a mil levy measure for the November 2024 ballot. Commissioner Garcia asked Commissioner Glass if this mil levy was new or an increase on a previously existing mil levy. Commissioner Glass responded it was a new mil levy, and that Ciudad doesn't currently have a mil levy. Commissioner Garcia moved to approve Ciudad's mil levy referendum. Commissioner Sharp seconded and the motion passed by all commissioners present-see roll call vote.

**Old Business**

6. Agriculture Workforce Development: Patricia Depner (NMDA) provided an update for the Agriculture Workforce Development (AWD) program. The available \$119,000 program funds were fully allocated for 12 interns. This year's applicants were achieved largely in part of the efforts of Katie Mechenbier (NMDA).

Chair Vigil asked if there was an update on the Healthy Soil Program (HSP). Ms. Depner reported there was no update at this time. Commissioner Sharp noted Dean Bruce (NMDA) was in Mora County 2 weeks ago for an agricultural workshop on the rehabilitation of the burn scar lands, and wanted to recognize the great job Mr. Bruce did with his presentation. Commissioner Glass commented he had attended the outstanding Soil Health and Soil Carbon Conference on July 31<sup>st</sup>, hosted by NMDA's HSP staff. Many people were introduced to the HSP as well as scientific based soil health information shared by researchers. The conference went very well and the attendees were touring healthy soil sites in Valencia County on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the conference.

Commissioner Garcia reported East Rio Arriba also had an HSP workshop that he was not able to attend, however Taos and East Rio Arriba each had a workshop last week. This is the second workshop they've had, which are always well attended and informative. Tanya Duncan (Taos SWCD) has almost completed work on an informative invasive weeds website, which will be a helpful resource for everyone in the state. Commissioner Glass commented NMDA has recently hired a full time Noxious Weed Coordinator, Dylan Burress. Chair Vigil noted Mr. Burress had immediately started his duties and had met him at their last board meeting, just days after having been hired.

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

7. Governor's Office - none
8. New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA): none
9. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): none
10. Forest Service: none
11. Farm Service Agency: none
12. New Mexico Environment Department (NMED): none
13. Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC): Chair Vigil reported he will be in Santa Fe in next 2 weeks, starting August 5<sup>th</sup>, for the continuation of the reused water rules.
14. New Mexico Mining Commission: none
15. National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD): none
16. New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts (NMACD): Debbie Hughes reported NMACD continues to administer the Technical Service Provider (TSP) program. NRCS added additional funds to the program, and there are about 25 employees placed within NRCS offices to assist districts and Farm Bill programs. NMACD is administering a \$2 million contract with Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) to assist Emergency Watershed Programs (EWP) to improve and repair acequias damaged by the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon (HPCC) fires. In addition, they have two contracts with the Forest Service, are assisting with the development of Coordinated Resource Management

Plans (CRMP), as well as documentation of losses of infrastructure from the HPCC fires, helping with the major fences that were damaged, and range monitoring. NMACD was successful in the 2023-2024 legislative process with the Land of Enchantment (LOE) legacy fund. Currently, they are working with staff from LFC (Legislative Finance Committee) on a request for a recurring \$3 million appropriation for district employees. They have been working with several groups including Conservation Legacy, who received funding for 6 climate core interns. The interns will start in in the fall with the following placements: 2 with Dona Ana SWCD, 2 with East Rio Arriba SWCD, 1 with Grant County in partnership with Western New Mexico University, and the last intern with Tierra y Montes SWCD. NMACD will soon be finalizing their agenda for the upcoming 78<sup>th</sup> annual NMACD meeting taking place in Albuquerque on October 28-31, 2024 at the Uptown Sheridan. The commission meeting is on the agenda for the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the annual meeting.

17. New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts (NMCCD): none
18. NMSU College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES): none
19. New Mexico Conservation District Employees (NMCDE): Commissioner Garcia reported Marcos Valdez (East Rio Arriba SWCD) is the current chairman of NMCDE. The basic purpose of the NMCDE is to encourage district employees to attend meetings, training, and have the opportunity to network with others across the state. As the last meeting occurred a few years ago, the NMCDE is planning to meet at the NMACD annual meeting in October. Mr. Valdez reported some of the statewide trainings concerns to Commissioner Garcia such as general office, detailed programmatic training, DFA reporting, audit preparation, main website or portal, as well as a progress group to become a resource to all employees.
20. Next meeting: Chair Vigil proposed the next in-person meeting take place on the first day of the NMACD annual meeting on Monday, October 28 from 1-2pm at the Uptown Sheridan in Albuquerque. Mr. Rubin recommended for the next meeting the SWCC

adopt an Open Meetings Resolution annually at the upcoming meeting, in which their counsel will send a draft Open Meetings Resolution to Ms. Saenz before the next meeting. Ms. Maitland reported an Open Meetings Resolution was recently completed in June, but the counsel is welcome to send a document to ensure an accurate job was performed. Mr. Rubin thanked Ms. Maitland for having already prepared an Open Meetings Resolution for the year.

21. Commissioner Garcia moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Glass seconded and the motion passed by all commissioners present-see roll call vote. Meeting adjourned at 9:31am.