



STATE OF NEVADA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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MINUTES
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
The Richard H. Bryan Building 5th Floor Ponderosa Room
901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, Nevada
Monday, April 4, 2016 at 1:00 p.m.
Available by teleconference

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; Robert Little, NV Dept. of Agriculture; Jake Tibbitts, Eureka CD; Maggie Orr, Lincoln County CD; Leland Wallace, Esmeralda County CD; Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD; Kevin Roukey, Washoe-Storey CD, and Dr. Sherm Swanson, UNCE/CABNR.

Others Present: Tim Rubald, Conservation Districts Program Manager; Sandy Quilici, DCNR Director's Office; Nancy Sicking; Lori Story, Sr. Deputy Attorney General; Jon Paul Kiel, NV Division of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Water Quality Planning; Marlene Wallace, Esmeralda County CD; Meghan Brown, NV Dept. of Agriculture, and Connie Lee, Department of Wildlife (by phone).

CALL TO ORDER, DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

- A. Chairman Sicking called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.
A quorum was confirmed and introductions were made.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS There was no public comment.

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

- A. Commissioner Tibbitts said on page 3 under Item G: it says "NACD did development more policy" and it should say "NACD did develop more policy". On page 7 under NEXT COMMISSION MEETING: the second paragraph ends with "NRCS or Agriculture" and it would be best to clarify and say "NRCS or the Nevada Dept. of Agriculture". Commissioner Roukey made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. * **ACTION TAKEN** *
The changes were made and the minutes were finalized on April 4, 2016 by Sandy Quilici.

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

- A. Tim Rubald, program manager, said the three field staff specialists completed and passed the Conservation Credit System Verifier Training with the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program. Gerry Miller completed the certification training and Bettina Scherer and Ben Bolton completed the certification and GIS training. The staff specialists will only be verifying projects (habitat) approved by the Conservation Districts. This is to avoid competing with private enterprise. There were about 50 consultants verified at the training.

Mr. Rubald said the agenda will not include Item VII today which was to discuss the 'Action Plan' as he has not completed the plan at this time.

V. REVIEW, RANKING AND DETERMINATION OF FUNDING OF APPLICATIONS FROM CONSERVATION DISTRICTS FOR THE SAGE-GROUSE COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. and B. Mr. Rubald provided questions and points on a compilation page that showed the projects ranking along with the applications. (*See Attachment I*)

He said the total is \$80,000 to spend and passed out the Sagebrush Ecosystem Team's comments provided by Kelly McGowan. (*See Attachment II*)

Commissioner Little said that Meghan Brown has been asked to replace his position on the Commission. The Commission will receive a letter from the Nevada Dept. of Agriculture regarding the change.

Commissioner Tibbitts commented that Mr. Rubald did a good job in the ranking. He asked for the next round to consider whether the projects are in mapped habitat and connecting habitat. He suggested full funding of the first 4 projects as ranked and the 5th project would get the remaining funding.

Chairman Sicking said regarding the Paradise project #2 – this is work on the north fork of the Little Humboldt River that may need approval of the Army Corps of Engineers. Commissioner Roukey said if there is not fill being added it would not.

Commissioner Tibbitts asked if it would need a water permit and Commissioner Roukey said no.

Commissioner Roukey made a motion to fund the first 4 projects entirely and the 5th project to be funded with the remaining \$16,235.02. Commissioner Rieman seconded the motion, but there was more discussion.

Mr. Rubald said there may be a 2nd round after July 1st.

Commissioner Tibbitts said the timing of some of these projects would be at the time of sage-grouse breeding and disturb the birds. This includes some of the pretreatment surveys. Mr. Rubald said there will be more complete wording of the projects before the money is granted. The wording will say what should not be done at this time.

Commissioner Roukey asked if Fred Steinmann could provide a grant application training for CD's and Commissioner Orr said the Commission should review the training first which was agreed.

Commissioner Orr said she would like to thank the CDs that applied. We want them to reapply as some applications just need more details.

It was agreed to vote on each of the top five ranked applications individually. Commissioner Roukey made a motion to approve the applications individually, Commissioner Wallace seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Commissioner Roukey made a motion to approve the Lincoln County CD application for the amount of \$23,230.87 and Commissioner Tibbitts seconded the motion. Commissioner Orr abstained from the vote as she is on the board of this CD. There was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Commissioner Tibbitts made a motion to approve the White Pine County CD application for \$22,632.11, Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Commissioner Orr made a motion to approve the Paradise Sonoma CD #2 application for \$14,100.00 and Commissioner Swanson seconded the motion. Chairman Sicking abstained from the vote as this is the CD he serves on. There was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Commissioner Roukey made a motion to approve the Paradise Sonoma CD #1 application for \$3,802.00 and Commissioner Orr seconded the motion. Chairman Sicking abstained from the vote as this is the CD he serves on. There was a vote and the motion passed with 6 votes. Commissioner Rieman voted against funding the application citing there were limited funds available and the Paradise Sonoma CD had received funding for one application and these funds could go to a different CD. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Commissioner Roukey made a motion to approve \$16,235.02 (the balance of the \$80,000) in funds for the Eureka CD application and Commissioner Little seconded the motion. Commissioner Tibbitts abstained from the vote as this is the CD he serves on. There was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

