



STATE OF NEVADA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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MINUTES
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Nevada Department of Agriculture, Conference Room
405 S. 21st Street, Sparks, Nevada
Thursday, February 4, 2016 at 9:00 a.m.
Available by teleconference

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

Board Members Present: Chairman Joe Sicking, Paradise-Sonoma CD; Vice Chairman Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD; Robert Little, NV Dept. of Agriculture; Jake Tibbitts, Eureka CD; Maggie Orr, Lincoln County CD; Leland Wallace, Esmeralda County CD; Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD, and Kevin Roukey, Washoe-Storey CD.

Board Members Absent: Dr. Sherm Swanson, UNR/CABNR.

Others Present: Tim Rubald, Conservation Districts Program Manager; Sandy Quilici, DCNR Director's Office; Nancy Sicking, Paradise-Sonoma CD; Lori Story, Sr. Deputy Attorney General; Ray Dotson, State Conservationist, NRCS; Marlene Wallace, Esmeralda County CD; and Jon Paul Kiel, NV Division of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Water Quality Planning (by phone).

CALL TO ORDER, DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

- A. Chairman Sicking called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.
A quorum was confirmed and introductions were made.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS Commissioner Rieman said at our last meeting Lee Turner with NDOW said that CD's can help work with NDOW on projects. Commissioner Rieman spoke with Jasmine Kleiber with NDOW/NRCS and she was not sure how it is arranged. He asked Mr. Rubald if he knew the process.

Mr. Rubald said he emailed Jasmine regarding the technical aspects. He said it is a simple process – it requires an intergovernmental agreement and NDOW's fiscal staff would be familiar with the procedure. Commissioner Rieman said it is a good idea and his CD wants to participate.

Commissioner Rieman mentioned the Southern Nevada CD will be raising a tax for money. He was concerned about a CD raising a tax to collect money at this time.

Commissioner Tibbitts said SB476 that passed during the 2015 Legislative Session, allows CD's to ask the voters if they would agree to a per parcel fee to help fund the CD's. If the people in the area don't want the fee they won't vote for it.

It was noted that there is not a Southern Nevada representative on the Commission; Commissioner Tibbitts said the NvACD submitted names to the Governor and the Governor did not choose them. Rubald explained there are three regions in the state and that two Commissioners are chosen from each region and then one at large. Commissioners Wallace and Orr are both from the Southern Region.

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

A. Commissioner Orr made a motion to approve the December 15, 2015, meeting minutes and Commissioner Roukey seconded the motion. There was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. * ACTION TAKEN *

IV. BRIEF UPDATE ON CONSERVATION DISTRICTS PROGRAM - * FOR DISCUSSION ONLY *

A. Tim Rubald said the Nevada-Tahoe CD is working on the idea of a parcel fee for their CD. Their boundary lines need to be firmly established first. This is raising the visibility of the CD's. Mr. Rubald received a call from the Chief Deputy of the Secretary of State's Office in charge of elections who asked why districts were not on the general election ballot. Mr. Rubald told him some districts are on the ballot. Many districts use the "mass meeting" option in the statutes for their elections due to the extreme rural nature of some. Many of the district's boundaries do not follow any "typical" geo-political boundaries like precincts or county lines. Anecdotal information is that some county commissioners are looking to change this. This may require an AGO as it may not be up to the County Commissions, but could require a statutory change. It's possible that during the 2017 Legislative Session that there could be an effort to remove "mass meetings" as an election option. The concern is this would not work for some rural districts due to their unusual boundary lines. Some are watershed based or geographic based boundary line rather than precincts or counties.

Storey County government is looking at requesting a change of the Dayton Valley and Washoe-Storey CD's boundaries so a small portion of Storey County would be in the Dayton Valley CD instead of all of it in the Washoe-Storey CD. This concerns watershed dividing lines and weed control issues that go in to Dayton Valley from Storey County. This is being discussed by the CD's and if they both choose to pursue the change, the final decision would come to the Commission for approval.

There has been the announcement of the SETT's letter of intent request from people for sage grouse projects that they are willing to partially fund. The CD Staff Specialists have been working on getting letters of intent submitted from CD's. The deadline is February 8th.

