



STATE OF NEVADA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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MINUTES
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Nevada State Conservation Commission
Richard H. Bryan Building Tahoe Hearing Room 2nd Floor
901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, NV 89701
Monday, May 15, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

The Nevada State Conservation Commission considered and acted on the following items.

Board Members Present: Chairman Joe Sicking, Paradise-Sonoma CD; Vice Chairman Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD; Jake Tibbitts, Eureka CD; Leland Wallace, Esmeralda County CD; Kevin Roukey, Washoe-Storey CD; Dr. Sherm Swanson, UNCE/CABNR; Maggie Orr, Lincoln County CD, and Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD (by telephone).

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

Others Present: Tim Rubald, Conservation Districts Program Manager; Sandy Quilici, DCNR Director's Office; Lori Story, Senior Deputy Attorney General; Marlene Wallace, Esmeralda County CD; Nancy Sicking; Dominique Etchegoyhen, NV Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Deputy Director; Connie Lee, Nevada Department of Wildlife; Gerry Miller, Conservation Staff Specialist, Elko Area (by phone); Sheila Anderson, Governor's Office, and Cheva Gabor, United States Forest Service.

I. CALL TO ORDER, DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

- A. Chairman Sicking called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.
A quorum was confirmed and introductions were made.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS There were no public comments.

III. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES - * FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

- A. Commissioner Orr noted that on page two, Item V, in the third paragraph, it refers to "facilitator's training" and it should say "NCCN meeting".

Commissioner Roukey made a motion to approve the March 29, 2017, meeting minutes as amended.* Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

**The minutes were changed and finalized as amended on May, 16, 2017, by Sandy Quilici. The minutes are on the Conservation Districts website.*

IV. BRIEF UPDATE ON CONSERVATION DISTRICTS PROGRAM - *FOR DISCUSSION ONLY*

A. Tim Rubald, program manager, said that June 2nd is his last day as he is retiring from the state.

The Humboldt River Basin Network held a meeting on May 3rd that was well attended. When the minutes are completed he will forward them to the Commissioners. The next item for the Network will be a situation analysis. With Connie Lee and Laura VanRiper's help we have submitted an application for a grant for funding the analysis. Hopefully next summer there can be a Humboldt River Basin conference.

VI. RECONSIDERATION, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DECISION REGARDING THE GOOD STANDING STATUS FOR THE QUINN RIVER CONSERVATION DISTRICT - * FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Tim Rubald said Quinn River held an election and has a new secretary. There is a Supervisor's Training in Reno on May 17th and four of their members will be attending. They have plans on the calendar for working with youth. He asked for the funding to be released to them for this fiscal year. They have had two or three meetings this year.

Commissioner Roukey made a motion to release the \$4,000 of funding for Quinn River, Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

X. AGENCY UPDATES - *FOR DISCUSSION ONLY*

A. Nevada Department of Agriculture – Meghan Brown, Plant Industry Division There was no report today.

B. UNR-College of Agriculture Biotechnology and Natural Resources – Dr. Sherm Swanson, Range and Riparian Extension State Specialist for University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and Scientist for Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station Commissioner Swanson said Assembly Bill 407 proposes splitting Extension Services into two regions. One would include Clark, Nye, and Lincoln counties to be managed by UNLV and DRI as land grant institutions. Dean Bill Payne said this bill would not only affect Cooperative Extension, it could affect federal and state funds for the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Natural Resources (CABNR) If any members have contacts at the Legislature please let them know we are opposed. This would also politicize the land grant mission.

C. Natural Resources Conservation Service – Ray Dotson, State Conservationist There was no report today.

D. Nevada Department of Wildlife – Connie Lee, Landowner Incentive Programs Ms. Lee said Wildlife has numerous bills in the Legislature.

A conservation easement has been completed in Elko County on 4,500 acres that was funded through NRCS, and facilitated and funded with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation as well. This is a working cattle ranch (Masini) that will help to protect 4,500 acres of key wildlife habitat via the conservation easement agreement. The project will also improve access to nearly 19,000 acres of adjacent public land.

