



STATE OF NEVADA  
**STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
901 South Stewart Street, Suite 1003  
Carson City, Nevada 89701  
Phone (775) 684-2717 Fax (775) 684-2715

## MINUTES

### STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Richard H. Bryan Building  
Video/Teleconference Meeting  
901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, NV 89701  
**August 19, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.**

**Board Members Present:** Chairman Joe Sicking, Paradise-Sonoma CD; Vice-Chairman Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD; Leland Wallace, Esmeralda CD; Mark Dameron, CD of Southern Nevada; Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD; Dr. Paul Meiman, UNCE/CABNR, Elko; Doug Martin, Nevada Tahoe CD; Jake Tibbitts, Eureka CD.

**Board Members Absent:** Meghan Brown, NV Dept. of Agriculture.

**Others Present:** Melany Aten, Conservation Districts Program Manager; Jennifer Zampanti, NDCNR Director's Office; Lauren Williams, Ely Conservation Staff Specialist; Gerry Miller, Elko Conservation Staff Specialist; Lorinda Wichman, Nye County Commissioner; Adam Sullivan, State Water Engineer; Kelly McGowan, Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Team Program Manager; Nikhil Narkhede, Off-Highway Vehicles Program Manager; Robert Adams; Tori Sundheim, DAG; Connie Lee, NvACD Executive Director

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER, DETERMINATION OF QUORUM (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)**

- A. Chairman Sicking called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.
- B. A quorum was confirmed. **NO ACTION TAKEN**

#### **2. PUBLIC COMMENTS** There were no public comments.

#### **3. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)**

- A. Minutes amended to correct Paul Meiman's partner update correction to ranch acreages in update – change 64 acres to 644 acres.
- B. Motion made to approve the March 12, 2021 meeting minutes.
- C. Commissioner Damron seconded the motion.
- D. There was a vote and Doug Martin passed the motion. **ACTION TAKEN**

#### **4. DISCUSSION ABOUT NOMINATION OF CHAIRMAN FOR SCC (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)**

- A. There have been no new appointments from the Governor's office to the SCC board.
- B. Unsure of timeline for new appointments.

C. SCC to move forward with current board to nominate chairman.

**5. NOMINATION FOR CHAIRMAN OF SCC – NRS: 548.140 (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)**

A. Doug Martin nominated Joe Sicking.

B. Joe accepted, and Mark Damron seconded the nomination.

C. Leland Wallace moved to close nominations and Joe Sicking was re-appointed as Chairman.

D. Discussion around vice chair position to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

**6. UPDATES FROM AGENCIES AND PARTNERS (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)**

A. NRCS – no update

B. DCNR – Nevada Conservation Districts Program staff gave updates for each region (see PowerPoint presentation attachment 1)

C. NDWR – Adam Sullivan, newly appointed State Engineer for the Division of Water Resources, talked about water issues pertinent to this commission. Top priorities of the division include filling vacancies, training, and provide tools needed; follow through on commitments of predecessors regarding difficult local water dilemmas and have a local presence to communicate what we are doing and why we are doing, including listening to stakeholders; drought is taking up a lot of staff time and energy; have new water planning staff to help be a resource on drought issues; specific update on basin designation orders that came out of our office last year - has had a lot of questions, especially from rural communities; provides a legal designation of what the basin is and establishes the requirement for well drilling and the need to have a water right before drilling the well; held a series of public meetings with a lot of public input with a lot of focus on use for irrigation; another topic mentioned was the replenishment of the Channel Clearance Fund by the Legislative Interim Finance Committee (IFC) that will have a balance for applicants for the funds; long term priorities are consistent with previous priorities, including over appropriations in ground water basins, continued public outreach and local involvement from our office is essential, conjunctive management of surface water and groundwater where there is a hydraulic connection also a focus. Also addressed a question that Joe had regarding domestic wells and the relinquishment of water rights in favor of domestic wells. During the last Legislative session, a new subcommittee to study conservation of water was established, and that committee should be initiated in November, presentation attachment 2

--Commissioner Doug Martin mentioned the NVACD annual meeting in November, theme is "Water-Make Every Drop Count" and mentioned that NDWR will be contacted for that meeting for a panel discussing the policy and politics of water and water conservation. Suggested there is some synergy between NVACD and the new Legislative subcommittee as mentioned previously.