Kacey KC, the SETT Program Manager, has accepted a position at NDF as the Deputy of Operations; they are recruiting for a replacement. If you know of someone, please contact Jim Lawrence.

Commissioner Roukey said Washoe-Storey CD would like to send a joint letter of intent with Vya CD. He asked if the letters would need to be separate. Mr. Rubald said it is the SETT's decision, but it should be okay. He noted the statutes encourage the CD's to work together.

Commissioner Orr said with money secured by NDF, the Lincoln County CD will receive \$300,000 for work.

Agenda Items V and VI and VII were moved to later in the meeting.

VIII. AGENCY UPDATES - * FOR DISCUSSION ONLY *

A. Sagebrush Ecosystem Program – Kacey KC, Program Manager There was no report today.

B. Nevada Department of Agriculture – Robert Little, Plant Industry Division Commissioner Little said Jaime Abbott, the Noxious Weed Coordinator, has left to take a position in Arizona. We are trying to fill that position and also the Rangeland Specialist position previously held by Tina Mudd. The recruitment for the positions has been reworded because some of the duties have shifted and the Rangeland position will now be in Elko.

Carson City Open Space would like to form a weed district with regulatory authority. The Department would like CD's to take on more of a weed district role in having authority in their areas. We are happy to help CD's with this.

C. UNR-College of Agriculture Biotechnology and Natural Resources – Dr. Sherm Swanson, Range and Riparian Extension State Specialist for University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and Scientist for Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station There was no report today.

D. Natural Resources Conservation Service – *Ray Dotson, State Conservationist* Mr. Dotson said the Secretary will be announcing 115 million dollars for the Conservation Stewardship Program today.

Regarding personnel we have had people leave; one is a wildlife biologist who went to the national office, and Katrina Krause in Minden. Katrina's two year position has termed out. A bigger issue impacting NRCS in Nevada is that we have about 66 full-time employees and of that, 10 employees can retire at any time. This is a loss of experience that is hard to replace. There will be new faces so please be patient with our changes.

Commissioner Orr asked about the position in Caliente and Mr. Dotson said they are trying to fill it.

Mr. Dotson said NRCS will pay 75% (or an average) of the cost to send 50 CD employees nationwide to boot camp training for technical assistance.

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

F. Nevada Department of Wildlife – *Connie Lee, Land Owner Incentive Programs* There was no report today.

G. Nevada Association of Conservation Districts – *Jake Tibbitts, President* Commissioner Tibbitts said the NvACD resolution on pinyon-juniper did pass. NACD now has the policy in place. A few resolutions went forward on wild horse management and feral horse management. NACD did development more policy this week at their annual meeting here in Reno. The NvACD hosted a rangeland tour yesterday with over 100 attending. There were positive comments from the out of state participants.

Fred Steinmann can host more leadership workshops and they are needed in southern Nevada. Commissioner Smith asked if we could tie that in to the NvACD's Annual Meeting in Las Vegas this year. Commissioner Tibbitts said it was a good idea and we'll try to do it every year. Commissioner Smith said he would like to have a workshop in Elko, too.

J.P. Kiel said he highly recommends the Conservation Leadership Workshop.

H. Others – Participating agencies and partners. There were no other reports.

VII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RESPONSE TO BLM LETTER ON WILD HORSE BROCHURE ISSUE - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Commissioner Tibbitts said SRM received the same response (*See Attachment I*). The Public Lands Foundation and the Wild Horse Coalition would like to partner in forming a companion piece. With these three involved, they could take the lead and the Commission could support it. It was agreed the letter that has been sent is enough for now.

NO ACTION TAKEN

V. DISCUSSION, REVIEW AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF THE COMMISSION'S STRATEGIC PLAN - * FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. *See Attachment II*. Tim Rubald said the Action Plan (*See Attachment III*) can be developed as we go through the Strategic Plan which means Agenda Items V and VI will be combined.

Chairman Sicking asked if there were any comments on the WGA Wild Horse letter that Mr. Rubald provided (*See Attachment IV*). Mr. Rubald said it showed that other states were in agreement with Nevada. Commissioner Tibbitts said he was pleased that in the Governor's scoping comments on the Sagebrush Focal Areas and mineral withdrawal it says rather than setting aside land from mineral entry, it is more critical to address the overpopulated wild horse problem and the effect on sage-grouse habitat (*See Attachment V*).