Wildlife Heritage funds have come in for FY18 of \$785,000. Those funds come through allocations from sportsmen's dollars. There were \$820,000 in requests with some for private land conservation. One of the projects is for Pahrangat Valley habitat restoration on private land. There is funding for Northeast Elko CD, SANE, Humboldt Watershed CWMA, and Southern Nye CD for Beatty projects.

Habitat Division Workshops are ongoing for Habitat Restoration and Rehabilitation Strategic Frameworks. There is one in Elko next week.

The Partners for Conservation Development Program has received funding from BLM and work continues in Elko County for pinyon/juniper removal.

E. Nevada Association of Conservation Districts – Maggie Orr, President Commissioner Orr said NvACD has continued their involvement with the Nevada Collaborative Conservation Network (NCCN). We worked with Duane Coombs to draw our agreement money with NRCS. The potential for that meeting was the Intermountain West liaison position. We have decided that position could not possibly do everything that was requested.

Commissioner Tibbitts represented us at the Humboldt River Basin Network meeting. Commissioner Roukey will attend the NACD Training in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Spencer Scott was nominated as a Soil Health Champion. Newmont would like to connect with CD's in Area One.

We have been asked to participate on Dept. of Agriculture's Noxious Weed Review Committee.

Gary McCuin has submitted two articles to the Progressive Rancher regarding Conservation Districts.

We have fifteen signups for the Conservation Client Gateway with NRCS.

We have updated the website: we have added the PowerPoint from the Legislature, the Progressive Rancher article, and we have sent a request to the CD's for articles for the "CD Spotlight".

The annual meeting will be at the Carson Valley Inn in Minden and not in Virginia City. The dates are November 6-8, 2017.

There are twenty youths signed up for Range Camp. There are seventeen applications for the NvACD scholarships.

Commissioner Roukey said he received a copy of a grant application from Pheasants Forever for educational outreach. He will forward the information to Mr. Rubald.

F. Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team – Kelly McGowan, Program Manager There was no report today.

G. Others – There were no other reports.

10:30 a.m. Chairman Sicking called a break to switch telephones.

10:40 a.m. Chairman Sicking reconvened the meeting.

V. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON THE NEVADA CONSERVATION COLLABORATION NETWORK (NCCN) - *FOR DISCUSSION ONLY*

A. Sheila Anderson, Policy Analyst with the Governor's Office, and Cheva Gabor with the United States Forest Service provided handouts (the handouts are available from Sandy Quilici).

Ms. Anderson said this is a new process to enhance communication between ground level working groups and agencies up to the state directors of the agencies. This is focusing on implementation of the sage-grouse land use plan with BLM and USFS. We want to emphasize the input of local area working groups. This is a chance for the state to take a larger role in land use management on public lands.

Along with BLM, USFS, and NRCS we wanted to develop a process that would ensure consistent and good communication from the ground level up to the agency heads. As we developed the network there are four groups starting with the local stakeholders, agency field managers, the Technical Advisory Committee, and the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council.

BLM funded two workshops to improve collaborative training with the stakeholders. There has been facilitator's training which will help to build a network to help local groups. We are pursuing funding from BLM for meetings for capacity building. We will be filling a coordinator position.

There are three things the network has identified to do – the first is improve communication among the stakeholders, the second is working on capacity building, and the third is to create a pot of funding where all the agencies contribute and the money is distributed based on local priorities.

At the next SEC meeting there will be a block of time for the local working groups to talk about their projects.

Ms. Gabor said one thing for this network to work on is: in a couple of years the Forest Service will be doing Forest Plan revisions. Right now there are two separate plans, one for the Humboldt, and one for the Toiyabe; we will be starting assessments in 2021. If there are specific plans in place we can put them in the Forest Plan revision.

Commissioner Smith said at the Cottonwood Ranch we have the Shoesole Resource Management Group and we're having our annual tour on the 13th and 15th of June. This specifically involves three ranches and the issues surrounding them. It is a collaborative team that has been in place for twenty years. We are dedicating this tour to the collaborative process.

11:15 a.m. Chairman Sicking announced a break.

11:25 a.m. Chairman Sicking reconvened the meeting.

