



NOTICE OF BOARD MEETING AND AGENDA STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION



DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Wednesday November 19th, 2025
Time: 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Physical Location access: Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Building, 901 South Stewart Street, 2nd Floor, Tahoe Room in Carson City, Nevada

Public Comment* If you wish to make a public comment, you may do so verbally in person or virtually. Public comment may be submitted via email to maten@dcnr.nv.gov or by written mail to the CD Program 3275 Fountain Way, Winnemucca, NV 89445. Public comments are for all matters, both on or off the agenda as designated on the agenda and will be limited to three minutes per person. Public comments will also be heard during individual action items on the agenda prior to action taken. The Commissioners may prohibit or limit comment of the content if the comments are a topic not relevant to, or within the authority of the SCC, or if they are irrational or amounting to personal attacks or interfering with the rights of other speakers but will not restrict comments based on viewpoint only. The SCC reserves the right to reduce the time or limit in writing on the agenda items and/or attend and make comments on that item at the meeting.

- The Commission may combine two or more agenda items for consideration.
- The Commission may remove an item from the agenda or delay discussion relating to an item at any time. Items on the agenda may be taken out of order.

Contact the Nevada Conservation District Program Manager for additional information. Melany Aten (775) 625-0901, maten@dcnr.nv.gov

Meeting information can be found at <http://dcnr.nv.gov/divisions-boards/conservation-districts-program/state-conservation-commission>

Agenda

1. Call to order & Determination of Quorum.

*Chairman Tibbitts called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM.
A quorum was confirmed.*

Commission Members Present:

Chair Commissioner Jake Tibbitts, Area 1
Commissioner Doug Martin, Area 2
Commissioner Maggie Orr, Area 3
Commissioner Jerry Annis, Area 1
Commissioner Mark Damron, Area 3
Commissioner Agee Smith, member at large.
Commissioner Meghan Brown, Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA).

Commission Members Absent:

Vice Chairman Commissioner Eric Rieman, Area 2
Commissioner Dr. Paul Meiman, University of Nevada, Reno College of Agriculture,
Biotechnology & Natural Resources and Cooperative Extension (CABNR/UNCE), Elko.

2. Public Comment. *

None

3. Approve today's agenda, November 19th, 2025, with the inclusion of any emergency items and deletion of any items. (For Possible Action)

Commissioner Orr made a motion to accept the agenda as presented, Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. ACTION TAKEN

4. Approve the SCC April 24th, 2025, draft meeting minutes. (For Possible Action). Meeting Materials provided.

A revised version provided at the meeting, with only one change to the minutes with a change of substance for review. Item 8, the updated version of the minutes changed from "no action" to "no action needed consensus from the Commission to update the reporting to meet audit and NRS reporting requirements"

Commissioner Orr made a motion to accept the draft meeting minutes with the change as presented under Item 8, Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. ACTION TAKEN

5. Updates from Agencies and Partners. (For Discussion Only).

a) Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA)

Commissioner Brown -the NDA noxious weed program has a request for proposals open for conservation districts and other partners utilizing the state and private forestry funds to address noxious and invasive plants. NDA is working on having the regional EDRR – Early detection rapid response, regional meetings, which will happen this fall and spring, so be on the lookout for those meetings, NDA is working with the noxious weed team on new Forest Service agreements across the state.

Commissioner Orr - asked about a letter from NDA to address noxious weeds to landowners in the region.

Commissioner Brown- after surveys in the region, letters were sent out to landowners to address noxious and invasive plants on the State EDRR list. Some landowners may not have been aware of the plant, or the requirements to address it. The letter is to help them identify the plant and find resources, like the CD or other partners to address the noxious plant.

b) University of Nevada Reno/ University Cooperative Extension

None

c) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Heidi Ramsey NRCS State Conservationist- Partner positions with NvACD in Elko, and Ely

are filled. The partner position starting in Duck Valley will be filled soon. Current staffing is 42 at 13 field office locations, many people in the State office are taking on additional roles to help rural offices. There are 3 vacant district conservationist positions in rural offices, which are in Elko, Lovelock and Yerington. Elko and Yerington also do not have full field staff. Chief Aubrey Bettencourt outlined priorities for NRCS: preserving and protecting agricultural land and reducing the loss of productive farmlands to safeguard the viability of Americas agriculture. Next, to modernize NRCS infrastructure and technologies to empower staff to help farmers with modern tools and systems. Third is re-centering field engagement and technical assistance. Leveraging partnerships to accelerate conservation outcomes. Shift to outcome-based conservation and measure success through empowering farmers with data and market access.

NRCS is funded through 2026 but still waiting on final numbers. Program guidance will come around the first of December. The National office set the program application deadline this year, which is January 15th, 2026. Applications will continue to be accepted throughout the year.

