



STATE OF NEVADA  
**STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
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**MINUTES**  
**STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETINGS**  
Thursday, January 22, 2015 and Friday, January 23, 2015  
Tahoe Hearing Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Richard H. Bryan Building  
901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, Nevada 89701

The Nevada State Conservation Commission held meetings on January 22 and 23, 2015, in the Tahoe Hearing Room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor 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, Jake Tibbitts, Eureka CD, Tina Mudd, Nevada Department of Agriculture, Kathy Mort, Stillwater CD, Vice-Chairman Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD, and Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD. Dr. Sherm Swanson, CABNR-NAES joined the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

**Others Present:** Tim Rubald, Conservation Districts Program Manager, Sandy Quilici, DCNR Director's Office, Kevin Benson, Deputy Attorney General, Steve Weaver, Conservation Staff Specialist, Winnemucca Area, Gerry Miller, Conservation Staff Specialist, Elko Area, Ed Ryan, Mason Valley and Smith Valley CD's, Steve Lewis, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension in Douglas County, Angela Alter, NV Department of Transportation, Kacey KC, Sagebrush Ecosystem Program Manager, Tom Seley, Tonopah CD, and Bruce Petersen, State Conservationist, (joined the meeting at 3:25 p.m.).

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

Chairman Sicking called the meeting to order at **9:05 a.m.** and a quorum was established.

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 October 7, 2014, meeting. Commissioner Tibbitts noted that on page 4 under Item VII the third paragraph says "inundated weed management" and it should read "integrated weed management".

Under Item VIII the first sentence would be clearer to say "not expanding the Environmental Protection Agency's jurisdiction on navigable waters".

On page 5 Item X under the NV Dept. of Agriculture report, the last sentence refers to "wild horses" and it is more precise to say "state managed feral horses". Commissioner Orr made a motion to approve the October 7<sup>th</sup> minutes as amended, Commissioner Smith seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes from the November 11, 2014, meeting. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve, Commissioner Tibbitts seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Approval of Minutes from the November 13, 2014, meeting. Commissioner Tibbitts made a motion to approve, Commission Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. **\*ACTION TAKEN\***

#### **IV. BRIEF UPDATE ON CONSERVATION DISTRICTS PROGRAM – \*NOT FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

A. Tim Rubald said the Winnemucca and Elko Conservation Staff Specialists Steve Weaver and Gerry Miller will join us today and tomorrow for the review of the Strategic Plan.

The recruitment for the Ely Conservation Staff Specialist has three candidates and the interviews will be scheduled soon. The panel will be Tim Rubald, Commissioner Orr, and Chairman Sicking. One candidate is promising, and lives in Ely.

There has been a 2007 Dodge pickup truck obtained for the Ely position from the Division of Minerals.

In the Governor's recommended budget there is an additional \$500 annually for each CD standard grant. This would bring the annual total to \$4,000 for each district found in good standing. This would start next year.

There is Senate Bill 45 regarding the distribution of grant money for a 'competitive' grant program. This year and next year the money is \$40,000. In fiscal year 2017 there will be an additional \$35,000 bringing the total to \$75,000.

Senator Goicoechea has a placeholder BDR for funding for the CD's.

#### **V. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DIRECTION TO STAFF, AS WELL AS AUTHORIZING COMMISSIONERS TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION AT VARIOUS PUBLIC MEETINGS, REGARDING ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE WILD HORSE AND BURRO ACT (WHBA) AND SITUATIONS ENCOMPASSING THE CURRENT MANAGEMENT OF WHBA BY BLM AND US FOREST SERVICE - \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

A. Mr. Rubald said Commissioner Orr has drawn up a letter (*See Attachment I*) that would be a good starting point for a policy. Mr. Rubald provided the 2014 Nevada Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Plan's Wild Horses and Burros Management section as an example for the members (*See Attachment II*).

Commissioner Tibbitts made a motion for the Commission to adopt the Wild Horses and Burros Management section from the State Plan as well as NvACD's policy as the Commission's position. Commissioner Orr seconded the motion; there was a vote and the motion passed. **\* ACTION TAKEN\***

Commissioner Tibbitts made a motion that any member may speak on behalf of the Commission as long as it is consistent with this policy. Commissioner Rieman 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 – Tina Mudd Commissioner Mudd said the Nevada Small Farms Conference is January 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> in Sparks. The Governor's Conference on Agriculture was in November in Reno and was well attended and very good.

Agriculture has two bills this Legislative Session and they are language clean-up bills - AB77 and AB79.

Agriculture is making comments and recommendations to reports that came from the Western States Fish and Wildlife Agency in regards to invasive species management and sage grouse habitat. Agriculture was not contacted in the writing of the reports and has some direct comments to provide the Agency.

Agriculture is working on updating the grazing statistics which has not been updated since 1999. This will be in 3 phases; the first phase is collecting data from the BLM District Offices, then the data needs to be verified. This will cost about \$10,000. The second phase is updating from 1999 to 2014. This will be about \$15,000-\$20,000. The third phase will be updating and verifying adjudications and this will be about \$100,000. Agriculture will seek funding from their partners and the legislature.

- G. Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Program – Kacey KC The State Plan was approved by the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council in October. The Technical Team is now working on the Strategic Action Plan.

The Conservation Credit System is in place and the team is working with a couple of mining companies.

