



STATE OF NEVADA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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MINUTES

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Nevada State Conservation Commission
Nevada Department of Agriculture-Elko Office
4780 Idaho Street, Elko, Nevada
Thursday, June 14, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Chairman Joe Sicking, Paradise-Sonoma CD; Leland Wallace, Esmeralda County CD (by teleconference); Kevin Roukey, Washoe-Storey CD; Maggie Orr, Lincoln County CD; Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD; Jake Tibbitts, Eureka CD and Meghan Brown, NV Dept. of Agriculture.

Board Members Absent: Vice Chairman Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD and Dr. Sherm Swanson, UNCE/CABNR.

Others Present: Bettina Scherer, Conservation Districts Program Manager; Sandy Quilici, DCNR Director's Office; Nancy Sicking; Connie Lee; Lori Story, Deputy Attorney General (by teleconference); Bobby Jones, NDOW/NRCS Shared Habitat Biologist (by teleconference); Rick Orr; Gerry Miller, Elko Conservation Staff Specialist, Melany Aten, Winnemucca Conservation Staff Specialist, and Gary McCuin, Eureka CD.

I. CALL TO ORDER, DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

- A. Chairman Sicking called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.
A quorum was confirmed and introductions were made.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS Commissioner Orr wanted to say that long time conservationist and rancher Keith Whipple passed away.

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

- A. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the minutes, Commissioner Roukey seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

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

- A. Bettina Scherer said she is working on obtaining a more reliable vehicle for Melany Aten. She is working on reports and funding for projects and continues to try to visit the districts.

V. REVIEW OF CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORTS - * FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Bettina said two reports were late; the Conservation District of Southern Nevada and the Conservation District of Southern Nye County. Commissioner Roukey made a motion to approve the annual work plans and budgets, Commissioner Smith seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. *ACTION TAKEN* Bettina reminded the commissioners that the annual stipend is now \$4500 and the templates for the work plans and budgets are on the CD Program's website.

B. Bettina said the tracking is all good and the logs are due in the first two weeks of October.

NO ACTION TAKEN

VI. DISCUSSION OF THE HUMBOLDT RIVER BASIN NETWORK'S ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE 03-09-2018 MEETING - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Chairman Sicking said he spoke to the Humboldt River Water Basin Authority and assured them that the HRBN was not trying to take over.

Bettina said the HRBN received funding which was going to be used for a situation assessment with Mike Lunn and Laura Van Riper and now is not.

Chairman Sicking said there is more landowner participation needed.

Connie Lee urged that a conference be held; it is non-threatening and promotes collaboration. Perhaps ask the HRWBA for their help in planning. It would be educational for the attendees.

Gary McCuin said if you could show the landowners the potential of what the watershed could be it would be helpful.

Commissioner Brown said if we ask certain producers to start the process it helps; not to come from the top down.

Commissioner Smith said we could work with the landowners that are willing to come to the table and talk about their part of the river. Ask the progressive landowners what they have done. Commissioner Tibbitts said instead of a workshop or a conference have a Humboldt River Showcase. Ask for examples of what people have done that has shown progress. Ask what improvements can help me as a landowner?

Commissioner Orr said the 1st day of the NvACD Annual Conference in Elko there could be a symposium, but she would need help.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to direct staff to help Commissioner Orr to organize a Humboldt River Symposium; Commissioner Tibbitts seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

ACTION TAKEN Suggestions were to show successful projects, photos, maybe a bus tour. Ask for funding perhaps from Newmont Mining.

VII. PERIODIC REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN AND ACTION PLAN - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Bettina Scherer said the Action Plan shows the suggested additions from Commissioners Roukey and Orr in red. Commissioner Roukey's is under Goal: Vibrancy of Renewable Natural Resources, Objective: 4, Step 7. It was noted that it should be Step 6. It was agreed to leave as written: "Inform Districts of Soil Health Trainings in Principles and Applications of Soil Health Management."

Commissioner Orr's is under Goal: Increasing Districts' Capacity and Capabilities, Objective 3, Step 7. Commissioner Tibbitts asked to remove "State Conservation Commission" at the beginning of the sentence because it is the SCC's plan and start the sentence with "Support". He made a motion to change the sentence to read: "Support the Nevada Association of Conservation Districts Resource Needs Assessments process to bring increased capacity and capabilities to the CD's." Commissioner Roukey seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. *ACTION TAKEN*

VIII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DIRECTION OF STAFF REGARDING STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION STANCE ON U.S. WATER AND LAND, LLC APPLICATION FOR WATER - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Chairman Sicking said U.S. Water and Land, LLC has applied for 300,000 acre-feet of flood waters from the Humboldt River. They want to pump the water into an underground aquifer at Winnemucca Farms. The water

could be marketed and the water rights could be sold to other entities. The Humboldt County Commission voted against it. Is the Commission interested in sending a letter to the State Engineer?

