



STATE OF NEVADA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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MINUTES

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

NV Department of Agriculture-Elko Office
4780 Idaho Street, Elko NV 89801
Friday, June 14, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

Board Members Present: Chairman Joe Sicking, Paradise-Sonoma CD; Leland Wallace, Esmeralda County CD (teleconference); Maggie Orr, Lincoln County CD; Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD; Dr. Sherm Swanson, UNCE/CABNR (teleconference), and Meghan Brown, NV Dept. of Agriculture.

Board Members Absent: Jake Tibbitts, Eureka County CD and Vice-Chairman Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD.

Others Present: Bettina Scherer, Conservation Districts Program Manager; Sandy Quilici, NDCNR Director's Office; Lori Story, Deputy Attorney General; Bobby Jones, NDOW/NRCS (teleconference); Lauren Williams, Ely Conservation Staff Specialist; Gerry Miller, Elko Conservation Staff Specialist; Melany Aten, Winnemucca Conservation Staff Specialist; Connie Lee, Executive Director, NV Association of Conservation Districts; Ray Dotson, State Conservationist, NRCS; Jerry and Kati Annis, Lander County CD; Gloria Montero and Carl Clinger, Big Meadows CD and Joe Cumming, Jiggs CD.

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 Smith made a motion to approve the March 8, 2019 Meeting Minutes, Commissioner Orr 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 the reports were in on time, thank you. There are two new Legislative bills that passed which pertain to the Open Meeting Law. They are AB70 and SB134. AB70 says if you provide audio or visual resources to the public you must confirm the members of the public can both hear and see. If they cannot you have to ensure they can. SB134 says that any government body that holds a meeting needs to provide detailed meeting minutes within 30 days. You need to provide enough detail that if the minutes are read after the fact the public can understand what happened.

If you are not receiving emails from myself or Connie Lee please let your area CD Specialist know. Some correspondence has not been getting through and we don't know unless you check with us. Commissioner Smith asked if every CD needs to provide conference calling. Bettina said no, but if you provide a call-in

number then you must confirm everyone can hear. Bettina said we will do an Open Meeting Law update at the Annual Convention in October.

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

A. Chairman Sicking asked if the members had read the reports and the response was yes. The Chairman said there were no obvious errors. Bettina said there was an increase in funding to \$5000.

B. Chairman Sicking asked about a review of the tracking logs. Bettina said she will ask the Districts before the 30th for any additional meeting minutes.

Chairman Sicking asked for a motion to approve the District reports. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve; Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

ACTION TAKEN

VI. DISCUSSION OF AREA REPRESENTATIVES ON THE STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION AND ADDED APPOINTMENT TO NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) STATE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (STAC) - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Bettina said this was at the request of Commissioner Orr to open communication and awareness with our partner NRCS. To clarify this would be an Area term not a specific individual. The makeup of the Commission is 2 representatives from each Area – 1, 2, and 3. There is one at large member and two appointees (Ex-Officio). The terms are staggered with 3 expiring one year and 4 expiring in another year. Commissioner Orr said this is part of an NvACD agreement with NRCS to re-energize the STAC. Commissioner Tibbitts had suggested to Commissioner Orr having it tied to supervisors that were on the State Conservation Commission in order not to tie it to an individual, but to an Area position. This would ensure representation on the STAC.

Deputy Attorney General Lori Story said a description of this should be added to the Commission Member application. Chairman Sicking recommended it be done annually. Commissioner Orr advised to make this an agenda item to decide the choice at the October SCC Meeting accompanying NvACD Annual Meeting.