Mr. Rubald said the dates will change on the cover and the footers when the Strategic Plan is adopted.

Commissioner Tibbitts said in the Prologue, on Page 3 in the 2nd paragraph, 1st sentence, to add after “the plan” “based on the efforts and outcomes of the two day workshop.”

Remove the next sentence and replace with “The Commission finalized and formally adopted the plan on February 4, 2016. Note here that there are different Commissioners for the record.

The next sentence to say “The Commission did agree to apply the concept of adaptive management to the plan and revisit the plan as conditions change and at least twice a year”

The last sentence has an errant comma after “living document” – strike the comma.

Page 6 – On the first bullet point “Administer the NRS” to list the NRS and NAC and remove “the”. Now to read: “Administering NRS 548 and NAC 548;” Change Facilitate to “Facilitating”, Develop to “Developing”, Build to “Building”, Distribute to “Distributing”, Provide to “Providing”. Remove the “and” after “Distribute Funds;” after Guidance add the word “and” and then add a bullet “Assisting in Conservation District Leadership Training”.

Page 7 – Remove “What we believe in” and start with “Our Values:”. Change “Producing our food” to “Producing food”. The last bullet: after volunteers add “and partners who” are essential to our success.

Page 9 – the changes as marked.

Page 10 – Remove the last bullet before Opportunities and add to the first bullet to read: “Inconsistent two-way coordination and partnerships between districts, local, state, and federal agencies.”

Under Opportunities – on the 3rd bullet – remove “from the state in past three years-- \$2500/\$4000”

On the 4th bullet – replace “2015 CD Bill” with “SB 476 2015”; after “funding stream” add “and combine with weed districts”

On the 5th bullet – replace “three years ago” with “years past”

On the 6th bullet – replace “some” with “many”

On the last bullet – replace “Rural” with “Supportive”

Page 11 – on the 1st bullet – after “Farm Bill” add “and other sources of funding” – remove “dollars”

Under Threats:

Add a new first bullet: “Large federally administered land holdings and pressure towards protectionism”

On the 2nd bullet – Change to “Loss of hope, lack of interest, understanding, and commitment with staff, members,”

On the 5th bullet – remove “interest and”

On the 3rd bullet – Change to “Lack of, or poor active management of federally administered resources; e.g. wild horses and burros, pre-wild fire management”

Add to the last bullet after a semicolon – “Bulk of population disconnected from the land and resource management resulting in poor understanding that renewable natural resources need active management”

Add a bullet – “Lack of general understanding and implementation of SB 476 2015”

Break 10:45 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Mr. Rubald asked about completing the Action Plan and how the Commissioners wished to do it. It was agreed to complete the Action Plan later after the Strategic Plan is completed.

Page 13 – On 1.1 – remove “Fred Steinmann” and change to read “Arrange with the leadership development program for training classes.”

On 1.2 - replace “Fred” with “the leadership development program.”

On 1.3 – after Supervisors add “to attend.”

On 3.2 – Add an Acronym Index. Replace 3.2 with “Empower each district to have at least two additional partnerships with associated programs currently not in place.”

On 3.2 – after “not in place” add “including reaching out to non-traditional partners.”

On 3.4 – after “community” add “and urban”. Change “Encourage” to “Increase”.

On 4.1 – after “required” add “and potential hurdles”.

Page 14 – On 6. – Change “partners” to “agencies” and after “projects” add “and coordination under FLPMA and other laws and regulations.

On 6.1 – Change to read “Write a section in the Supervisor training program addressing the NEPA process and federal land use planning and management process and specifically the responsibilities of becoming a cooperating agency and coordination obligations and opportunities.”

On 6.2 – after “Handbook” change to “to address the same issues as designated in 6.1.”

On 6.3 – replace “more” with “appropriate”. After “projects” add “and federal land use planning”.

On 6.4 – after “recognized” insert “as having special expertise” and after “processes” add “and coordination under FLPMA and other laws and regulations”.

Page 15 – On 1. – after “CD Resource” insert “Management”.