D. SEP/SETT – Kelly McGowan provided update on program and SEC. Sagebrush Ecosystem Council held a face-to-face meeting in July that incorporated a tour including about 35 people. Started in Lander County and visited the McGinnis Hills geothermal plant in the northern part of Grass Valley and had Ormat staff talk about the geothermal plant, including some of the mitigation that was done prior to the Conservation Credit System; then went over to the east side of the Simpsons Parks in Eureka County and stopped by credit producer project at the Three Bar Ranch, then ended tour in Eureka where held the SEC meeting the next morning. The Council has been developing for about 8 years the CCS, so a tremendous amount of time spent by staff and council developing system and going through regulation process to require mitigation. Since the regulation went into force, we had 17 transactions in the CCS and 100% of authorized activities on BLM land that require mitigation are currently in the process of mitigating, so we have very good compliance. The chairman is

very interested on where we go from here because we were not just established to be a mitigation program for a single species but instead were set up to be a Sagebrush Ecosystem program to address as many issues as we can. The SEC reviewed the strategic action plan that was adopted in 2016, and since that plan, a number of federal and state agencies have provided funding that brought tools to help us point our efforts in the most effective locations. The SEC has instructed the SETT to add more meat to the strategic action plan based on new tools available, including developing a larger group to review available tools. Will be an in-depth process because a lot of new science has been developed. It is going to be imperative to get the local input and include not only the CD program, hoping Melany has the time to be a partner in the initial meetings, but also the local area work groups will be a partnership in the development of the plan. Sage Grouse will probably still be a large focus, but we also don't want to ignore opportunities where conservation can be implemented to benefit multiple species. Focus on sagebrush ecosystem in general. Input welcome from local working groups.

E. NDA – no update

F. UNR/UNCE – Dr. Paul Meiman, UNCE/CABNR: Organizational update from the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources (see Attachment 3 for partner update) Melany will send update. County extension educators are still local contacts for county folks as needs arise. Search for extension educator for White Pine County should begin very soon. Budget at campus level, 2021 Legislature used \$23,000,000 of Nevada share of the American Rescue Plan funding to restore some of the positions that were to be held vacant to meet 12% reduction target. Furlough reductions ended July first. Dean Payne said enrollment can have impact on budget at UNR. There is reason to be hopeful about enrollment to affect the budget. Extension to the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislation session there was funding made available to restore cuts to previous years, amounting in \$210,000 a year for two years. No questions.

\*Also gives a brief summary of range, livestock interaction. Virtual fence project ongoing at Cottonwood Ranch and Maggie Creek Ranch. In March, 200 collars were put on cattle that were on BLM land. Large pasture was subdivided, with conventional wire fencing and virtual fencing, into smaller units and it worked well until collars malfunctioned, due to production companies poor supply and manufacturing allowing moisture to get into collars. New collars acquired at Cottonwood, allowing cattle to go into wilderness. Coverage of fence signal is spotty, but better than expected. Presentation and demonstration of virtual fence demonstrated how to set up paddocks, track animals, and use the system. At Maggie Creek, more controlled study was done to determine more controlled stock density to hold animals on more productive sub-irrigated ground near Lamoille and maintain effectiveness of the virtual fence. Graduate student Nathan Giroux ran trials with stock density of 5-20 animals per acre and looked at remaining forage and stubble heights inside and out of the paddock to indicate whether fence is effective. Project starting to test herbicide Indaziflam on annual grasses to combine with Imazapic currently used on cheat grass to minimize impacts on non-target native plants. Large plots 10-40 acres are applied with herbicide and studied aerial for effect on less abundant plants and native forbs in community. This is funded by Fish and Wildlife Service mainly and cooperating with NDOW and Beyer, the producer of herbicide. Partnering with Nevada Gold Mines to do study. Range extension has revised Ranchers Monitoring Guide and copies are available. Working with monitoring groups tied with Winecup-Gamble outcome based grazing demo. One group focuses on uplands and another on repairing areas on monitoring plan and grazing alternative. Ranchers expressed interest in photo point monitoring and qualifying plants. Nevada Gold Mines are interested in coming up with plan for test case. Thanks to Gerry including him on maps of invasive weeds in Elko, Humboldt, and Eureka Counties. No questions.

