



STATE OF NEVADA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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DRAFT MINUTES
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, June 25, 2014 at 11:00 a.m.
Director's Conference Room, 1st Floor, Richard H. Bryan Building
901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, Nevada 89701

The Nevada State Conservation Commission held a meeting on June 25, 2014, in the Director's Conference Room of the Richard H. Bryan Building, 901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, NV, 89701. The State Conservation Commission considered and acted on the following items.

Board Members Present: Chairman Joe Sicking, Paradise/Sonoma CD, Maggie Orr, Lincoln County CD, Leland Wallace, Esmeralda County CD, Dr. Sherm Swanson, CABNR-NAES, Jake Tibbitts, Eureka CD, Robert Little, Nevada Department of Agriculture (in person), and Kathy Mort, Stillwater CD.

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

Others Present: Tim Rubald, Conservation Districts Program Coordinator and Sagebrush Ecosystem Program Manager, Sandy Quilici, DCNR Director's Office, Kevin Benson, Deputy Attorney General, and Bruce Petersen, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

I. CALL TO ORDER, DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Chairman Sicking called the meeting to order at **11:02 a.m.** A quorum was established with members: Chairman Joe Sicking, Commissioner Jake Tibbitts, Commissioner Maggie Orr, Commissioner Leland Wallace, Commissioner Dr. Sherm Swanson, Commissioner Kathy Mort, and Commissioner Robert Little.

A. Others present introduced themselves and are noted above.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT There were no public comments.

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

A. Approval of Minutes from the May 16, 2014, meeting was moved to the next meeting. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

IV. BRIEF UPDATE ON CONSERVATION DISTRICTS PROGRAM - *NOT FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Tim Rubald said the Ely Conservation Staff Specialist position is now vacant and the recruitment should go out next week to fill the position.

The recruitment has closed for the Program Coordinator for the CD's program and there were 21 applicants. An interview panel will be created and the Commissioners are welcome to sit on the panel.

Commissioner Orr asked if the people that applied for the Ely position originally could be asked again. Mr. Rubald said they could be urged to apply.

The Legislative Commission approved the Sage Grouse Grant Fund regulation on Monday.

V. CONSIDERATION AND DETERMINATION OF GRANT RECIPIENTS FROM THOSE APPLICATIONS RECEIVED TIMELY - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Mr. Rubald said there were 17 applications received, but some were not completed correctly.

The SETT reviewed the applications. The application with a problem due to lack of information was from the Carson Valley CD. The rest were approved.

Carson Valley CD, Jiggs CD, and Starr Valley CD did not have elected supervisor's signatures. The 14 other applications were reviewed by the SETT on a scale from 1-10 and received from an 8 to a 4 with letters of approval having been issued.

Commissioner Tibbitts asked if there is a contingency. Mr. Rubald said it is written in the regulation that it is to be an even distribution of funds. We will try to make it a more competitive grant program.

Commissioner Tibbitts asked what happens if the funds are not expended. Mr. Rubald said the money needs to be spent; it does not roll over. Commissioner Little asked if there could be an extension to use it in the following year for a continuing project. Chairman Sicking said he believed the money must be obligated or it reverts to the general fund. Mr. Rubald said that is correct. If at the end of the next fiscal year the money is not expended and a report submitted, the money would be deducted from the regular grant for that fiscal year.

Commissioner Orr said on the non-signature applications if a board person submitted an email would that make a difference. Mr. Rubald said it was not a board person submitting in all three of the non-signature applications.

Chairman Sicking started the voting for the CDs eligible for funding. Carson Valley CD – Commissioner Swanson said the requirement that the CD have the resources to track was not addressed in this proposal. Chairman Sicking said it does not have a signature. Commissioner Tibbitts said it is not on the prescribed form, it is not signed, it does not answer the questions on the form to meet the requirements, and there is no map attached, Commissioner Swanson moved not to approve, Commissioner Wallace made the second to the motion. There was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. *** ACTION TAKEN***

Dayton Valley CD – Commissioner Tibbitts made a motion to approve, Commissioner Swanson seconded, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. *** ACTION TAKEN***

Eureka CD – Commissioner Tibbitts abstained from this vote. Commissioner Swanson moved to approve, Commissioner Orr seconded, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. *** ACTION TAKEN***

