



STATE OF NEVADA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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MINUTES

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

NV Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, NV
Tahoe Hearing Room 2nd Floor
Tuesday, October 15, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

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

Board Members Absent: Vice-Chairman Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD and Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD.

Others Present: Bettina Scherer, Conservation Districts Program Manager; Sandy Quilici, NDCNR Director's Office; Tori Sundheim, Deputy Attorney General; Connie Lee, Executive Director, NV Association of Conservation Districts (teleconference); Ray Dotson, State Conservationist, NRCS; Marlene Wallace, Esmeralda CD; Rick Orr from Lincoln County; Dominique Etchegoyhen, NDCNR Deputy Director; Bryan Stockton, Senior Deputy Attorney General and Kelly McGowan, Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team, Program Manager.

I. CALL TO ORDER, DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

- A. Chairman Sicking called the meeting to order at 10:00 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 Brown made a motion to approve the June 14, 2019 Meeting Minutes, Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Tibbitts did not vote because he did not attend the meeting. ***ACTION TAKEN***

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

- A. Bettina Scherer said she is leaving at the end of November. Interviews are scheduled tomorrow for her replacement with three applicants.

This past legislative session approved an increase to CD funding from \$4500 to \$5000. Commissioner Orr thanked DCNR for their efforts in securing the increase.

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

A. Bettina said Southern Nevada CD had a lack of minutes submitted. They have the minutes, but they are working on submitting them. Southern Nye CD was not receiving emails, but they are using a new email address now which has helped. They were on time.

Chairman Sicking asked about Southern Nevada CD; were there concerns? Bettina said everything else was on time. They do have a new clerk. Commissioner Orr said we could approve and say we need Southern Nevada CDs' minutes submitted by a certain date. Commissioner Orr made a motion that we accept all the Districts Reports and all CD's receive full funding, but CD of Southern Nevada must submit their minutes by November 15, 2019. Commissioner Tibbitts said we are getting ahead of the agenda, this is in Item VI. Commissioner Orr withdrew her motion and Chairman Sicking moved to Item VI. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

VI. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DETERMINATION OF DISTRICTS' 'IN GOOD STANDING' STATUS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019 - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Chairman Sicking asked for a motion to approve. Commissioner Orr made a motion that we determine all the Districts to have met criteria to be eligible for funding for 2018-2019 with the caveat that the CD of Southern Nevada must have their minutes submitted by November 15, 2019. Commissioner Wallace seconded the motion, there was a vote and motion passed unanimously. *** ACTION TAKEN***

B. Commissioner Wallace made a motion to release the funding to the CDs in good standing. Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. *** ACTION TAKEN***

VII. 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. It was agreed there needs to be Area representation on the STAC. Commissioner Orr asked Ray Dotson what he wanted. Ray Dotson said we're going to follow the policy to have representation for CDs and Area level representation seemed logical. Commissioner Orr said you're looking for 3 CD supervisors from each area to be a voting member of the STAC. Commissioner Orr made a motion that the 3 CD supervisor representatives for the STAC be from the Areas that are already elected to the STAC. The State Conservation Commission will vote before each STAC meeting for a representative and an alternate. Commissioner Wallace seconded the motion. There was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. *** ACTION TAKEN***

Ray Dotson said he would like to have a meeting clarifying what NRCS does before the meeting of the STAC. Commissioner Tibbitts said there are 2 representatives from each Area on the SCC. There could be an introductory meeting first and then a phone meeting for the decision. Bettina said we do not have any Area 2 representatives here today on the Commission. The vacant position on the Commission is Area 2, so we will meet later for this decision.

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

A. Bettina said Mineral County should be moved from Area 3 to Area 2. Looking at the overall acreage as well as the district boundary of the Mason Valley CD which bridges two different counties it would be neater. Also, Lyon and Mineral Counties share the same watershed. This will require a change in the statute language which requires a bill draft request. DCNR would submit the bill draft.

Commissioner Swanson made a motion that we recommend that Mineral County be moved to Area 2 and the state takes the steps to move that process forward. Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

IX. COMMISSION TRAINING: ETHICS, OPEN MEETING LAW, USE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS AND HARASSMENT TRAINING – Deputy Attorney General’s Office - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Senior Deputy Attorney General Bryan Stockton presented a PowerPoint presentation (*See Attachment I*) to the Commission as a brief overview. The Attorney General’s Office provides Boards and Commissions Training once a year which he recommends. There is an Open Meeting Law Manual available. The Law is in Chapter 241 in the Nevada Revised Statutes.

