



STATE OF NEVADA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
901 South Stewart Street, Suite 1003
Carson City, Nevada 89701-5247
Phone (775) 684-8600 Fax (775) 684-8604

APPROVED MINUTES
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, March 31, 2014 at 10:00 a.m.
Director's Conference Room, Richard H. Bryan Building
901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, Nevada 89701

The Nevada State Conservation Commission held a meeting on March 31, 2014, in the Director's Office 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 on March 31, 2014.

Board Members Present: Chairman Joe Sicking, Paradise/Sonoma CD (by phone), Maggie Orr, Lincoln County CD (by phone), Leland Wallace, Esmeralda County CD (by phone), Dr. Sherm Swanson, CABNR-NAES (by phone), Jake Tibbitts, Eureka CD (by phone), and Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD (by phone). **Board Members Absent:** Robert Little, Nevada Department of Agriculture, Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD, and Kathy Mort, Stillwater CD.

Others Present: Joe Locurto, Conservation Districts Program Coordinator, Sandy Quilici, DCNR Director's Office, Tim Rubald, Sagebrush Ecosystem Program Manager, Kevin Benson, Deputy Attorney General (by phone), Steve Weaver, Conservation Staff Specialist Winnemucca Area (by phone), Anita Lahey, Conservation Staff Specialist Ely Area (by phone), Doni Bruland, Conservation Staff Specialist Elko Area (by phone), 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 **10:05 a.m.** A quorum was established with members: Chairman Joe Sicking, Commissioner Jake Tibbitts, Commissioner Maggie Orr, Commissioner Leland Wallace, Commissioner Dr. Sherm Swanson, and Commissioner Agee Smith.

A. Others present introduced themselves and are noted above.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT There were no public comments.

III. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DIRECTION TO STAFF OF CHANGES TO LCB FILE NO. R139-13, SECOND REVISED PROPOSED REGULATION OF THE STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Sage-grouse Grant Fund Regulation Changes to Incorporate Conservation District Qualifications for Grant Fund Requests. Tim Rubald said that he sent an email to the Commissioners with changes he and Joe Locurto made to the regulation - *See Attachment I*. Mr. Rubald said on page 2 from line 7 to line 16 it describes the qualifications required. Are there any other qualifiers you might want?

Chairman Sicking said under these guidelines the Stillwater CD would not qualify; Mr. Rubald said yes, it does not have essential sage grouse habitat. Lake Tahoe, Southern Nye, and Southern Nevada CD's do not either.

Commissioner Tibbitts said perhaps change sufficient or potential habitat to any sage-grouse habitat. The reason being there are the lower and higher ranges, but also movement corridors that the birds use that are listed as low value or moderate importance. In the Eureka CD we are trying to open up those corridors so the birds can move and use them. Leave it to the SETT to decide if that is a project component.

Commissioner Swanson said the requirement on page 3, number 2. "The Commission will consider a statement of qualifications for a project only if the project: (a) Has been reviewed and approved by the SETT" would suggest the districts have to go to some effort to put together a project. Commissioner Swanson believes the amount of habitat in each district is great enough, that any district that wants to could propose a project. The amount of habitat should not be a limiting factor.

Commissioner Tibbitts said there is a bill draft request to go forward to allow competitive grants. He believes to facilitate this regulation it should be made as non-cumbersome as possible to get the money to the projects. Commissioner Orr agreed to keep it simple in order to move forward on the projects. Commissioner Smith said some grant proposals can be daunting and if they are too complicated they won't be utilized.

Commissioner Wallace asked what types of projects are expected; it would help to have some guidelines. Mr. Rubald said it can be as simple as fence marking to sagebrush rehabilitation. Doni Bruland said it may not be a comprehensive project after the monies are divided.

Commissioner Swanson said since these are state funds they can be used to match federal monies. Commissioner Tibbitts asked if there were qualifications that there needs to be additional funds. Mr. Rubald stated the Commission could add that if they chose to. Chairman Sicking said perhaps not now because of the timeline. Mr. Locurto said not now but the Legislature would like to see partnering. Commissioner Swanson said it would help the SETT determine if it's a better project because of more money from a match.

Commissioner Tibbitts said on page 1, line 11, it still says "competitive" grant (will be changed). On page 2, line 12, suggested to include language "sufficient sage-grouse habitat, potential sage-grouse habitat, or habitat connectivity corridors".

Commissioner Tibbitts continued on page 4, line 19, it says "any money not committed"; should we change to obligated? Kevin Benson suggested leaving it as committed because of the short timeframe. Mr. Rubald said he chose committed because the money has to be out by June 30th or will revert to the general fund.

Commissioner Swanson said on page 3, lines 7 & 8, regarding "not considering money primarily for acquiring equipment" – what if it was equipment for a sage-grouse project? After discussion it was agreed to leave the wording as is.

Chairman Sicking asked for a motion to approve taking the word "competitive" out of page 1, line 11. Commissioner Tibbitts made the motion; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith. There was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Rubald said the changes will be made and submitted tomorrow (April 1, 2014). ***ACTION TAKEN***

IV. COMMISSIONER ITEMS – *NOT FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Comments and Reports. Commissioner Swanson said William Payne is the new dean of CABNR and has been meeting with the Agricultural Experiment Station grant holders. Ron Pardini will remain for one year to be the Associate Dean/Director of the Agriculture Experiment Station. This will help with the transition.

V. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Date, time and location of next meeting. It was agreed the next meeting will be in Carson City.

Chairman Sicking asked Mr. Rubald the timeline for the regulation. Mr. Rubald said it is 30 days for LCB to review and then the Commission posts a 30 notice for the public hearing. Mr. Rubald will try to expedite the time with LCB, post the hearing notice, and return the regulation to the Commission in May.

Chairman Sicking said the next meeting will be after May 15th to allow for the posting time.

Commissioner Tibbitts requested an agenda item to review the Commission's Strategic Plan which is on the SCC website. It was agreed.

Chairman Sicking said elections will be on the next agenda and the swearing in of the new Commissioners.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS Bruce Petersen, State Conservationist, with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, said a new Farm Bill has been passed. Mr. Petersen recently toured the state providing information meetings regarding the monies coming from the new Farm Bill.

The Governor's Office asked NRCS if the interest in Sage Grouse EQUIP had lowered pending the listing decision. It does appear it has fallen as people wait to see the impact of the decision.

NRCS could partner with money for sage-grouse projects. Mr. Petersen would like to use EQUIP monies and see more work on public lands. Commissioner Smith said the SANE group has several plans that will work with public lands. It is looking more promising to get some work done with BLM.

Mr. Petersen thanked the CD Staff Specialists for their participation at the NRCS meetings.

VII. ADJOURNMENT Chairman Sicking asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Smith made the motion, Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.