



STATE OF NEVADA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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MINUTES
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Richard H. Bryan Building 1st Floor, Director's Office
901 S. Stewart Street, Suite 1003, Carson City, Nevada
Monday, June 15, 2015 6:00 p.m.
and by teleconference as seating is limited

The Nevada State Conservation Commission considered and acted on the following items.

Board Members Present: Chairman Joe Sicking, Paradise/Sonoma CD, Dr. Sherm Swanson, CABNR-NAES, Tina Mudd, Nevada Department of Agriculture, Jake Tibbitts, Eureka CD, Maggie Orr, Lincoln County CD, Leland Wallace, Esmeralda County CD, and Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD.

Board Members Absent: Vice Chairman Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD and Kathy Mort, Stillwater CD.

Others Present: Bill Elder, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Tim Rubald, Conservation Districts Program Manager, Sandy Quilici, DCNR Director's Office, Nancy Sicking, Gerry Miller, Conservation Staff Specialist, Elko Area, Kimberly Elliot, and Carl Clinger, Big Meadow CD.

CALL TO ORDER, DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

- A. Chairman Sicking called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.
The participants introduced themselves.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS There were no public comments.

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

- A. Tim Rubald said Steve Weaver, Winnemucca Conservation Staff Specialist, is on extended leave until August or September.

Gerry Miller, Elko Conservation Staff Specialist, is leaving as a state employee on July 3rd, but he will remain as a volunteer. Mr. Rubald will be recruiting for Mr. Miller's position and said if there are any suggestions to please email him. Mr. Rubald thanked Mr. Miller for continuing to help as a volunteer.

IV. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DECISIONS ON STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF A NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM GRANT (RCPP), WHAT THE PROJECT(S) SHOULD BE, AND HOW THE COMMISSION WOULD LIKE IT PRESENTED. - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. A review of the meetings held in Winnemucca (6/8/2015) and Elko (6/9/2015). Chairman Sicking said there were several good ideas, but the meetings were low on attendance. The Winnemucca meeting had 4 CD's represented and the Elko meeting had 1 CD (not including the Commissioners). Chairman Sicking opened the item for discussion.

Mr. Rubald said Commissioner Swanson sent a correction on the meeting report (*See Attachment I*). Commissioner Swanson said at the Winnemucca meeting the 2nd column starting with Assess Watershed Functions and everything in the column is actually part of the 1st column. The order of the columns was reversed. The Education and Build Capacity and Consensus column was labeled as Communication, Collaboration, and Cooperation by the group. Within that column on the 2nd page is the Capture Study. That should be in a separate column and everything below it.

Commissioner Swanson said the Capture Study is work the State Engineer's Office will do and the Policy/ Legislative Initiative was something that while important may not be part of an RCPP project. This left the columns of Integrated Watershed Management, Assessment and Planning, and the CCC as the primary focus. The ideas that came from the Elko meeting will fit under these columns.

Chairman Sicking asked Mr. Elder for comments. Mr. Elder said the Winnemucca meeting was better attended; both audiences had the same comments.

Chairman Sicking said the BLM representative from the Winnemucca Office (Liz Munn) is interested and wants to know more about what we're doing.

Commissioner Mudd commented the input was good, but this is the early stages of development; perhaps submit for the next application.

B. Commissioner Tibbitts said he asked Mr. Rubald to send the Commissioners an application for the RCPP from New Mexico (*See Attachment II*). This could be a model we use. It list objectives, but not specifics. They are doing this through the Coordinated Resource Management Planning process. They have found the funding for some things and then they will develop and highlight which producers will go for the EQIP funds, etc. and then it will be expanded in the plan. This allows bringing the producers and CD's on board to determine what the specific objectives would be. For this round rather than focusing on the Humboldt we should focus statewide. The projects in the Humboldt districts will most likely concern the river. We need the baseline inventory and planning to move forward.

Chairman Sicking asked Bill Elder if there will be another round. Mr. Elder replied it was hard to say. This is an evolving process. It is intended to get groups such as CD's to talk and put together a group application. Mr. Elder believes there will be a national offer and the State Conservationists will be given the authority to develop a state level offer process.

Commissioner Tibbitts said he spoke with John Ruhs, the Acting Director for NV BLM, and Bill Dunkelberger with USFS, to talk about the Coordinated Resource Management Process and having the Conservation Districts take the lead on it. They would like to reenergize it in the state. The RCPP came up and they both committed to support it. Commissioner Tibbitts said we need to determine where the projects will be and have a plan.

Chairman Sicking said he spoke with the head of the TCID and they are doing a study on redoing the Truckee Canal. Their EIP and the other requirements are estimated at 6 million dollars. The Humboldt River projects will include a lot of permitting.

Commissioner Orr said we need to move forward on something rather than not doing anything.

Commissioner Smith said there needs to be an assessment of where to start. It is disappointing that there were not more Elko CD members at the meeting. Commissioner Smith and Commissioner Swanson spoke and agreed there needs to be a PFC assessment on the upper Humboldt River.