Commissioner Orr made a motion to accept the idea of a Conservation District representative to the STAC coming from the Area Representatives (3) on the State Conservation Commission to be determined at the fall meeting of the State Conservation Commission. This year the appointment for next year will be made at the State Conservation Commission Meeting associated with the NvACD Annual Meeting in October. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Commissioner Smith said it may be prudent to have the representative be a member of their local work group. There was a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

*** ACTION TAKEN***

VII. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF NRS 548.125 - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Chairman Sicking said Mineral County is in the same watershed as Lyon County and it would be a better fit to be within Area 2 than Area 3. We had an appointment to the Commission for Area 2 who lives in Mineral County and is on the Mason Valley CD, but he was deemed ineligible because he lives in Area 3. This is a geographic change, but it would require a statute change. DAG Lori Story said it will require a bill draft request at the next Legislative Session. The bill draft could come from a legislator or the Department. Bettina said our maps have shown Mineral County in Area 2 which is incorrect. The maps have been updated to show Mineral County in Area 3. The proposed change would also create a more equal acreage representation.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to seek a bill draft to make this change through a legislator or the Department. Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

ACTION TAKEN

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

ACTION*

Chairman Sicking said we will move this item to the next meeting. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

IX. AGENCY UPDATES - *FOR DISCUSSION ONLY*

A. **Nevada Department of Agriculture** – *Meghan Brown, Plant Industry Division* Commissioner Brown said the new Director of the Department of Agriculture is Jennifer Ott and the new Plant Industry Administrator is Ashley Jeppson.

The Rangeland Monitoring App is out and we can provide training for CD's and operators. The range app also features Ecological Site Descriptions (ESD) and State and Transition Models (STM). Using the GPS on your device, the app will retrieve the ESD and STM associated with that site, providing a much more detailed approach to land management and site objectives.

Dave Voth with the Rangeland Health Program will have a stockmanship school at Cottonwood Ranch this fall.

There will be a coming announcement of a weed grant award from USFS (United States Forest Service). There is an update regarding the new farm bill online. We can help with program applications. The Nevada Native Seed Partnership is working on a strategic plan. There have been workshops and forums.

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 he has been teaching a Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) class in Orovada and doing PFC assessment on the King's River Ranch and touring the King's River Ranch and Jordan Meadow. The conditions look good this year.

This week we went to the Winecup Gamble Ranch for collaborative planning for outcome based grazing. We should have a plan by next spring.

Next week is Nevada Youth Range Camp which he is attending along with Commissioner Orr and Rick Orr. There are a lot of kids this year thanks to the CD's support of the camp.

Paul Meiman will take over the Natural Resources Specialist position in Elko starting in September. He is from Colorado State University and is highly qualified in range management and sustainability.

Commissioner Swanson is retiring from his UNR position in December. He will still be involved with the Nevada Creeks and Communities Team and the Nevada Collaborative Conservation Network.

Chairman Sicking asked about the work Commissioner Swanson was doing at the King's River Ranch. Commissioner Swanson said the focus was on the streams. On the tour we talked about the southern part of the valley where they want to change the grazing management from the spring to the winter. It would help not to be in the same place at the same time of year. The streams would improve and provide better habitat.

Chairman Sicking said he has Log Cabin Creek (Poplar Creek) in mind for a Conservation Credit project. Commissioner Swanson said it is a wonderful creek and watershed area to work on.

C. **Natural Resources Conservation Service** – *Ray Dotson, State Conservationist* Mr. Dotson said Jose Rosado has been selected as State Conservation Engineer. He is from Arizona and he is bright and motivated. There are two positions that will be decided in the next two weeks. The Statistics Operation position that was formerly Debra Hoffman and the Programs position that was Gary Roeder.

We are revisiting MOU's with districts and individuals that occupy NRCS space around the state. There are about six different locations where people are utilizing NRCS space or equipment. These are called things of value in the federal government and there should be an agreement to cover it. We have been out of compliance with this and the MOU's will either be changed to show the usage or remain the same.

D. **Nevada Department of Wildlife** – *Bobby Jones, NDOW/NRCS shared Habitat Biologist* Bobby Jones said we are happy to have a wet year so far. We should see a good response from the fire rehabilitation efforts. NDOW just had their free fishing day over the last weekend. The hunting tags have been issued and there were a record number of applications this year.