C. Commissioner Tibbitts made a motion to authorize Mr. Rubald to negotiate the funding issues and sign the agreements with the successful CD applicants, Commissioner Swanson seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Mr. Rubald asked for the Commissioners comments on the projects. Commissioner Tibbitts said Brad Schultz can help with technical assistance. Commissioner Swanson said there is a new UNCE range person at the plant materials center in Fallon who can help. Commissioner Tibbitts said there are USDA issued specification sheets that can be used.

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

A. Commissioner Orr said (*See Attachment III*) on pages 10 and 11 she wondered if there is a conflict between the Opportunities bullet of "Supportive legislators in leadership provide a voice in the legislature" and in Threats the bullet of "Loss of effectiveness, funding, and legislative support". After discussion it was agreed there was not a conflict.

Commissioner Orr said on page 13: the last sentence of 3.3 is the same as 3.4. It was agreed to remove the sentence from 3.3 and leave it in 3.4. On page 16 under Goal III there is a 1.3 but it is not there; it needs to be added; it is "Assist Districts in developing communication outreach tools." On page 20 under 4.4 change "Invite them" to "Invite youth".

Commissioner Tibbitts said on page 18 under 4., 4.1, and 4.3 change Sage-grouse to lower case sage-grouse. On the cover page the date adopted should be changed from April 5, 2016 to April 4, 2016.

At 2:00 p.m. Commissioner Smith joined the meeting.

Commissioner Little said we had talked of adding a list of potential partners and Mr. Rubald said he would work on compiling a partnership list.

Sandy Quilici said on page 10 after the first bullet there is a period that needs to be deleted. There has been an acronym list added. Commissioner Tibbitts said the acronym list can be changed as needed since this is a living document and will be revisited at least twice a year.

Commissioner Tibbitts made a motion to adopt the Nevada State Conservation Commission Strategic Plan with the final changes that were just discussed. Commissioner Roukey seconded the motion. There was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

VII. DISCUSSION, FURTHER DEVELOPMENT, AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF THE 'ACTION PLAN' FOR THE COMMISSION'S STRATEGIC PLAN - * FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. This item will be moved to a future agenda as the 'Action Plan' is not complete at this time. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

VIII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DIRECTION TO STAFF REGARDING SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE'S (NRCS) REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (RCPP) - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

B. Commissioner Tibbitts said he was in Washington D.C. in March and met with the National NRCS Office staff on RCPP. He told them the one page and one paragraph letter we received as feedback on what we could improve in submitting an application was not too helpful. He asked for guidance and they encouraged applying for the state pool instead of the highly competitive national pool.

One review point was the application was heavy on planning, but at the end of the meeting they said to reapply. He felt if we apply for a state pool we would focus on one or two or a group of districts rather than the whole state. We could revamp, fine tune, and resend for the national. It is due in May. Originally the national application was to develop a Coordinated Resource Management Plan in every district. After each CRMP was in place then each district would get the remainder of the funding to fund one or more of the projects in the CRMP.

After a discussion Commissioner Tibbitts said we can flesh out the previous year's national application and resubmit. Commissioner Roukey made a motion to direct staff to prepare the application for the national grant and Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Commissioner Roukey said he would help Commissioner Tibbitts with the application. Commissioner Swanson suggested including that BLM is spending a lot of sage-grouse monies to fund the NRCS to develop ecological site descriptions and that is an excellent example of agencies working together to develop a tool that is useful for local groups to use for planning purposes. The CD's can see how this is applied and use it.

Commissioner Tibbitts said he and Tim Rubald are meeting with NRCS tomorrow. NDOW will be there and we can talk about partnering. There was a vote to approve the motion and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Commissioner Swanson asked about the state funding and should we partner with someone who is applying. Commissioner Tibbitts said if a CD wants to work with NDOW they could do so and apply; he feels that if the Commission applied they would be questioned on why certain projects were selected.

IX. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS TO DISTRICTS REGARDING SB476 PASSED DURING THE 2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Chairman Sicking asked if there was anything new on what the districts were doing. Commissioner Tibbitts said the CD of Southern Nevada wants to move forward and put this (the imposition of a fee on parcels in a CD) on the upcoming ballot. The county commissioners and some of the business community have objected and said they will fight it. Commissioner Roukey said he spoke with a Washoe County commissioner and they said this is not a good time. Washoe County schools are asking for a raise in taxes.