VII. DISCUSSION, REVIEW AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF AN UPDATE OF THE COMMISSION'S STRATEGIC PLAN - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Commissioner Tibbitts said the NCCN should be added; the Strategic Plan should have a goal to participate in the NCCN and the HRBN. On Page 2, add a paragraph to list today's Commission members.

Page 10 under Opportunities add the NCCN and HRBN. On Page 11, the 1st line, change to "work with NCCN, HRBN, and landowners" or add a separate line regarding working with NCCN and HRBN.

Page 13, Goal 1., under 3. add a 3.5 and a 3.6 to say work "with the NCCN and work with the HRBN when appropriate".

On Page 5 (17), under 3. add a 3.2 to say "recognizing the Districts as the lead local entity for NCCN and HRBN.

Commissioner Roukey asked if you can combine a CD with a Weed Management Group? Commissioner Tibbitts said it is allowed if the area is a weed management district. Connie Lee said you would not want the two groups competing for funding. Commissioner Orr said you could create a local working group which would include all the groups.

On Page 5 (18), under 1. and under 1.2 (line 37) change to read "SCC and staff will encourage counties, cities, towns, special districts, and other entities to support Conservation Districts to a level allowing full time staff and synergy of resources".

On Page 6 (18), under 4. and under 4.2 (line 28) change to read "SCC and staff will assist Districts to become more involved in leadership roles in existing LAWGs and the NCCN".

On Page 3 (15), under 3. and under 3.4 (line 38) add 3.5 to say "Encourage each District to conduct riparian PFC assessments and integrated riparian management with all interested landowners in local watersheds".

On Page 10, under Opportunities, to add "The Nevada Creeks and Communities Team teaches Riparian Proper Functions condition assessments to support collaborative integrated riparian management".

On Page 10, under Opportunities, to add "Work with the newly created Nevada Conservation Collaborative Network (NCCN) and the Humboldt River Basin Network (HRBN)".

On Page 5 (17), under Goal III, under 3. and after 3.1 add 3.2 "Recognizing Districts as the lead local entity for NCCN and HRBN."

Commissioner Roukey made a motion to have the changes added and sent to the Commissioners for review.

Commissioner Tibbitts seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

12:00 p.m. Chairman Sicking adjourned the meeting for lunch.

1:35 p.m. Chairman Sicking reconvened the meeting.

VIII. REVIEW, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF A DRAFT 'ACTION PLAN' FOR THE COMMISSION'S STRATEGIC PLAN - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Commissioner Tibbitts thanked Mr. Rubald for his work on the Action Plan. He asked to add to the 1st (24) page "To poll the CD's on what topics they feel they are lacking in". This would be Step # 4. Due date would be as the fall training is starting. Who's Responsible: Program Manager & NvACD Leadership.

On page 2 (25) under Step #4 – adding "and facilitate if possible." and under Who's Responsible say "Program Manager and Conservation Specialists".

On page 3 (26) add Step #7 "To provide the links to other CD's plans and reports to the CD's."

On page 4 (27) on Step #6 change to "Explain to Districts and coordinate with federal agencies on process of obtaining grants from federal land management agencies on a fee for services basis".

Add Step #8 to say "Encourage state and federal agencies to work with CD's to implement funded programs."

On page 5 (28) add to Step #2 "and NvACD."

On page 6 (29) add Step #5 to say "Use the NACD master MOU with BLM to develop state and local level MOU's with federal agencies."

On page 7 (30) add Step #6 to say "Continue to offer basics of resource management planning through the Nevada Leadership Training program".

On page 8 (31) add Step # 5 to say “Continue to try to find ways for CD’s to have more active involvement with NRCS funded projects.”

On page 9 (32) under Step #1 change to read: “Open a dialogue with DWR, NDEP, and any other state agencies or other entities dealing with the stated issue.”

On page 10 (33) under Step #2 change to read: “Work with other state and federal agencies to include them on presentations and partnerships.” Under Step #1 change to read: “Work with NRCS to develop and present soil health and Ecological Site Description programs to all Districts.”

On page 11 (34) under Step #4 change to read: “Once trained, encourage Districts to provide producers and agencies the service of monitoring as a pay for services function.” Under Step #1 change to read: “Assist CABNR in the update of the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook, the Ranchers Monitoring Guide, and the Rangeland Monitoring App.”