\*Tori Sundheim answered question about appointing Vice Chair. Statute does not specify Vice Chair statute, but permissible. Vice Chair can only call order and announce agenda. Slough pack cannot have alternative. Alternate would be useful, but can't make decisions. Follow bylaws.

G. NVACD - Connie updates with strategic plan. Jake agreed to save comments for their meeting. Overview of Association of Conservation Districts. Work as state voice for policies and can advocate on behalf of 28 CDs in state and work to provide forums to inform, train, and educate supervisors and recognize outstanding individuals and programs. Will work with CDs to provide Conservation District day at legislature. Provide communication through Listserv and State Conservation District. Make sure fulfilling deliverables responsible for. Will complete template in advance of meeting. Strategic plan almost completed. NVACD annual meeting is November 16-18 with Nevada Farm Bureau meeting in Fallon. Sportsman's raffle to increase funds for scholarship program. Plan with SCC and Nevada association of counties to communicate in future to improve meetings. Thanks to Melany for her update. No questions.

\*Commissioner Doug Martin -At annual meeting, reached out to Nevada Farm Bureau to have joint meeting starting on 16<sup>th</sup> in Fallon along with business meeting (adoption of strategic plan). With partners, commissioners, and CDs. All to review copy of strategic plan. Have room available for CD commission. Theme: "Water: Make Every Drop Count." Format for active wise water use. Addressing range with Agee Smith and Cottonwood Ranch. Addressing production wells and irrigation practice with Marty P out of Diamond Valley. Alternative crops and crop management and water use, using Miles Getto from Getto Family Ranches having presentation on growing teff and how to make teff economically viable. Getto's and Eckerts were able to sell grain as niche crop and now can sell as far as Europe in one ton totes. Arnie (Martin) Fallon producer will tie it all together regarding making malting grains for uses in production of beer. Growing own crops and using them as Nevada theme. Nevada Farm Bureau Doug Bustleman will be presenting university research and update on production practices. Engaged with Alejandro Rodriguez and Dr Justin Huntington, involved with new software to use information more effectively for uses in State of Nevada. Inviting Senator Goicoechea to plan policy and politic component to water. Why we conserve water? Talking about how and what it means. In communication with Melany and her group. Getting great support and information. Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> with Nevada Farm Bureau will be able to participate. Farm Bureau will have meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> with CD. Field tour coming. Dairy bringing in local milk and Frey family distillery. Getto production and malting operation. Chocolate milk, teff and teff brownies, beer, whiskey.

H. NOHV-Nikhil Narkhede introduces himself. (see Attachment 4 partner update) One seat open to represent conservation interests on OHV commission. To award grant funds produced by \$21 OHV registration fee and where to put grant funds. To restore areas damaged by OHV usage. Projects developing for conserving sensitive habitats. \$1.5 million available for OHV projects. Next OHV meeting September - December. No questions.

\*Tori Sundheim discusses Vice Chairman. Must be item on next agenda. Commission recommends Electing Vice Chairman. Putting item on agenda for next meeting.

Humboldt River Water Authority talked to Jake to give update on their behalf. Jeff Fontaine of Humboldt River Basin Water Authority: made up of all counties within Humboldt river work on issues specific to river. Meeting September 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am. Update on cloud seeding operations in Ruby mountains. Funding cause fall to wayside. Restaffing and Jeff discussed with Desert Research Institute to get program running again. Benefit to increase precipitation.

effort to reestablish program. DRI are preparing to reestablish funding for program to benefit group in basin.