A conference line is not required for the public if there is an accessible physical location for the meeting.

The Commission thanked Mr. Stockton for his time and presentation. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

XII. AGENCY UPDATES - *FOR DISCUSSION ONLY*

Chairman Sicking moved Ray Dotson to this time so he could leave early.

C. Natural Resources Conservation Service – *Ray Dotson, State Conservationist* Bettina congratulated Ray on the recent birth of his daughter.

Ray said Karri Honaker is now the Assistant State Conservationist for Programs which leaves the State Resource Conservationist position vacant. Jeffrey Jones from Virginia is the Acting SRC, he is a biologist and will be beneficial. Jose Rosado is officially the State Conservation Engineer. Internally we have transitioned the engineers in the state from being supervised by the District Conservationists to being supervised by Jose directly.

Next week we will have 13 NRCS staff attending the NvACD Annual Meeting. Ray will not be here, he is attending a national meeting in Minnesota. We have sent emails for representation for STAC. We received ten responses and we are sending out for a second time.

When we were in Elko for the Area One Meeting we brought MOU’s. We will be reaching out to NDCNR leadership to make sure we are going about this correctly. We need these MOU’s in place by the end of December. Is this something you want for every District or at the Department level? Bettina asked if someone will be at the NvACD Meeting in your stead. Ray said yes, Karri will be attending and she can answer questions. Commissioner Orr asked if there training for writing ranking criteria for local work groups. Ray said yes. Right now we have program sign-ups and they have multiple systems to go through. We want to combine all those systems into one system. Commissioner Orr asked if the MOU’s could start at the state level and then to the CDs. Ray said we can discuss that at the NvACD Meeting.

Leticia Barber will be starting the 1st week of December as the ASTC of Field Operations.

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

Chairman Sicking said we will move this item to the next meeting when we have a full board present. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

XI. FOLLOW UP ON CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS OUTLINED IN 06-14-18 MEETING *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

This item was incorrectly placed on the agenda; it was copied from a previous agenda. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

XII. AGENCY UPDATES - *FOR DISCUSSION ONLY*

F. Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team – *Kelly McGowan, Program Manager* Kelly said we had a regulation adoption hearing which resulted in adoption with some minor amendments. We should have a hearing before

the Legislative Commission later this month and it will be adopted and made a permanent regulation. Hopefully it will be in place by November 1st.

We have another round of funding soon for private landowners interested in generating credits within the Conservation Credit System. This funding allows a private landowner to apply. The funding allows them to hire a verifier to use the habitat quantification tool on their property before they begin their projects. It helps provide funding for enhancements on their land to provide additional credits. We expect about \$750,000 of those dollars to be available this round. This is the third round of funding and we hope for transactions in the system which means more of that initial funding we granted which the state will recover and reinvest in more private landowners. The regulation has created an uptick in the number of debit projects that we see. This will create a need for credits in the future.

Ethan is attending the NvACD Annual Meeting and he will talk about the Adaptive Management Process which is specific to habitat and the population of sage grouse (*See Attachment II*). USGS does part of the study and we analyze the habitat. For each population management unit we study the trigger criteria (fire etc.) and we put out a ranking sheet. We are holding meetings about this. We hope the CDs will participate. We have identified some of the priorities and now we want to hand it off to the local groups. Part of the reason the NCCN (Nevada Collaborative Conservation Network) was created was to create a process for the locals to be involved and identify areas of conservation. Kelly said this should fit in with the Resource Needs Assessments. He asked if all the Districts were involved in the RNAs. Commissioner Orr said seven CDs are participating. Kelly said this process should play into the RNAs as these are specific to sage-grouse and sagebrush habitat. We are hopeful the local information will be brought up to the regional/state level and give some guidance to BLM, USFS, and others that have pots of money and help them in their ranking process. We can attend local meetings.

Kelly said they will apply for RCCP (Regional Conservation Partnership Program) funding. There are two pots. We are going to apply to match our state funding. When the state applies for this funding we don't go through NRCS. We hope we can put in a grant application asking for match funds for the state funds we have.

We had a couple of improvements that were adopted by the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council. One was the ability to generate credits on public lands and the other was to quantify the impacts related to exploration drilling.

