



STATE OF NEVADA  
**STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
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## MINUTES

### STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Richard H. Bryan Building  
Video/Teleconference Meeting  
901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, NV 89701  
**December 10, 2021 at 1:00 PM**

- **List of Acronyms attached as last page.**

**Board Members Present:** Chairman Joe Sicking, Paradise-Sonoma CD; Vice Chairman Commissioner Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD; Commissioner Leland Wallace, Esmeralda CD; Commissioner Meghan Brown, NV Dept. of Agriculture, NDA; Commissioner Mark Damron, CD of Southern Nevada; Commissioner Dr. Paul Meiman, University of Nevada, Reno College of Agriculture, Biotechnology & Natural Resources and Cooperative Extension (CABNR/UNCE), Elko; Commissioner Jake Tibbitts, Eureka CD.

**Board Members Absent:** Commissioner Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD; Commissioner Doug Martin, Nevada Tahoe CD.

**Others Present:** Melany Aten, Nevada Conservation Districts Program Manager (NCDP); Jennifer Zampanti, Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (NDCNR) Director's Office; Lauren Williams, NCDP Ely Conservation Staff Specialist; Dominique Etchegoyhen, DCNR Deputy Director; Gerry Miller, NCDP Elko Conservation Staff Specialist; Greg Ott, NV Deputy Attorney General, DAG; Connie Lee, Nevada Association of Conservation Districts NVACD Executive Director; Carl Clinger; Big Meadow CD; Rob Holly, Dayton Valley CD; Kristen Szabo, Administrator Division of Nevada Natural Heritage; Ryan Shane, Division of Forestry; Robert Adams CD of Southern Nevada.

#### **1. Call to order, Determination of Quorum (For Possible Action)**

- A. Chairman Sicking called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.
- 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. Motion made by Commissioner Tibbitts to postpone review of the October 26, 2021 minutes until the next meeting.
- B. Commissioner Meiman seconded the motion.
- C. Motion passed unanimously. **ACTION TAKEN**

#### **4. Discussion and reevaluation on good standing determination of Dayton Valley Conservation District (For Possible Action) NAC 548.100**

- A. Discussion: Rob Holly speaks about the revised financial report for Dayton Valley CD. Ms. Aten comments new report is correct and complete.
- B. Motion made by Commissioner Tibbetts to find Dayton Valley CD in good standing.
- C. VC Commissioner Rieman seconds the motion.
- D. Motion passed unanimously. **ACTION TAKEN**

**5. Discussion and reevaluation on whether the Conservation District is eligible to receive grant monies after revised statements are submitted for review to the SCC (For Possible Action) NAC 548.115 (c)(2) NAC 548.120 -Meeting materials provided**

A. Carson Valley CD: Commissioner Tibbitts asks why the text says the report states annual work plan, not annual report. Determined to be wrong text. The financial report shows dollar amounts are the same for income and expenditures. VC Commissioner Rieman comments that the report is complete. Melany states that expenditures are correct, after talking to Rich Wilkinson from Carson Valley CD. Accounts are all current using their Excel program, which doesn't transfer exactly to the CD form. Spreadsheet shows a consistent balance, due to their ongoing grants. Ms. Aten will work with the CD to adjust their spreadsheet with the grants in a different category to track them separately. Commissioner Tibbitts would like a review of spending, not just a bank balance. He states that certification of expenditures is required per statute and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC), not just a reporting of what is in the bank. SCC's job is reviewing what funding was spent, not what is in the bank account. VC Commissioner Rieman comments that when money is spent and the CD is waiting for reimbursements from other agencies for what was already spent, it shows that way on the Excel sheet. Chairman Sicking asks for a standard form for CD financial reports. Commissioner Meiman states that he gave Commissioner Tibbitts a call to get explanation of audit. Also asks for a standard form for expenditures. Commissioner Sicking asks for discussion regarding developing a standard form to be on next agenda.

- a. Board accepts Carson Valley CD's submission of clarification on finances.

B. Dayton Valley CD: Review of financials. Approved expenditures and receiving funding.

- a. Motion made by VC Commissioner Rieman that CD is eligible to receive the funding.
- b. Commissioner Tibbitts seconds the motion.
- c. Motion passed unanimously. **ACTION TAKEN**

C. Duck Valley CD: Commissioner Tibbitts states revised report shows state funding and all expenditures. Had not reported a scholarship they awarded.