Doug Martin – Ruby Mountain Back Country Skiing Association might be support and funding for Ruby seeding program.

Mark Dameron asks Nikhil if he is asking for a member of SCC to be OHV commission member or recommend someone. Nikhil clarified he is asking SCC who might be interested.

**7. REVIEW, DISCUSS, AND CONSIDER RESPONSE ON ANY NATURAL RESOURCES, CONSERVATION, AND AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION BILLS (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)**

Jake talks and reminds Assembly Joint Resolution<sup>2</sup> was passed and recognizes forest help and amendment for soil health to benefit water quality and quantity. Wants agenda item to discuss soil quality. To take lead on issue. Joe agrees to item on next agenda.

**8. COMMISSIONER ITEMS (FOR DISCUSSION ONLY)**

A. No discussion.

**9. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)**

A. Melany discussed about off schedule and having more meetings during off legislation year. Update in fall. Commission asked about more meetings. Open for discussion. Joe would like to have next SCC meeting in mid-October. Combining annual meeting of NVAC. Discussed items for next meeting. Joint resolution? Doug asking for reoccurring template from Melany. Melany says completing tracking of meetings and can show example. Jake tired of talking about Humboldt River. Mid-October decided on for next meeting. Present format acceptable. No commissioner items.

**10. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Public comments may be made on any issue, provided such comment is limited to areas relevant to and within the authority of the State Conservation Commission. Public comment is limited to three minutes per person. No action will be taken on any item raised during public comment that is not already on the agenda. At the discretion of the Chair, public comment may be received prior to action on individual agenda items.

A. No public comment.

**11. ADJOURNMENT (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)**

A. Motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned



Nevada Department Of Conservation and Natural  
Resources Conservation District Program

# Updates from the Staff



# Elko/Eureka Conservation Specialist activities





# Elko/Eureka Conservation Specialist activities

## Wintertime Activities:

- Sagebrush Seed Collection
- Celebrating the Owyhee's and Starr Valley 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary on February 26<sup>th</sup>
- Brush manipulation with 200 acres of aeration in Ruby Valley
- Fire reseeding and over 150 McAdoo Sagebrush Caches installed on the Hunter Fire
- Conservation Credit System verifier certification training
- NDCNR training





# Elko/Eureka Conservation Specialist activities

## Springtime Activities:

- Weeds -1,204 acres of County Right-of-Way treated over a thousand miles of County right-of-way inventoried and traveled looking for weeds, many private acres being treated for weeds.
- Developing seed recommendations and drill calibration with three operators for a total of 400 acres seeded to pasture.
- Multiagency Range and Pasture monitoring for nearly 1,200 acres for the Conservation Credit System and assisting the landowner in submitting the annual report to the State Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team – This was a five year review and nearly 800 acres of monitoring for Sage grouse habitat for the possibility of entering the Conservation Credit system
- Visiting various operations for a total of 2,500 acres of other assorted pastures and rangelands monitored on seven previous CD projects and for seven landowners via site visits.



# Elko/Eureka Conservation Specialist activities

## Summer time Activities:

- Verifying noxious weed sightings for NDA – thirty site visits in Elko and Eureka Counties
- Assisting with the Ruby Marshes Wildlife Management Area habitat monitoring on the northern section north of Brown Dike (Grazed pasture by a Ruby Valley Landowner – excellent grazing management)