The fall Nevada State technical advisory committee STAC meeting had to be rescheduled due to the shutdown in October. It will likely be in January.

NRCS spent around 99% of the funding sent to the state in 2025, a little over \$22,000,000.

d) Nevada Farm Service Agency

None

e) Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

Dominique Etchegoyhen DCNR Deputy Director – *Capital Christmas tree came from Nevada this year, there have been multiple news articles and information about the tree and its travel across the US.*

NDF is working on burn piles in Tahoe this year to clear hazardous fuels, around 400,000 acres cleared this year.

NV outdoor recreation produced a study with results showing NV outdoor recreation is a \$24 billion dollar industry supporting 75,000 jobs. There is a recognition that outdoor recreation relies on conservation stewardship of natural resources.

Nevada state parks did a soft opening for the Valley of Fire Visitors Center.

Heritage put out boxes for recording diversity of... (park visitors, plant communities, all organisms?). They had the first confirmed sighting of Western jumping mouse in the Carson range, and the new technologies are allowing for this reporting and information in Heritage.

Division of Water Resources DWR – Adam Sullivan State water engineer- provided an update on the conjunctive management. The Humboldt watershed has the opportunity to develop a water management plan for water in Nevada. DWR is working on providing increased public awareness and opportunities for public input and engagement through local working groups, CDs and others. The ground water pumping depletes flow, and, in the Humboldt, it is clear when there is increased pumping. There is a conflict with junior water rights users inhibiting access to water for senior water right holders. With decree rights the state is obligated to stop pumping for senior water right holders to get their water. There are currently no other options for addressing the issues related to this and so the Humboldt region is being asked by the State Engineer to develop a plan to address the whole region. Conservation will need to be considered in the plan as well as surface water right holders, and industry economics. There is a stakeholder board, but DWR would like to encourage more local input. Traditionally, until there is a threat of water curtailment, people will not typically engage, DWR decided to release a draft curtailment to add urgency to the issue and bring people to the discussion in advance of an action. DWR is looking to all partners to offer as much information and program information to those impacted to offer alternatives to those who might be at risk of losing water rights. Alternatives can be considered when working with programs like NRCS, FSA, and conservation districts. The desire is to avoid the courts as much as possible and offer win win solutions for everyone along the river corridor.

Commissioner Orr - is the curtailment for everyone or just junior water right holders?

Mr. Sullivan – it would be to all permit holders who show or have existing right and proof of use.

Commissioner Smith – how over-allocated is the system?

Mr. Sullivan – there are a lot of ways to determine that and measure that. There isn't a specific term or number, but just general overuse across the region. The entire basin might not be over-allocated, but the impact of conflict could still be causing an overallocation or over-pumping situation.

Commissioner Martin- do you have a list of who is being contacted and asked for input? Ducks unlimited, hunting clubs and others may be interested in providing information and feedback.

Mr. Sullivan – those are good suggestions. There is a list of working group members provided on the DWR website.

Chairman Tibbitts – suggests interested groups contact the working group with organized ideas and concerns to consider in the management plan development. There is no doubt there can be a lot of solutions and options for addressing the agricultural lands which may be

impacted. It's important the SCC and CDs are aware of these kinds of plans and provide solutions from a conservation perspective to help producers.

Nevada Dept of Environmental Protraction (NDEP) – Zach Carter Environmental scientist for non-point source branch- *The nonpoint source program had a recent announcement and closing of our grant funding opportunity, the grant funding opportunity for nonpoint source, both planning and implementation projects. NDEP is anticipating about 1.3 million dollars of clean Water Act Section 319 funding which is contingent upon receiving the Fy 25 federal award. The grant funding opportunity closed on September 22nd and we're actively evaluating proposals and are hopeful to reach out to applicants regarding the status of that review by the end of the calendar year. Post fire rehabilitation projects can also be considered under the 319 funding.*

Commissioner Orr – what is the timeline for grant funding if impacted by fire.

Mr. Carter- there is not a timeline set in place, if the site shows impact there could be funds available at any time.

f) Nevada Conservation District Program (NCDP)

Melany Aten NCDP Program Manager – *The program hired a new southern Nevada staff specialist for CDs in the Southern part of the state. The position is in Las Vegas and in a shared space with NDF, allowing for more coordination on projects in the region that both the State and CDs are working on.*

Marlee Jenkins in the western region has continued to do great work in the western region, executing grants and helping CDs meet their goals and objectives. Big thank you to all staff. The Elko position will be advertised and filled early in 2026; it will be posted as a 1 and 2 level to increase the number of applicants.

We will be looking forward to providing an NCDP staff update at the SCC summer meeting.

g) Sagebrush Ecosystem Program & Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team

Kathleen Steele SETT Program Manager – *There are credit projects in the fire, four project sites were burned this year, and while all were impacted the SETT is working on rehab plans and restoration plans for the areas burned. The SETT has been applying for grants to address the areas impacted.*

The next SEC meeting will be December 2nd to discuss reserve accounts and how to work with the SETT for restoration work.