- a. Motion made by Commissioner Tibbitts that the CD spent all funding.
- b. Commissioner Brown seconds the motion.
- c. Motion passed unanimously. **ACTION TAKEN**

D. Ruby Valley CD: Commissioner Tibbitts refers to letter from Ruby Valley that some expenditures were intended, but not executed by the end of the fiscal year. States that money spent after June 30, 2021, are not eligible for fiscal year 2021. Ms. Aten asks Gerry Miller, Staff specialist to comment. Mr. Miller stated the Ruby Valley CD intended to spend the grant funding before the deadline, but did not due to COVID complications in applicants. Commissioner Tibbitts clarifies the grant money was approved to spend before deadline, but was not spent.

- a. Chairman Sicking agrees with Commissioner Tibbitts not to approve the full amount of grant. Commissioner Damron returns to original submittal that \$3,374.17 was spent. Expenditure based on that. All funds not spent.
- b. **NO ACTION TAKEN TO ACCEPT NEW SUBMISSION TO CHANGE PREVIOUSLY VOTED ON FINANCIAL SUBMISSION.**

E. CD of Southern NV accepts determination from October 26, 2021 SCC meeting and will only be awarded the difference in expenditure (\$4,000-\$1,149.10=\$2,850.90) NAC 548.120(1). Southern NV confirms original report. Commissioner Damron asks Commissioner Tibbitts whether SCC only wants to see expenditures. Commissioner Tibbitts confirms that only actual expenditures before deadline can be accepted.

a. **NO ACTION TAKEN TO ACCEPT NEW SUBMISSION TO CHANGE PREVIOUSLY VOTED ON FINANCIAL SUBMISSION.**

**6. Discuss and approve releasing funds to all Districts in good standing (For Possible Action)**

a. Motion made by Commissioner Tibbitts to provide state contribution of \$4,000 to all the districts in good standing, less the amount for Ruby Valley CD and Southern Nevada CD. Balances from the two CD's will be distributed to all other CD's.

b. Commissioner Meiman notes that in the 10.26.21 minutes, it was written that the Legislature reduced the funding to \$3,000. Ms. Aten confirmed with Mr. Etchegoyhen that the grant amount is \$4,000 for fiscal year 2022.

c. Commissioner Brown seconds the motion

d. Motion passed unanimously. **ACTION TAKEN**

**7. Updates from Agencies and Partners (For Possible Action)**

A. Nevada Department of Agriculture: Commissioner Brown had updates. Hired new noxious weed coordinator Jake Dick, he has attended some CD meetings and plans to attend some more. Recruiting for NDOT paid position to do reviews of construction plans. Also recruiting another noxious weed position for an Agriculturalist I to do survey work related to early detection and rapid response. Working on getting recruitments for environmental science, worker protection and water quality program. Wrapping up recruitments and interviews for native seed program, which received grant funding. Working with Nevada Native Seed Partnership. Working on Seed Forum as hybrid meeting, with smaller in-person meetings in fall. Participating in shared stewardship and other activities in north and south. Commissioner Reiman asks whether Agriculture talks to agriculture teachers with greenhouses to see if they can help plan or grow native varieties. Commissioner Brown states that there are problems with obtaining volumes of pure seed. Thanks to Ms. Aten for her dedication to the NDA programs.

B. University of Nevada Reno CABNR/UNCE: Commissioner Meiman has no updates. No questions.

C. Natural Resource Conservation Service: Question from Ms. Aten about the date for the NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) meeting. NRCS released report about new numbers related to Snowtel locations and new averages on the measured precipitation. NRCS wants to present to SCC in the spring a "New Norms" averages to determine precipitation. Ms. Aten is working on presentation. Commissioner Tibbitts comments that reporting "averages" changing to "median". Commissioner Brown asks about whether changes are within all of USDA or only NRCS programs. Ms. Aten replied that it is only within the NRCS. No one from NRCS was present to comment.

D. DCNR: Dominique Etchegoyhen updates that this week, Division of Water Resources issued order #1329 establishing interim procedures for managing groundwater appropriations to prevent the increase of capture related to rights decreed pursuant to the Humboldt River

adjudication. DCNR is wrapping up state water plan survey that runs through December 15<sup>th</sup>. Goal is to find priorities of using water. There is concern about access to Division of Forestry conservation camp crews. There are significant vacancies. There are less inmates for crews. Early release programs have reduced available inmates. Have requests regarding American Rescue Plan Act, about how money is spent and how much Nevada is going to get. Forestry to use shared stewardship and coordinate where funds will go. Question about NDOR. Colin Robertson to come to next meeting to talk about his division. Matthew Weintraub was hired as NDOR Deputy Administrator. Hired Brandon Bishop as program manager for conservation bond program of AB84. He is developing regulations for the competitive grant program to do natural resource work. Commissioner Rieman asks about state lands and water discussion. State is taking over river to high water flood mark of Carson River and air control above river. Are permits needed to access river now? Army Corp of Engineers to make it navigable to Fallon. Mr. Etchegoyhen says there are different tests for navigability for different purposes and outcomes.