On 1.2 – after “to bear NRCS” add “and appropriate partners”.

On 1.3 – after “report” insert “the status of their progress to meet their objectives in their annual reports”.

On 2. – after “producers” change to read “and project proponents to meet or make progress towards making resource objectives and report to the Commission on the status of their progress through their annual reports.”

On 2.1 – after “producers” change to read “and project proponents in the development of a program of monitoring to measure and document progress towards meeting resource objectives.”

On 2.2 – remove “the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA)” and insert “appropriate partners”.

On 3. – after “practices” add “including water quality.”

On 3.2 – after “NRCS” insert “and appropriate partners”.

Create a new No. 4. which will highlight soil.

4. Will say “Assist Districts to implement soil health programs.”

4.1 – To say: “Provide each district access to soil health concepts and training.”

4.2 – Will read the same as 3.2

4.3 – To say: “Encourage each district to develop and implement soil health objectives through their local plans.”

Add a 3.3 to read: “Encourage each district to develop and implement water conservation objectives through their local plans.”

4.4 – Will read the same as 1.3 so it will read “Districts will report the status of their progress to meet their objectives in their annual reports.”

Add a 3.4 to read the same as 1.3

Lunch 12:35 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. Commissioner Sicking reconvened the meeting.

On 5. (was 4.) Change to read: “Participate in update of the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook with UNCE, BLM, USFS, and the Nevada Department of Agriculture, and associated publications and working documents so they are accepted by appropriate agencies as the approved standards in place for Nevada rangelands.”

Now 5.1 (was 4.1 and 4.2) to say: “SCC will assist in promoting the Rangeland Monitoring Application.”

Now 5.2 (was 4.3) to say: “Staff will be trained on the new application sufficiently to train Supervisors in its use.”

Now 5.3 (was 4.4) to say: “SCC will encourage Districts to provide the RMA to producers as a pay-for-services opportunity; maintaining a reasonable and affordable fee schedule.”

New 5.4 to say: “Support legislative measures that recognize the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook as the accepted monitoring standard in Nevada.”

Remove the original 5. section.

Goal III.

On 1.1 – Change to say: “Assist Districts in involving resource based industries” then add a sentence “This would include increasing awareness of CD capabilities and authorities with local government and resource-based industries.”

On 1.2 – Change “participating producers” to “partners”.

Add 1.3 – “Assist Districts in developing communication outreach tools.”

Remove 3. 4. will become 3. 3. (was 4.) now says: “Increase federal and state agencies’ support of locally led conservation through Districts.”

On 3.1 (was 4.1) after “agencies” insert “and appropriate partners”
Change “the agencies support” to “their support”

5. is now 4. 4. (was 5) remains the same: “Develop strategies to increase family succession of farms and ranches.”

On 4.1 (was 5.1) insert “and appropriate partners” after “NRCS”

On 4.2 (was 5.2) Change to say: “Assist Districts to work to target and include FFA members, 4H, and other youth programs to be involved in conservation projects and programs.”

On 4.3 (was 5.3) Change “Districts will” to “Assist Districts to”

On 4.4 (was 5.4) Change “Districts will” to “Assist Districts to”

On 4.5 (was 5.5) Change “Districts will” to “Assist Districts to”

Change numbering on 5.6 to 4.6

X. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING - * FOR POSSIBLE ACTION *

Chairman Sicking moved to this agenda item as Mr. Rubald needed to leave soon.

Mr. Rubald said after he is done doing the applications for the grant how much time should be given to the Districts get them in. It was agreed to be six weeks.

This would make the 1st or 2nd week of April the time for project approvals. The meeting would include the approvals and the development of the Action Plan. It was agreed to have a two day meeting. Commissioner Tibbitts said there is statewide NRCS meeting with partners on April 5th in Reno. It was agreed to hold the meetings on April 4th and 5th in Carson City or Reno, possibly at NRCS or Agriculture. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

RETURN TO AGENDA ITEM V. DISCUSSION, REVIEW AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF THE COMMISSION’S STRATEGIC PLAN - * FOR POSSIBLE ACTION *

Goal IV.

