



STATE OF NEVADA  
**STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
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**MINUTES**  
**STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING**

Elko County Commission Chambers  
Nannini Administration Building Suite 102  
540 Court Street, Elko, Nevada  
Tuesday, June 9, 2015 6:30 p.m.

The Nevada State Conservation Commission considered the following items.

**Board Members Present:** Chairman Joe Sicking, Paradise/Sonoma CD; Dr. Sherm Swanson, CABNR-NAES; Tina Mudd, Nevada Department of Agriculture; and Jake Tibbitts, Eureka CD.

**Board Members Absent:** Vice Chairman Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD; Maggie Orr, Lincoln County CD; Leland Wallace, Esmeralda County CD; Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD; and Kathy Mort, Stillwater CD.

**Others Present:** Bill Elder, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Kevin Benson, Deputy Attorney General; Sandy Quilici, DCNR Director's Office; Nancy Sicking; Jaime Jasmine, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Gerry Miller, Conservation Staff Specialist, Elko Area; Ben Bolton, Conservation Staff Specialist, Ely Area; George Kleeb, Great Basin College and today's meeting facilitator; Connie Lee, NV Dept. of Wildlife; Ralph Sacrison; Leslie Lotspeich; Dale Lotspeich; and Jonathan Dahl, Starr Valley CD.

**CALL TO ORDER, DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

- A. The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m.  
There was not a quorum at this meeting and there were no action items on the agenda.  
The participants introduced themselves.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENTS** There were no public comments.

**III. A DISCUSSION FOR THE COMMISSION TO RECEIVE AND DISCUSS PUBLIC INPUT ON POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSERVATION WORK THROUGHOUT THE HUMBOLDT RIVER WATERSHED.**

- A. The Commission is considering applying for an NRCS grant known as the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). This item is to discuss with stakeholders and others the possible scope of conservation work that might best assist or improve the health of the Humboldt River watershed. Development of partnerships for this application is also an important discussion point, among others that may come up concerning conservation issues as they apply to the health of the watershed. Chairman Sicking introduced George Kleeb as the facilitator of the discussion.

Chairman Sicking said this is more about restoring the health of the Humboldt River Basin than getting water to specific users. He said he had hoped to see more attendance at this meeting.

Mr. Kleeb said he has provided a list of questions (*See Attachment I*) and gave copies to the audience members. He told the members if they think of something later; please send the thoughts to the address or email provided at the bottom of the list.

Mr. Kleeb said this map (*See Attachment II*) shows the extensive area of the watershed. Right now we want ideas to help the entire watershed. He asked for a volunteer to right down ideas on the easel as he spoke. Commissioner Mudd offered to help.

Question #1 is “What is our greatest natural resource conservation need in the watershed?” Mr. Kleeb directed this to the audience.

- Physical stability
- Healthy ranches
- How the water is used
- Good plant life/soil erosion control
- Endangered plants
- Water quality
- Invasive plants

Question #2 is “What do we need to know about the watershed to become better stewards?”

- Historical norms and how it has changed
- Review historical records and the changes that have occurred.
- Where the headcutting is taking place and the impacts
- Public policy

Question #3 is “What do we need to do to improve the watershed’s health?”

- Assess weed infestations
- Assess vegetation and types of growth
- Promote vegetation that conserves water
- Flood control
- Balance competing needs
- Dams – help with flood control and rebuild the river bed
- Cooperation between the agencies – CCC
- Priority Flow Control and proper functioning condition (PFC)

Mr. Kleeb gave each member a red sticky note worth 50 points, a blue note worth 30 points, and a green note worth 20 points. He asked the members to come to the easel and put the notes on the items they want to vote on. He said your best vote is the red, the second vote is the blue, and the third vote is the green.

Mr. Kleeb said this group is concerned with the norms, weed infestations, and cooperation between the agencies.

Mr. Kleeb asked who is missing in this room that should be here. The audience members said:

- Policy makers – county, state, local governments
- Conservation Districts
- Ranchers
- State Division of Water Resources, Division of Environmental Protection
- BLM
- Mining

- Humboldt Watershed Authority
- Recreation groups
- Tribes

A member asked what government entities does the Commission work with? Chairman Sicking replied the Commission works with Water Resources, Environmental Protection, and Forestry. Conservation Districts have MOU's with BLM and Forest Service. We are unique that we can cross government lines and work with public and private lands. This meeting is to gather ideas for projects. The Commission is appointed by the Governor.

A member asked what was mentioned at yesterday's Winnemucca meeting. Chairman Sicking said there were discussions and a presentation of how to get more water to Lovelock. The meeting was not as productive as this one.

Commissioner Swanson said the ideas were put into columns and there was a column on policy and creating initiatives, but it did not get a lot of attention. The thought was that the issues would be addressed by the State Engineer's capture study. This is a four year study that is about to contract with the Desert Research Institute and USGS. There was a column with Coordination, Cooperation, and Communication which was agreed to be important. There was a column about integrated watershed management which included treating headcuts. Also to restore basic watershed functions, to restore meadows, conservation on private lands, improve channel stability, reduce erosion and sediment, and improve irrigation efficiency. Another column was about assessment and planning; to assess watershed functions, determine the locations of the risks, examine the vegetation on the landscape, understand the watershed as a whole, determine the long term plan, and understand mining changes. Some other items were how to recycle pit lake water and return it to the river, how to deal with wildfire and invasive species (tamarisk), and how to manage fuels.

The Commission thanked Mr. Kleeb for his help.

#### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS** There were no public comments.

Comments from the Commissioners – Commissioner Tibbitts said he was not confident in moving forward with the grant application without more support from the CD's and landowners.

Chairman Sicking agreed.

Commissioner Tibbitts said the pre-proposal needs to be submitted by July 8<sup>th</sup>. The pre-proposals are then reviewed and some are selected to submit a full proposal.

Commissioner Swanson said it would be good to have a proper functioning condition (PFC) analysis.

#### **V. ADJOURNMENT** Chairman Sicking adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.