E. Sagebrush Ecosystem Program/Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team: No updates. No questions.

F. NvACD: Connie Lee updates on the newly established Sportsman's raffle success. Money raised to annual scholarship program and the two part time staff. Approved strategic plan and look forward to implementing objectives. National Association of Conservation District is looking for items of interest for new Southwest Region newsletter, which includes Nevada's CDs. Approved NRCS Resource Conservation planning partnership agreement to reinvigorate conservation planning as part of the NRCS contracting processes

G. All others: Ms. Aten states there are representatives from our partner agencies: Ryan Shane from Division of Forestry and Kristen Szabo from Natural Heritage Program. Mr. Shane adds to Mr. Etchegoyhen's report for DCNR. SB508 passed in Legislation. NV Energy to implement more than 10,000 acres of treatments to create fuel breaks. Mr. Shane comments to expand capabilities for mitigation and fuel reduction to curtail fire spread where needed. There is 47% increase in acres treated by Forestry, State, and Federal agencies. Extended contract with NV Energy beyond SB508, for an additional year. Looking for State investment to match. Would like to talk more about use of the Shared Stewardship Agreement in the future with the SCC and CDs. Kristen Szabo summarizes that Natural Heritage Program maintains data on rare plants and animals and leads Nevada's wetlands program. Currently working on native bee and butterfly pollinator working group and would like to coordinate and collaborate with Ms. Aten and the CDs for future projects and funding.

**8. Consideration and discussion on the role of the SCC on Assembly Joint Resolution Number 2 (AJR2) to "identify or establish voluntary programs, within the limits of legislative appropriations and other available money, to address the health of forests, rangelands and soils..." (For Possible Action)**

Commissioner Tibbitts opens discussion. AJR2 was originally proposed to relate to forest health and linkages to water quality and was amended to include rangeland and soil health and water quality. Conservation Districts are specifically called out in amended AJR2. SCC has big role to play in AJR2. CD managers and Commission can be on the offensive moving forward. There is potential nexus with the 30 x 30 Initiative. Would like to establish funding out to CD's from Legislature or other sources. Must discuss and should vote to meet goal of AJR2. Commissioner Sicking states CD's can help a lot. Mr. Shane agrees with Commissioner Tibbitts about leveraging the Shared Stewardship Agreement and asks Ms. Aten about involving her with Technical Advisory Committee, TAC. Commissioner Sicking asks who is lead agency. Mr. Shane explains Shared Stewardship united USDA natural

resource management agencies and Department of Interior at the Federal levels, including tribes, NDA, NDOW, and NDF to move forward with stewardship. IFC approves position in NDF that will coordinate initiative. Connie Lee comments on shared stewardship strategy and coordination there for this process. NvACD strategic plan is to assist with efforts in greater integration. Commissioner Tibbitts states AJR2 lists CD's specifically to aid in this. Would like action to be made aware by local CD's. Commissioner Sicking asks Ms. Aten to get more information on programs concerning this. Ms. Aten has been at TAC meetings and helped with Elko project area. Would be great to develop another grant that SCC manages to reach these goals. Commissioner Tibbitts volunteers to help develop grant or other funding opportunities. Commissioner Meiman asks Commissioner Tibbitts where letter regarding CD's would go. Letter should go to all state resource entities; the Governor's office, NDOW, NDF, NDA, etc.. List what issues are pending. Commissioner Sicking says Department of Interior and BLM should be included.

- a. Motion made by Commissioner Meiman to draft letter to explain the role of SCC, including CD's.
- b. VC Commissioner Rieman seconds the motion.
- c. Motion passed unanimously. **ACTION TAKEN**

#### **9. Commissioner items (For Discussion only)**

- A. Commissioner Sicking comments on loss of Lahontan CD member Ed Venturacci
- B. Ms. Aten working on Sage Grouse grant with SET and will have a draft ready for review to release this next year.

#### **10. Next Commission Meeting (For Possible Action)**

- A. Future agenda items: Sage Grouse grant-review of rewrite and release of grant.
- B. Commissioner Sicking sets tentative date of next SCC meeting to coordinate with NvACD in late February or early March.

#### **11. Public comments-None**

Public comment 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 3 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.

#### **12. Adjournment (For Possible Action)**

- A. Motion to adjourn: Meeting adjourned 2:31 PM.