Chairman Sicking said before a CD asks for this they need to make sure they have good projects and promote how beneficial and valuable the projects are to the county.

Commissioner Swanson said it would be helpful to put photos on the website to showcase the projects.

Commissioner Tibbitts said it would also be good to provide the legislators with examples and photos of CD projects. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

X. AGENCY UPDATES - * FOR DISCUSSION ONLY*

A. Sagebrush Ecosystem Program – There was no report today.

B. Nevada Department of Agriculture – Robert Little, *Plant Industry Division* Commissioner Little said a new facility opened in Las Vegas last week which includes new labs. We will be hiring an agricultural enforcement officer for the southern area. We plan on more educational outreach from that office.

We are trying to fill two positions: the Noxious Weeds Coordinator and the Rangeland Health/Agriculturist II. The AG IV that ran the pest control operator program has retired and we are recruiting for that position.

The pesticide applicator licensing is in place and should not affect CD's as far as licensing unless it is "work for hire".

The Rangeland and Project Monitoring App will be out soon; there will be added tutorial buttons to help with use.

We will have RFP's out soon. The Forest Service/Private Weed Control grants on private land are a little late, but will come out in the next couple of weeks. There will not be RFP's for sage grouse projects this year because there is no funding, hopefully next year.

Commissioner Little said this is his last meeting on the Commission and that he has enjoyed working with the Commissioners and Mr. Rubald. The Commissioners thanked Commissioner Little for his service. Meghan Brown will be representing the Nevada Department of Agriculture now.

C. 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 the proposal for the merger of UNCE and CABNR is being reviewed and will be moving on to the Board of Regents for its June meeting. The period of public comment through the Provost's website and through the Faculty Senate's website has closed. A partnership committee that consists of 4 county commissioners, Clark, Washoe, Eureka, and Humboldt, plus Mark Walker and Chancellor Klaich, with Jeff Fontaine and Dagny Stapleton has been established to work through issues or assurances contained in the NACO letter in opposition to the consolidation. A written report to those commissioners has been sent from the Provost and both letters are on the Provost's website.

We are interviewing for a beef research design statistician for the ANDF Dept. and we are recruiting for a Remote Sensing position.

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

E. Nevada Department of Wildlife – *Connie Lee, Land Owner Incentive Programs* – Ms. Lee said there is habitat funding available for restoration projects and to contact her for more information. Habitat is putting in an application for weed treatment on public lands.

F. Nevada Association of Conservation Districts – *Jake Tibbitts, President* Commissioner Tibbitts said the NvACD Annual Meeting will be November 15th and 16th in Las Vegas this year. The Conservation District of Southern Nevada and Amber Bosket are helping with the planning. There will be a SCC meeting on November 14th.

Chairman Sicking thanked Commissioner Tibbitts for helping with the NACD annual meeting in Reno and the Rangeland Tour. He has had numerous comments on how people enjoyed the meeting and the tour.

G. Others – Participating agencies and partners. There were no other reports

XI. COMMISSIONER ITEMS - * FOR DISCUSSION ONLY *

A. Commissioner Orr said there is a new State Forester and he is Joe Freeland formerly with BLM. She has spoken with him and he is enthusiastic about bringing his BLM experience to NDF. She also talked about the CD's and he is excited to work with them.

Commissioner Orr received a request from BLM for the CD's to write them a support letter for SNPLMA.

Chairman Sicking said Quinn River CD would like to merge with the Paradise-Sonoma CD - they are in talks.

Commissioner Swanson said with the talk about coordinated planning at the district level, it might be good for us to put the state and federal agencies on the next agenda to talk about how to work with the CD's. It would be good to talk about how to spend coordinated money.

Commissioner Rieman said DMV has a new farm license plate for purchase and as a farmer you can claim a refund of 80% of the taxes paid on bulk fuel purchases. *(See Attachment IV)*

XII. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Agenda Items: Commissioner Swanson would like to invite state and federal agencies to talk about coordinated planning with CD's. This would include BLM, USFS, NDOW and NDF.

Discussion, further development, and possible adoption of the 'Action Plan' for the Commission's Strategic Plan.

B. Next Meeting: At the call of the Chair.

Mr. Rubald said SRM will be having their summer rangeland tour on July 28th & July 29th in the Eureka area. They will look at sagebrush mowing, bio char, and PJ thinning projects.

Chairman Sicking welcomed Meghan Brown to the Commission. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS There were no public comments.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Commissioner Roukey made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Swanson seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.