A. Nevada Department of Agriculture – Meghan Brown, Plant Industry Division Commissioner Brown said we have met with a couple of the CDs to give presentations on using the Rangeland Monitoring App. We have been working with Sustainability Management and doing some presentations at the Cattleman's Convention. The Department will be participating at the Farm Bureau and Cattleman's Conventions and speak on Noxious Weeds. We have been working with the Nevada Native Seed Partnership to get our Strategic Plan out for a statewide meeting with our partners. We are hosting the Intermountain Native Plant Summit in Boise at the University on November 5th and 6th.

E. Nevada Association of Conservation Districts – Connie Lee, Executive Director Ms. Lee said our NvACD Annual Meeting is October 23-24. The business meeting is October 24th. There is a Soil Health Workshop on October 22nd.

The seven RNAs have reached final approval and completion. Thank you to Commissioner Orr and the others on the NvACD Board that have worked so hard to get this done.

The National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting is in Las Vegas February 8-12, 2020.

NvACD continues to work with NRCS to improve staffing. Gary McCuin and another are going to Washington D.C. to speak with lawmakers regarding wild horse issues.

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 there is an event next week regarding wild horse management. He can provide the flyer if needed.

Nevada Economic Assessment Project (NEAP) is going to put together economic information at the local level for various counties about the various industries including Tourism, Agriculture, Mining and Energy. This is so federal agencies and others will have a better understanding of the economics of their actions.

There was recently the sale of 144 acres of the Main Station Farm that is next to McCarran Boulevard. This was \$120,000,000 and the Farm will receive half of the funds. This will provide for an endowed professor of Urban Indoor Agriculture. There will be 700 acres of conservation easement on the rest of the farm. There will be a Research/Extension Facility in Clark County. There will be the renovation of the lab facilities at UNR including the Eureka station for sheep research to improve sheep, rangelands, and to increase water use efficiency of cropping in Diamond Valley. Also to renovate the Jay Dow Wetlands.

There have been replacement hires: Paul Meiman has replaced Kent McAdoo in Elko, Maninder Walia replaced Jay Davison, Christina Restaino replaced Ed Smith, she is the new Chair of the UNCE Natural Resources Team. Steve Foster will lead the Agriculture team. Lindsay Chichester is replacing Steve Lewis in Douglas County. Coretta Patterson replaced Bruna Alves as the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.

Some new positions are Erin Hanan as NRES Fire Ecologist, Bob Schreiber in NRES Rangeland Ecology Modeling, Erica Beijo as NRES Lecturer in Forestry. There is a half time lecturer for animal and vet science labs. There is an extension specialist for Agriculture Water Management, Alejendro Andre. There is an open search for a rangeland restoration focused assistant professor for the Rangeland Ecology and Management Program

A replacement for himself as he is retiring at the end of December will be Tamzen Stringham who will Chair the Department and represent the College NAES and UNCE on the Commission.

D. Nevada Department of Wildlife – Bobby Jones, NDOW/NRCS shared Habitat Biologist There was no report today.

G. Others – Dominique Etchegoyhen said we will work with Ray Dotson to support the Conservation Districts through the updates of the MOU agreements and the template. We are saddened that Bettina is leaving. We are hoping the appointment of the new board member is forthcoming.

XIII. COMMISSIONER ITEMS - *FOR DISCUSSION ONLY*

A. Commissioner Orr said NDF dispatchers as well as NDF crews can earn overtime when they are working on projects. Please let your CDs know to figure this into their projection costs. She has spreadsheets with the cost amounts.

Commissioner Swanson said it has been an honor and a privilege to be part of the State Conservation Commission. Chairman Sicking said it has been a privilege to work with Commissioner Swanson who has been a definite asset to the Commission. The Commissioners thanked him for his knowledge and commitment.

XIV. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Chairman Sicking said the next meeting will follow the NvACD meeting on Thursday, October 24th at 1:00 p.m. in Winnemucca.

B. If there is a full board at the next meeting we will go over the Strategic Plan.

We will go over any resolutions that come out of the State meeting.

We will discuss the STAC appointment.

We will look at the new template for the NRCS MOUs.

Chairman Sicking made a motion to have the meeting on October 24, 2019 at 1:00 in Winnemucca. Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

XV. PUBLIC COMMENTS There were no public comments.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*****

Commissioner Orr made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Wallace seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 12:47 p.m. ***ACTION TAKEN***