# Elko/Eureka Conservation Specialist activities

## Additional Activities:

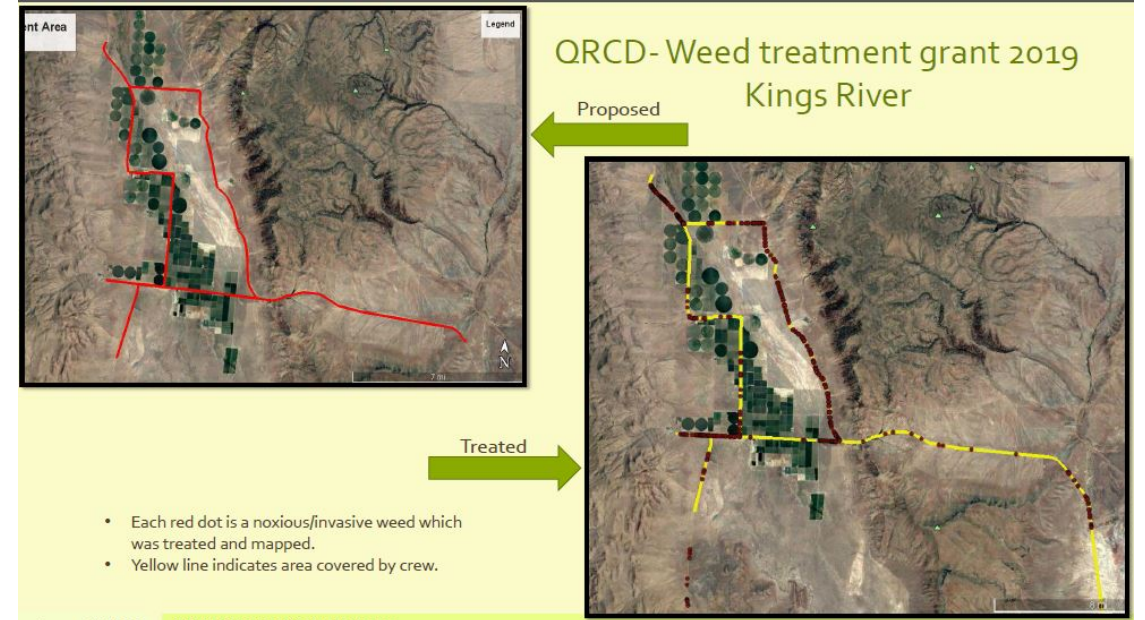
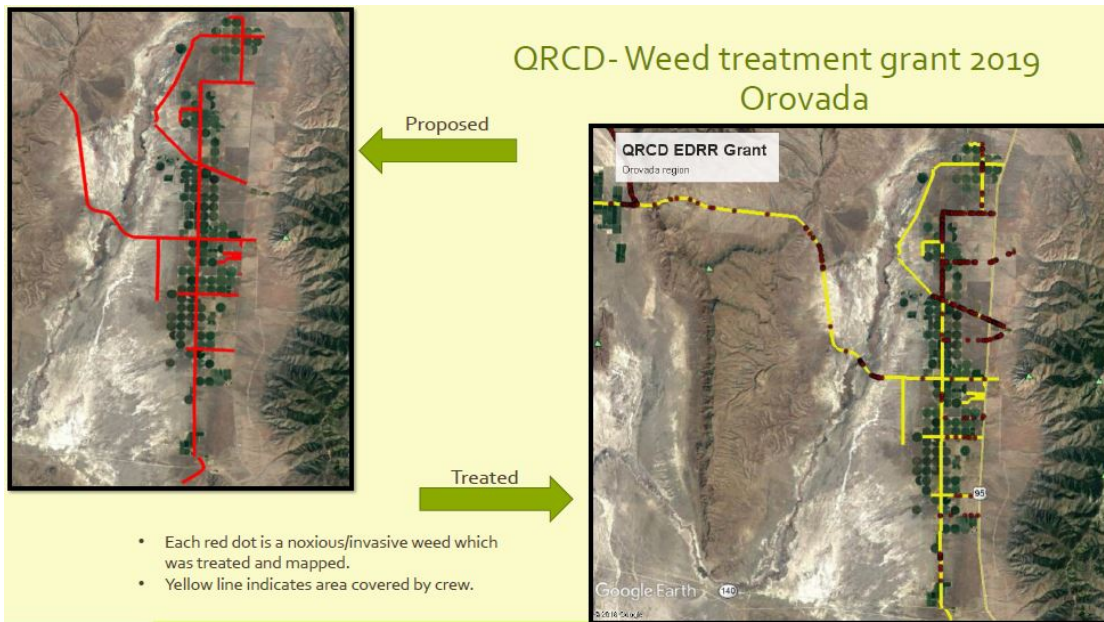
- Sage Grouse Local Area Working group has met five times.
- Letters of recommendation written for Range Campers.
- Lahontan Cutthroat assessment with the Jiggs CD.
- Ruby Mountains Shared Stewardship kick off.
- Shoe Sole winter mtg and summer tour.
- Humboldt Watershed Cooperative Weed Management meetings and nearly 5000 acres treated.
- NvACD Strategic Plan meetings
- NCDP monthly staff meetings.
- Five presentations on Natural Resources topics to the community with around 30 residents attending each presentation.