Jiggs CD – submitted with no signature. Commissioner Mort made a motion not to approve, Commissioner Tibbitts seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. *** ACTION TAKEN***

Lamoille CD – Commissioner Tibbitts moved to approve, Commissioner Orr seconded, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Lander CD – Commissioner Swanson said he would encourage them to put a gate in their enclosure to let cows out and to be used for prescribed grazing which would help sage grouse habitat. Commissioner Tibbitts said when they list their partners it does not include the land owner; the spring itself is on private land. The land owner is not aware this has been proposed. The grazing permittee has concerns with the fencing and is not on board. The cows would not be able to get to the upper country. There are also some stock watering rights issues. Commissioner Tibbitts

believes the permittee should have been included as a partner. The CD board members are not all supportive of the project.

The Board talked of moving forward with the concept, but they specifically required to have these issues addressed first. When this was presented to the board by Rod Davis and BLM they painted a picture that there was a road that dead ends into a riparian area and people use the road and tear it up. But the application regards livestock not vehicle use. It should have been presented to include livestock not just vehicle use. Commissioner Tibbitts wanted to point this out and when the CD votes to move forward this may not pass. The landowner is Elko Land and Livestock (Newmont) and they lease the permit to two permittees. The downstream area is BLM, but the upper area is private.

Commissioner Tibbitts supports funding, but the CD needs to work with all the partners to ensure when the fencing is done these issues are addressed. Commissioner Swanson made a motion to approve with the stipulation (in a letter Mr. Rubald would write) that before any money is spent it must be approved by the majority of the CD board and the landowner and permittees. Commissioner Tibbitts seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Lincoln County CD – Commissioner Orr abstained from this vote. Commissioner Tibbitts made a motion to approve, Commissioner Swanson seconded the motion, there was a vote and motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Mason Valley CD – Commissioner Orr moved to approve, Commissioner Swanson seconded, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Owyhee CD – Commissioner Tibbitts stated the application says the CD would be spraying with pesticide for hoary cress upon receipt of the funding. Using the product at this time of year would have minimal effect on hoary cress. Commissioner Little agreed that spring spraying would be best. Commissioner Swanson made a motion to write a letter to the CD to change the spray time to spring and to approve, Commissioner Tibbitts seconded, there was a vote and the motion for approval passed unanimously with the stipulation. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Paradise-Sonoma CD – Chairman Sicking abstained from this vote. Commissioner Tibbitts made a motion to approve, Commissioner Mort seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Quinn River CD – Commissioner Mort made a motion to approve, Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Smith Valley CD – Commissioner Tibbitts made a motion to approve, Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Starr Valley CD – Mr. Rubald noted this does not have a signature. Commissioner Orr made a motion to not approve the application, Commissioner Swanson seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Tonopah CD – Commissioner Orr made a motion to approve, Commissioner Mort seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Vya CD – Commissioner Tibbitts asked what the rating was from the SETT. Mr. Rubald said it was the lowest rating of a 4. Chairman Sicking asked if the project benefits sage grouse. Commissioner Tibbitts said it should by bringing water down to the lower benches for cattle. Commissioner Tibbitts made a motion to approve, Commissioner Wallace seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Chairman Sicking asked Bruce Petersen if NRCS staff for this area comes out of California. Mr. Petersen said it would be serviced out of the Alturas Office in California with Nevada funding.

Washoe-Storey CD – Commissioner Tibbitts asked where the exact areas of the project would be. Mr. Rubald said there was a model developed by SGI and used with GIS for the exact placements when the project is being designed. Commissioner Swanson made a motion to approve, Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

White Pine CD – Commissioner Orr said they need to correct their address; she made a motion to approve, Commissioner Tibbitts seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

Mr. Rubald restated his understanding of the caveats. They are that Lander County needs to show written approval from the land owner and the permittees, and vote to approve it as a CD; and Owyhee needs to wait until spring to spray.