Commissioner Swanson said doing this with the RFP's would address the important resource issues and the logical approach would be an integrated riparian management approach that starts with a PFC assessment.

Commissioner Tibbitts said he would like to do something like the New Mexico plan. We would work with the BLM and Forest Service for help with the planning. We need to start discussion and develop local plans.

Commissioner Swanson said this allows the producers be the lead for developing allotment management plans on their public land permits.

Commissioner Tibbitts asked is there a way to start a working committee of a core group (3-4) that will meet with BLM and Forest Service. Mr. Rubald said anytime there is a committee of a public body it has to be noticed. He said if there were volunteers that wanted to help in the drafting of the grant along with Kimberly Elliot and himself that would work.

Commissioner Swanson said the New Mexico proposal was submitted by the State Association of Conservation Districts. Should the Nevada Association submit the proposal rather than the Commission? Mr. Rubald asked if we have the staff to develop this and Commissioner Tibbitts said there would be funding to hire facilitators to help develop of the management plans. The New Mexico plan has money earmarked for a Technical Assistance Partner. There would be priorities for those who have developed a CRMP. BLM and USFS would commit as partners. The State Conservation Commission could partner with the NVACD.

Chairman Sicking said it is a good idea because the NVACD can have committee meetings without having to notice them. Mr. Rubald said the RCPP is about partnership. Mr. Rubald said it needs to be determined who would handle the money. The Commission could do it, but it would strengthen the Association and perhaps provide the funding of staff for them if they take it.

Commissioner Wallace said he can see it would be difficult to get the upstream users on the Humboldt to work with the downstream users.

Commissioner Smith said we need to approach this as a plan to move forward and get more people involved.

Mr. Rubald said to clarify - we are changing this from a Humboldt River Watershed project to a statewide/all 28 CD's project. Commissioner Tibbitts said yes.

Commissioner Orr asked what needs to be done by July 28th. Mr. Rubald said the grant proposal needs to be written and Kimberly Elliot will help.

Commissioner Tibbitts said if we decide to pursue this, first we need to talk with BLM and USFS to establish their involvement and commitments. We need to see what a typical CRMP costs for a facilitator etc. in order to build it into our budget. The main cash contribution would be for the planning process. Each CD would develop a CRMP and form their projects and costs.

Chairman Sicking asked Mr. Elder if the grant amount was 10 million dollars. Mr. Elder said the state amount is \$765,000. The national amount is 10 million dollars. Commissioner Tibbitts said he would like to check with the national level people to get an idea of going for the national pool rather than the state. Chairman Sicking said if we went for the national amount he would suggest half of the money go to the CRMP's and half of it go towards the Humboldt projects.

Commissioner Mudd said it is critical to get the plans in place. The Dept. of Agriculture would consider a match.

Commissioner Tibbitts said with Kimberly's help the Association could get projects ready. At the meeting on June 25th we could have an outline of the actual numbers.

Commissioner Swanson said the Humboldt projects would be within the CD's. Each CD would develop its own CRMP.

Mr. Rubald said there could be a motion stating that the Association is going to take the lead position.

Commissioner Tibbitts made a motion that the State Conservation Commission will move forward with the RCPP and conceptually what we're pursuing is development of Coordinated Research Management Plans for every CD and our partners will pursue current funding and projects they have that they will commit to the CRMP. Also the State Association will take the lead in fleshing out the details and bring it back to the June 25th meeting. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Chairman Sicking moved this to the June 25th meeting. ***ACTION TAKEN***

V. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DECISION OF VOLUNTARY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN ASPECTS OF WRITING THE GRANT - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Mr. Rubald said at the meeting on June 25th a lot of this proposal has to completed because there will only be a week to when the application is due. Commissioner Tibbitts said it is a pre-proposal. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

VI. COMMISSIONER ITEMS – *NOT FOR POSSIBLE ACTION* There were no Commissioner items.

VII. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Commissioner Swanson said he will be at Range Camp on June 25th. The meeting will be in Carson City and there will be teleconference available. The start time will be 10:00 a.m. on June 25th. Commissioners Orr, Smith, and Mudd will call in. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Carl Clinger with Big Meadow CD said the direction seemed to be an assessment of the Humboldt River and now it has changed. Chairman Sicking said the Commission needs to get plans in place first. Mr. Clinger thought the plan was to work on the critical areas of the Humboldt, but now the plan has expanded statewide. Commissioner Mudd said the effort on the Humboldt is not lost. We are not ready to move on this big of a project without the landowner buy in.

Chairman Sicking agreed and said this is where the CRMP's come in before work begins on the Humboldt. The CD's in the watershed will have river projects in their CRMP's.

Mr. Clinger said the Governor's Drought Forum has no representation from the Humboldt River Basin. He will write letters regarding this and asked should the letters go to the Governor or Leo Drozdoff (DCNR Director). Mr. Rubald said probably to the Governor because he appointed the Forum and to cc Mr. Drozdoff. Mr. Clinger suggested the Commission send a letter also. Chairman Sicking said he will check into it.

IX. ADJOURNMENT - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Chairman Sicking adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