# Western Region Conservation Specialist activities

## Grants:

- Quinn River executing their second NDA weed management grant to treat noxious and invasive weeds with a collaborative approach with the County and State.
- Potential development into long term funding for treatment in shared areas of concern.

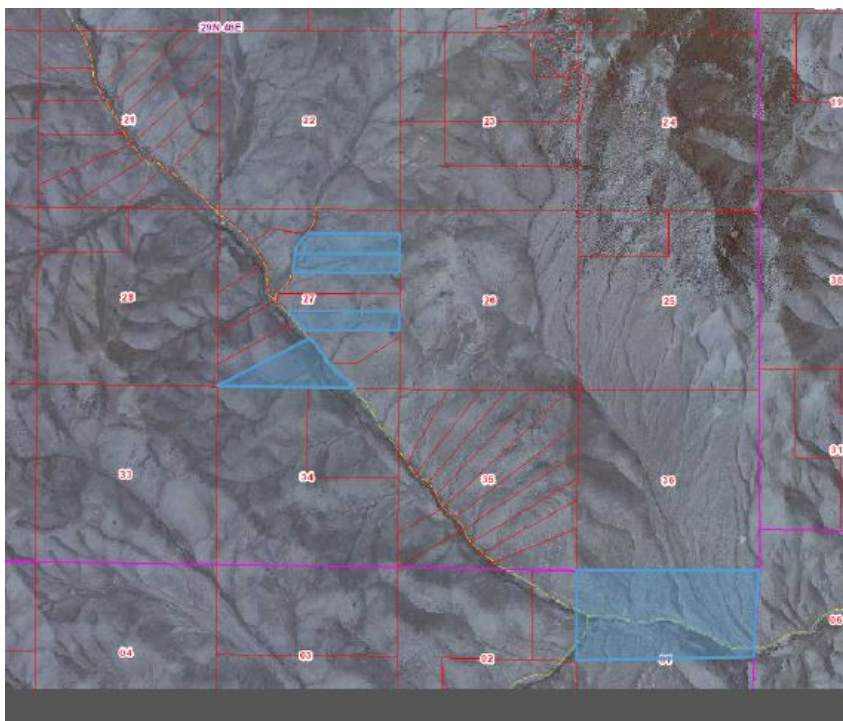




# Western Region Conservation Specialist activities

## Grants:

- Assisting Lander County CD treat noxious and invasive weeds in several large landscape scale project areas with multiple partners, including NDF, NDOW, BLM, and the County.
- This was the first attempt to treat across checkerboard in this system, the treatment will continue next spring with NDF and BLM assistance.





# Western Region Conservation Specialist activities

## Partnerships:

- Developing grant request proposal with Paradise Sonoma CD, Nevada Outdoor school, Humboldt County and the Paradise Valley Volunteer Fireman group. Our grant will be developing outdoor recreation spaces, and informational interpretive signs about fishing, fire ecology, and the history of conservation in the region.
- Partnership with Nevada Society for Range Management to host regional summer tours, and a winter information session. Continued conversations about hosting a CD sponsored low stress livestock handling class with SRM.
- Washoe Storey CD working with the newly formed Washoe Storey Cooperative weed management area to treat multiple areas through the District with collaborative help from multiple State, Federal and NGO groups.
- Vya CD continue to work with the NRCS office to develop conservation plan throughout the northern Washoe region.
- Big Meadow CD was awarded their Nation Association of Conservation TA-grant request to conduct a district wide RNA.