On 1.1 Replace “examples that” with “and” After “Districts” delete “that don’t have full time staff currently.” and insert “on methods to increase staff.”

On 1.3 Insert “Assist” before “Districts” and replace “will” with “to”.

On 2.2 Insert “Assist” before “Districts” and replace “will” with “to”.

On 3. delete “NRCS”

On 3.1 Change to say: “Staff will assist Districts to coordinate with NRCS District Conservationists to have at least annual local work group meetings involving not only the Supervisors, NRCS staff, and appropriate partners, but also producers and interested public to attend.”

Add 3.2 to say: “Assist Districts to be aware of other local work group efforts in their area.”

On 4.5 Insert “Assist” before “Districts” and replace “will” with “to”.

On 4.6 Insert “Assist” before “Districts” and replace “will” with “to”. After “producers” insert “and appropriate partners”.

On 5.2 Change “local” to “all” and after “entities” add “and other governmental sources, such as NGO’s.”

On 5.3 Change to read “SCC and staff will educate and assist those Districts interested in taking advantage of levying a parcel fee.”

5.4 – Delete.

On 6. – Delete section. 7. is now 6. Change all numbers in 7. to 6.

Goal V.

On 1. – Delete

2. is now 1. After “workshops” add “and materials”

2.1 is now 1.1 Change “in” to “to” Change “producing” to “produce” After “workshops” add “and materials.”

2.2 is now 1.2 Change to read “Assist Districts to coordinate with other Districts to leverage their information and contacts.”

3. is now 2.

3.2 is now 2.2 Insert “Assist” before “Districts” and change “can” to “to”

3.3 is now 2.3 Insert “Assist” before “Districts” and change “will” to “to”

3.4 is now 2.4 Insert “Assist” before “Districts” and change “will” to “to”

On 2.3 Delete “their significant and welcome”

4. is now 3.

4.1 is now 3.1

On 3.1 Insert “Encourage” before “Districts” and change “should” to “to”. Replace “in efforts” with “and staff”. Replace “NvSRM” with “SRM”. Add 3.2 (was 4.2) to 3.1 by adding a semicolon after “others”.

The new 3.2 will say: “Encourage Districts to become members of these types of organizations.”

5. is now 4.

4.1 (was 5.1) Add “Encourage” before “Districts” and change “should” to “to”.

4.2 (was 5.2) Add “Encourage” before “Districts” and change “will” to “to”. Delete “coordinated by NvACD”.

4.3 (was 5.3) Add “Encourage” before “Districts” and delete “have an opportunity”. After “Invite” delete “them to a meeting with a meal and invite”.

6. is now 5. Change 6.1 to 5.1, Change 6.2 to 5.2, Change 6.3 to 5.3, Change 6.4 to 5.4.

On 5.4 (was 6.4) Change to read: “SCC and staff will assist in obtaining any needed permits from NDOT or other entities.”

7. is now 6. After “its members,” change to say: “their constituents, other appropriate entities, and interested stakeholders.”

Change 7.1 to 6.1, Change 7.2 to 6.2, Change 7.3 to 6.3

On 6.3 Delete the last sentence: “Districts will need to cover all costs.”

Add 6.4 to say: “SCC and staff will coordinate to develop template public relation and outreach material.”

VI. DISCUSSION, DEVELOPMENT AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF THE ‘ACTION PLAN’ FOR THE COMMISSION’S STRATEGIC PLAN - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. It was agreed the Action Plan will be moved to the next meeting. ***NO ACTION TAKEN***

IX. COMMISSIONER ITEMS - *FOR DISCUSSION ONLY*

Commissioner Smith; Katlyn Uhart from Elko won the high school youth forum presentation at the International Society for Range Management Annual Meeting.

X. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

Agenda items for the next meeting: Commissioner Tibbitts suggested an action item to discuss the issues involved with SB 476.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS There were no public comments. Commissioners Orr and Roukey thanked Commissioner Tibbitts for his help at the NACD Annual Meeting and providing the Rangeland Tour. It was noted that the out of state participants truly enjoyed the experience.

XII. ADJOURNMENT - *FOR POSSIBLE ACTION*

A. Chairman Sicking adjourned the meeting at 3:40 p.m. by acclamation.