Following a discussion Commissioner Roukey made a motion that Bettina (as staff) works with Commissioner Tibbitts to draft a letter to the State Engineer's Office voicing the concerns of the Commission. Commissioner Tibbitts added that he and Bettina will work on a draft letter and then there will be a Commission phone meeting scheduled to approve the letter. Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

IX. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DIRECTION OF STAFF REGARDING UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA-RENO PLANS TO SELL A PORTION OF THE MAIN STATION FARM - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. After discussion Commissioner Smith made a motion to write a letter (to be drafted by staff) to thank the Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents and Regent Cathy McAdoo for supporting that the monies from the sale will remain. Commissioner Tibbitts 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* Commissioner Brown said there was a Native Seed Forum meeting in Ely and it was well attended. There was good discussion and presentations. We talked about more producer focus and more seed production. We want to get some native seeds on the national seed list.

Last Legislative Session we received \$500,000 from the Drought Initiative for water conservation funding. We have given out \$497,000 – some in Diamond Valley, Las Vegas, Elko, and the east side of the state. We will try for more funding during the next Session.

Commissioner Roukey asked if the Commission could thank NDA for the funding and encourage more (letter). Commissioner Brown said that by the next meeting she will have the final report and then a thank you letter may be suggested.

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* There was no update today.

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

D. Nevada Department of Wildlife – *Bobby Jones, NDOW/NRCS shared Habitat Biologist* Mr. Jones said the new hunt tag system has been deployed and it seems successful overall.

We are gearing up for fire season and we are coordinating with BLM on expectations.

There is a joint NDOW/NRCS position just like his in Elko and the interviews will be held shortly.

The funding cycle begins soon and we will find out what the funding is in the special reserve account.

NDOW is working on their geospatial tool with different layers of information that can track different projects and it is also a tool other agency partners and the public can use.

E. Nevada Association of Conservation Districts – *Maggie Orr, President* Commissioner Orr said NvACD has been busy, the resource needs assessments are moving forward. We have hired three contractors. We have started the outreach and have developed a PowerPoint. We will give it to the Interim Legislative Committee on Public Lands on June 29th in Pioche.

NDOW has committed \$10,000 to our survey, Fish and Wildlife committed \$10,000 from the partners program, Clark County will also pay, and we will provide some match.

About half of the CD's have signed with Pool Pact and will start July 1st.

NvACD is participating with the coordinating group for the Nevada Collaboration Conservation Network (NCCN). There was a good meeting in Elko a few weeks ago.

Our scholarship program has received 23 applicants. Half are agriculture/natural resources students.

The Annual Meeting is in Elko on November 13, 14, 15. Right now the 13th is leadership training or possibly Humboldt River discussion, the 14th is the general session, and the 15th is the business meeting and tour.

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

G. Others – Participating agencies and partners may report items of importance or urgency as necessary at this time. Commissioner Roukey said representing the Washoe-Storey Conservation District he introduced himself to the Truckee Meadows Weed Management group because we are going to try become a Cooperative Weed Management Area. Commissioner Roukey said he will be the president. We are setting it up and we will cover Washoe and Storey counties. Commissioner Orr said to talk to Betsy MacFarlan with the Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition for help. Connie Lee said Bobby Jones with NDOW can help also.

XI. COMMISSIONER ITEMS - *FOR DISCUSSION ONLY*

A. There were no items.

XII. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Chairman said the next meeting will probably be a teleconference for letter approvals. The following meeting will be in the first part of October after the 7th.

B. Commissioner Roukey had a question. If there is a supervisor who no longer lives in the CD County can they still be on the board? Bettina said they have to live in the confines of the district.

Bettina said the Vya CD has a supervisor who has not been in attendance of meetings. If it is brought to the Commission for attention we will need the appropriate notification. Lori Story (DAG) said it would need to be put on an agenda and the member would need to be notified of the meeting and have a chance to present their story. If the member resigns it would not be needed. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

The Humboldt River Showcase date should be an agenda item at the next meeting.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS There were no public comments.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Chairman Sicking adjourned the meeting at 4:35 p.m. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***