# Western Region Conservation Specialist activities

## Collaborations:

- Worked with Forest Service, NRCS, CD and McDermitt Tribe to develop a competitive Joint Chief grant proposal for multiple conservation actions across the Santa Rosa's. Including fuel breaks, noxious weed and fine fuels management, restoration activities, and a collaborative approach to stream-wide PFC assessments across all jurisdictions.
- Working with new Humboldt Field Office NRCS District Conservationist to update all CD training, MOA's and encourage regular LWG meetings.
- Working with NDA Conservation Camp on several projects throughout Humboldt and Lander County to treat weeds, manage fine fuels and restore intact resilient landscapes.
- Working with NDA on the background development of their Early Detection Rapid Response Plan for the State. Distributing gps points across the areas to have partners check reported weed infestations for mapping and verification.
- Adding language and content to Statewide Climate resilience planning to encourage CD collaboration and communication.



# White Pine and Lincoln Conservation Specialist activities







# White Pine and Lincoln Conservation Specialist activities

## White Pine County

### Cave Valley Ranch

NDOW Heritage, SCC, Dream Tag, NRCS CIG, BLM, RMEF, WP County CD, DCNR, and SETT

- 2019 multi agency PJ removal and entry into CCS.
- 1,400 acres of PJ removed, masticated, and seeded.
- Approximately \$130,000 on the ground with approximately \$50,000 in match (complicated spreadsheet on this project!)

### North Cave Valley

BLM, NDOW Heritage, WP County CD, Great Basin Institute, DCNR

- 400 acres of PJ removal on BLM land and adjacent to private.
- NDOW Heritage funds provide match for GBI NFWF grant.
- Conservation District was awarded \$50,000 to match GBI's \$50,000, with BLM providing the treatment area.



# White Pine County

**Cave Valley Ranch**



**North Cave Valley-GBI**





# White Pine and Lincoln Conservation Specialist activities

## Lincoln County

### Fry Ranch

SCC, NDF, Lincoln County CD, DCNR

- Multi agency effort to enhance the riparian corridor Beaver Dam Analogs (BDA) in Wilson Creek, Lincoln County.
- \$84,000 put on the ground with NDF contributing \$6,000 in match.

### Wilson Creek

NDOW, State Parks, BLM, NDF, IWJV, SETT, Smith Creek Ranch, Lincoln County CD, DCNR

- \$82,000 awarded to Lincoln County CD for continued riparian work in Wilson Creek Drainage.
- Nearly \$100,000 in match.
- Will exceed goal of installing 100 BDA's.



# Lincoln County

**Fry Ranch**



**Wilson Creek-NFWF**





# NCDP Program

- Developed NCDP Strategic Plan tracking sheet for tracking conservation efforts moving forward.
- Clean up on Program files and archived materials for a clean easy file management moving forward.
- Monthly meetings with NCDP staff to address and resolve issues, concerns and collaborate across all CDs and program wide for consistent approach.
- Collaborative effort and participation on NvACD Strategic Plan development.
- Assisted in all LAWG meetings and have continued to participate in absence of facilitators.

# State Conservation Commission Partner Updates

Partner Updates may be submitted using this template and may include additional materials. Please submit updates at least 2 weeks prior to the SCC meeting so items can be placed on the agenda and materials can be distributed.

**Partner Name**

**Date**

**Partner Update**

**Conservation Projects planned for next 12 calendar months.**

**Natural Resource concerns for the SCC to review and discuss.**

# State Conservation Commission Partner Updates

## Partnering potential for Conservation Districts

## Questions for SCC

## Notes for SCC

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