E. **Nevada Association of Conservation Districts** – *Connie Lee, Executive Director* Ms. Lee said we had CD day at the Legislature on May 14th. Commissioner Smith said it went well; there were not a lot of legislators because there was a lot going on that day. Next session we will try for an earlier date. The presentations were great and Commissioner Smith and Chairman Sicking thanked Connie for her work. Connie said she wanted to visually present what the CD's are doing and it was well received.

The Resource Needs Assessments are moving forward. Commissioner Orr said Lincoln County's was just sent for approval. The survey has gone out in Clark County and they are pleased with the results. She said she just received the Lincoln County card and she wished the cards were bigger. There is contact information on the back of the cards for any questions. The idea is to get them out to recruiters and then they share with others.

Connie said the NvACD Annual Meeting is in Winnemucca October 22nd through October 24th. There will be a soil workshop. We are continuing outreach to struggling CD's. We are focusing on communication between CD's and stakeholders. We are developing a newsletter with Farm Bureau information, input from the CD Specialists, and highlighting CD activities. NvACD Capacity Development is becoming something like an Associated Membership Program. We may put a button on the website for Associated Members to increase the income of the Association.

The NACD (National Association of Conservation Districts) provided Technical Assistance Grants and this pays for the Resource Needs Assessments. The Northeast Elko CD received a grant. Commissioner Smith said the grant will help the Northeast Elko CD to hire a person who will also help with SANE (Stewardship Alliance of Northeast Elko).

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

G. **Others** – Melany Aten, Conservation Staff Specialist, Winnemucca Area, said the Nevada Section of the Society for Range Management (NSSRM) Summer Meeting is in Winnemucca on June 27th. The business meeting will be on June 28th. She can provide registration forms. There will be discussion of the Martin Fire Restoration. Dave Voth and Melany will have a producer's roundtable. This will help involve the producers more and gain their feedback. We have given them some questions that we would like them to answer. Questions about what their future is after the fire. We want their feedback about the fire impact, the grazing component of plant restoration, and fire ecology. There will be UNR professors, local commissioners, NDOW, BLM, BYU and others. It will be a good discussion about how fire restoration is being done more effectively in the future and also preventive measures.

X. COMMISSIONER ITEMS - *FOR DISCUSSION ONLY*

A. Commissioner Orr said that overtime can be built into a grant for crews. This would allow the crews to stay in the field longer and not work so many days and use less travel time. They are doing this in Elko and this is something we should recommend to the CD's. These are the Honor Camp crews. The overtime is paid to the foreman and the inmates would receive credit. Melany Aten said she met with NDF (Nevada Division of Forestry) and they would like to use that kind of a template for all the camps. This gives them a budget frame and they will get that to us. They would like to do overnight stays and also work 14 hour days. This would allow more resource projects.

XI. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Bettina said the final reports are due on September 30th. The first two weeks of October would be good for the next meeting. It was agreed to have the next meeting on October 15th in Carson City starting at 10:00 a.m. The next meeting will be before the NvACD Annual Meeting which starts on October 22nd. That would make the SCC meeting on October 21st in Winnemucca.

B. Agenda items will include discussion of a STAC Representative from the State Conservation Commission and finalizing that decision at the October 21st meeting.

Also a discussion of the MOU's with NRCS. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS Bettina said at the end of October following the NvACD Annual Convention she will be leaving state service and moving back east to be closer to family. The Commissioners said it was great to work with Bettina and they don't want her to leave, but they understand her decision. Bettina said she felt the same and that she has enjoyed her job. Her plan is to leave at a time when everything is wrapped up for the fiscal year and calendar year.

Lauren Williams said she had some concerns about her shared office space with NRCS in Ely. Ray Dotson said this will be part of the discussion to update the MOU.

Gerry Miller reminded the Commission of the Area I Meeting with NRCS and CD's this afternoon. There will be lunch available for \$12.00 at the Museum location.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Chairman Sicking adjourned the meeting at 11:40 p.m. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***