On page 14 (37) under Step #1 change to read: “Encourage Districts to become involved with the NCCN and the HRBN which is already supported by federal and state agencies.” Under Step #2 change to read: “Work with management staff of local federal and state agencies, other entities, and other collaborations, to encourage their participation in districts and meetings.”

On page 15 (38) add a new Step #10 to read: “Work with land trusts and other estate planning tools to accomplish conservation goals.”

On page 16 (39) under Step #1 there is a typo; please “change emply to employ”.

On page 17 (40) under Step #5 change to read: “Repeat items 3 & 4 annually to make effort stronger.”

On page 18 (41) under Step #1 change to read: “Work directly with CD’s to plan Local Work Group meetings.” Add Step #5 to read: “Distribute NvACD article on Local Work Groups.” Add Step #6 to read: “Distribute Title440 Program Part 501; the federal regulation that provides the basis and responsibilities for Local Work Groups.”

On page 19 (42) No changes.

On page 20 (43) No changes.

On page 21 (44) No changes.

On page 22 (45) under Step # 1 change to read: “Work with NRCS, UNCE, and other agencies to be informed of available public workshops.”

On page 23 (46) under Step #1 change to read: “Provide Nevada Youth Range Camp templates to Districts encouraging involvement with local FFA, 4H, and other youth programs.” Under Step #2 change to read: “By working with Nevada SRM leadership, provide information to Districts at least four months prior to deadlines for application to Range Camp.”

On page 24 (48) No changes.

On page 25 (49) Under Objective: 4. change to read: “Encourage youth attendance at District meetings and training.”

On page 26 (50) No changes.

On page 27 (51) No changes.

Commissioner Tibbitts made a motion to adopt the Action Plan with the changes we just deliberated on; Commissioner Swanson seconded the motion; there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Commissioner Orr asked that if the CD’s have Conservation Credit System projects, please send the information to her and it will be posted on the NvACD website under the “CD Spotlight” section.

IX. REVIEW, DISCUSSION AND UPDATE ON THE HUMBOLDT RIVER BASIN NETWORK - *FOR DISCUSSION ONLY*

A. Under “Background on the Nevada Conservation Commission” Commissioner Tibbitts recommended changing to read “The Nevada Conservation Commission is charged with carrying out locally led policies on renewable natural resource programs. This includes guiding Nevada’s 28 locally elected conservation districts.”

Under “Overview” in the 2nd paragraph Commissioner Tibbitts suggested changing to read “In early May of 2017, a second meeting was held in Winnemucca with wider representation from the region. People attending represented water right holders, irrigators, The Humboldt River Basin Water Authority, Conservation Districts, University of Nevada Reno, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Nevada

Division of Water Resources, Inter-Mountain West Joint Venture, Newmont Mining, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Trout Unlimited, Humboldt Watershed Cooperative Weed Management Area, The Nature Conservancy, Nevada Farm Bureau, Nevada Department of Agriculture, US Forest Service, and Nevada Association of Conservation Districts.” The Commissioners agreed to the changes and Mr. Rubald will make the changes.

XI. COMMISSIONER ITEMS - *FOR DISCUSSION ONLY*

A. Commissioner Tibbitts said he is not renewing his position on the Commission and this will be his last meeting. Chairman Sicking said Commissioner Tibbitts has been a great asset to the Commission and he will be truly missed.

Commissioner Smith said the Northeast Elko CD and SANE are hiring a coordinator and hope to have someone in place by August.

Commissioner Smith said the Northeast Elko CD and SANE are putting on a Soils Class with Nicole Masters on July 5th and 6th at the Cottonwood Ranch north of Wells.

Commissioner Smith thanked Tim Rubald for his service and his work to build the CD's back up. He also thanked Commissioner Tibbitts for the knowledge he has brought to the Commission.

X. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING - * FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. The next meeting will likely be in October to establish the “good standings” of the CD's. Mr. Rubald said the recruitment for the Program Manager will be out soon. They hope to have the position filled by July 1st and he will ask that Chairman Sicking is part of the interview panel. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS There were no public comments.

XII. ADJOURNMENT - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Chairman Sicking adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***