The team is working on a training program for the Conservation Districts staff and others who will be implementing the plan.

The data was entered for the data call including all the CD projects.

Commissioner Tibbitts asked if the Conservation Credit System would have retroactive credit for projects done earlier. Kacey said there would not be credit for a particular project; the credit would be for how good the CD's ecosystem is now for sage grouse. The projects that have been done would provide a higher credit score, because some of the work is done. There has to be a certain level (baseline) reached to qualify for credit and it would need to be maintained.

Commissioner Mudd asked about the baseline. Kacey said the team would need to see the impacts and then there will be updates as to what is needed.

Commissioner Mudd asked if federal managers can generate credits. Kacey said they could generate credits or allotment holders could – this is being worked out. Commissioner Mudd said if the project is on federal ground who gets the credit. Kacey said whoever does the work and maintains the project.

Commissioner Orr asked how the planning would be put in place on what would be burned and not burned during wildland fires. Kacey said there are mapping tools showing critical habitat. Commissioner Orr said it has to come from the authority to make the decisions and this could take time. Kacey said an effort will need to be made to improve communications from the mutual authorities.

- F. Nevada Association of Conservation Districts – Jake Tibbitts Commissioner Tibbitts said there is a placeholder BDR with Senator Goicoechea.

Chairman Sicking called a break at 10:00 a.m.

Chairman Sicking reconvened the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

#### **IV. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING REVIEW AND REVISION OF THE CURRENT COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN - \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

- A. Steve Lewis with UNCE is a county extension agent from Douglas County and is here to help with the review and revision of the current Commission Strategic Plan. This part of the meeting will be a workshop discussion.

The workshop stopped for lunch at 12:05 p.m.

The workshop resumed at 1:30 p.m.

The workshop took a break at 2:50 p.m.

Steve Lewis resumed the workshop at 3:00 p.m.

At 3:25 p.m. Bruce Petersen, State Conservationist, joined the meeting. Chairman Sicking moved to Agenda Item VII.

## **VII. AGENCY UPDATES \*NOT FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

C. Natural Resources Conservation Service – Bruce Petersen Mr. Petersen said he has accepted the position of Conservationist for the Pacific Island Region. There will be an interim person to fill his position and hopefully the recruitment will begin soon for a permanent person. His office will be in Honolulu, Hawaii. Commissioner Tibbitts said Mr. Petersen has been a great partner. Chairman Sicking said Mr. Petersen has been most helpful to the Commission and he will be missed. Commissioner Smith agreed that Mr. Petersen's help has been important to the CD's.

B. UNR-College of Agriculture Biotechnology and Natural Resources – Dr. Sherm Swanson Commissioner Swanson said their staff is growing; they have hired an agronomist, a nutritionist, and are filling and recruiting other positions.

Mark Walker will be dean for one more year for the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension.

There are more students in the Agriculture Program and more range students.

D. Farm Services Administration – there was no report today.

E. Nevada Department of Wildlife – there was no report today.

H. Others – there were no other reports today.

Steve Lewis resumed the workshop.

4:40 p.m. Commissioner Sicking recessed the workshop until Friday, January 23, 2015.

## **Friday, January 23, 2015 Meeting**

**Board Members Present:** Chairman Joe Sicking, Paradise/Sonoma CD, Maggie Orr, Lincoln County CD, Leland Wallace, Esmeralda County CD, Jake Tibbitts, Eureka CD, Tina Mudd, Nevada Department of Agriculture, Kathy Mort, Stillwater CD, Vice-Chairman Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD, and Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD.

**Board Members Absent:** Dr. Sherm Swanson, CABNR-NAES.

**Others Present:** Tim Rubald, Conservation Districts Program Manager, Sandy Quilici, DCNR Director's Office, Steve Weaver, Conservation Staff Specialist, Winnemucca Area, Gerry Miller, Conservation Staff Specialist, Elko Area, Steve Lewis, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension in Douglas County, Marlene Wallace, Nancy Sicking, Ed Ryan, Mason Valley and Smith Valley CD's, and Tom Seley, Tonopah CD.

## **IV. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING REVIEW AND REVISION OF THE CURRENT COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN - \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

A. Steve Lewis with UNCE is a county extension agent from Douglas County and is here to help with the review and revision of the current Commission Strategic Plan. This part of the meeting will be a workshop discussion.

9:00 a.m. Steve Lewis resumed the workshop

10:30 a.m. Break and a half hour work session

11:10 a.m. workshop resumed

12:25 a.m. – 1:20 Lunch

1:20 a.m. Steve Lewis resumed the workshop

The ideas need to be formed into the new plan which can be done this year. The current plan is through 2015. Tim Rubald will compile the plan.

**VIII. COMMISSIONER ITEMS - \*NOT FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

Chairman Sicking commented he would like to discuss water issues at the next meeting.

Commissioner Tibbitts said NvACD has a water policy and the ideas could be shared with the Commission.

**IX. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING - \* FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

Commissioner Tibbitts would like to go over legislative bills that concern CD's and talk about water issues.

It was agreed to have a teleconference meeting on February 9, 2015. Chairman Sicking said an action item will be to determine water policy.

**X. PUBLIC COMMENTS** There were no comments.

**X. ADJOURNMENT - FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

Chairman Sicking adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m.