VI. CONSIDERATION AND DETERMINATION OF THE EQUAL AMOUNT OF EACH GRANT TO GO TO THE RECIPIENT DISTRICTS, AND AUTHORIZATION FOR STAFF TO RELEASE TOTAL FUNDING IMMEDIATELY - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

- A. Mr. Rubald said there are 14 CD's approved and equal distribution will be \$2857.14 each. Commissioner Swanson made a motion to approve the release of the grant monies, Commissioner Wallace seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. ***ACTION TAKEN***

VII. AGENCY UPDATES - *NOT FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

- A. NV Dept. of Agriculture – Robert Little, Noxious Weeds Coordinator. Commissioner Little said Agriculture plans to fill an Agriculturist IV position soon. An RFP was released for \$85,000 on June 6th with the funding to go to invasive plant management projects that benefit sage grouse in Nevada rangelands. The applications are due July 11th.

The Board of Agriculture voted to support Lander County's suit against BLM.

Ed Foster is back to work part time. He may be able to attend the next SCC meeting.

- B. UNR-College of Agriculture Biotechnology and Natural Resources – Dr. Sherm Swanson, Range and Riparian Extension State Specialist for the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and Scientist for Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station. Commissioner Swanson said the NV Ag Experiment Station will have funds available for some sage grouse proposals.

Range Camp was very successful this year. Commissioner Orr and her husband were great help.

- C. Natural Resources Conservation Service – Bruce Petersen, State Conservationist. Mr. Petersen said there was an announcement by the Secretary of Agriculture on a cooperative effort among NRCS, BLM, and Forest Service, to implement the bi-state sage grouse action plan.

There is a deadline coming for a new provision of a 2014 Farm Bill called a Regional Conservation Partnership Proposal.

There is an initiative to reduce NRCS office space statewide. Currently we are working on the Elko and Lovelock offices. The state office has been reduced by having the FSA move in.

There are currently 5 field vacancies which have been hard to fill.

There are dairies going in Fallon and Yerington and we need an agreement regarding animal waste with NDEP. We need some compliance rules.

D. Farm Services Administration – Clint Koble, State Executive Director. There was no report today.

E. Nevada Department of Wildlife – Connie Lee, Landowner Incentive Programs. There was no report today.

F. Nevada Association of Conservation Districts – Jake Tibbitts, President. Commissioner Tibbitts said NvACD has given \$3,000 in scholarships to students that are attending college. There are 9 to 10 students receiving money this year. The main prize of \$1,000 went to the top ranked student and \$250 to the others.

The Annual Meeting will be in Fallon in November. November 12th and 13th will be the main meeting dates.

Commissioner Tibbitts has been working with Tim on a training program. At the fall meeting there will be a training day for the CD supervisors.

Chairman Sicking asked Commissioner Tibbitts to participate in the CD Coordinator interviews. He said he would.

G. Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Program – Tim Rubald, Program Manager. Mr. Rubald said Commissioner Swanson is now a member of the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council.

There is now a Monitoring Committee to work on technical items. Commissioner Swanson is the Chairman. The committee is looking at developing a self-monitoring program for grazing permittees on BLM and Forest Service land that is acceptable to all parties. CD's could be involved in the training and promoting of the program. BLM may have some funding available. The additional funding may help CD's to fund a full time position.

The Council has been providing input to the state plan. The Council approved a few sections. Hopefully there will be a final draft ready by August. There is more technical information, actions, goals, plans, and objectives now.

There will be an appendix to the state plan which will include specific project information.

The credit system is being produced. In July we hope to have some demonstration projects.

H. Others – there were no other reports.

VIII.COMMISSIONER ITEMS - *NOT FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Commissioner Orr said Pete Anderson with the Division of Forestry was at the Nevada SRM tour and they talked about the Range Camp using NDF's Sonoma Kitchen. It was asked if the Kitchen could be transferred to the Range Camp. Mr. Anderson said it would be easier to transfer it to another state agency and it was suggested to be the Conservation Districts Program. Ryan Shane of NDF will be working on this; Commissioner Orr wanted to let the Commission think about the idea. The Commission was receptive to the idea.

IX. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING - * FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. It was agreed to meet October 7, 2014, in Carson City from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The meeting will include the disbursement of funds. ***ACTION TAKEN**

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS There were no comments.

XI. ADJOURNMENT - FOR POSSIBLE ACTION* Commissioner Tibbitts made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Orr seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

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