The SETT is working with BLM regarding major projects around the State.

SETT is working with NDF on a meadow restoration project in Eureka County, and looking forward to starting that project next year.

The SETT reserve account is there to help restore lands impacted by fire to get the habitat back into credit ranking. A portion of credit sales will go into the reserve account. There will be discussion about how money can be moved and utilized in the reserve account at the next SEC meeting.

h) Nevada Association of Conservation Districts

***NVACD – Kevin Piper NvACD Director** – we just finished our annual business meeting and look forward to hosting area meetings in place of large underattended annual meetings.*

NVACD has an agreement with NRCS, and the agreement allows for hiring shared staff with NRCS, there are two field positions, one in Elko and one in Ely as mentioned by NRCS. The administrative position in Elko and Fallon will help with program issues.

NVACD will be meeting with NCDP to organize an area meeting for CDs. These will be area specific and hopefully include field visits. The visits will replace the large annual meeting in hopes of providing more direct information for the CDs.

i) All Other Partners and participating agencies

***Nevada Dept of Wildlife -NDOW – Madie Ellingwood** - this fall NDOW staff have worked on roughly 69,011 acres of herbicide application across the state and we hope to seed about 103,398 acres this fall and winter; 172,000 acres treated by spring of 2026.*

***DCNR Off Highway vehicle Program OHV – Bob Adams** – working with Jake Dick and NDA on invasive weeds and EDDMaps access. Hoping more people will utilize the EDDMaps platforms. Also hoping to offer large grants in 2026 and encourages CDs to apply under for conservation related projects.*

This item is for discussion only.

6. Discussion and Review of the Conservation Districts' Annual Reports: (For Discussion Only) Review and discussion of all Conservation Districts' Proposed Budgets and Proposed Work Plans, and the Final Financial Reports and Annual Reports (NAC 548.110). NOTE: *The matrix for tracking attached to minutes.*

The matrix shows the districts which met the requirements for good standing. Ms. Aten provided an overview of the tracking matrix which shows if the district met at least three

times, sent in reporting on time, and if they spent their awarded funds. There were several CDs that did not submit their materials this year or turned in the reports very late. There were also CDs that did not spend their awarded funds. Many of the CDs were difficult to communicate with and did not return phone calls, emails or attempts by NCDP to get information in for review to close the year out in good standing. Ms Aten acknowledges that the lack of staff in areas contributes to a decline in communication, but should not be the only reason boards are not meeting their requirements to stay in good standing. Many of the boards have long-time members who have been part of the CD for over a decade. They were also given extensive advanced notice of staff departure and who to speak to for follow up.

In Elko the CDs now have the shared NVACD/ NRCS staff person to help with administrative duties, but there was a significant amount of time for CDs to reach out to NCDP for assistance to meet the requirements prior to this position being staffed.

*Chairman Tibbitts noted that the statute does say the CDs **must** do the following:*

NAC 548.110 Prerequisites for conservation district to be in good standing. (NRS 548.160, 548.175, 548.178) To be in good standing, a conservation district must:

1. Hold regularly scheduled meetings of the governing board of the conservation district.
2. Hold such meetings at least three times each year, one of which must be an annual meeting, except that not more than one meeting of the governing board held during a calendar month may be used to satisfy the requirements of this subsection.
3. Properly give notice of each such meeting, prepare an agenda and issue it in conformance with the requirements of chapter 241 of NRS.
4. File the agenda for and the minutes taken at each such meeting with the Program within 30 working days after the meeting.
5. Hold an election of supervisors on one of the first 10 days of November in each even-numbered year and submit the results of the election to the Program before November 30 of that year.
6. Not later than June 1 of each year, or such later date as approved by the Commission, develop a work plan and budget and submit the work plan and budget to the Program.
7. Not later than September 30 of each year, or such later date as approved by the Commission, develop an annual report and financial report for the fiscal year ending the immediately preceding June 30 and submit the annual report and financial report to the Program.

Chairman Tibbitts continued that due to this statute it would be difficult to claim that any of the CDs who did not meet the requirements are in good standing.

There may also be a need to approach NACO or the Counties to let them know there is a need for County engagement on the boards.

Chairman Tibbitts urged districts to report their actual spending and requested again that the CDs use the provided templates for reporting. The reporting needs to reflect the actual award of funding being spent to the full amount. The proposed budgets also do not show plans for budgeted expenses but instead just list what they spent last year. He encouraged CDs to pay attention to this and make projections accurately.

The reporting of spending also lacks clarity and consistency between the narrative report and the fiscal budget report. This kind of discrepancy leads to the audit problems we noted in the past. He also noted the elected terms are also incorrect on the reporting sheets, and it continues to show the lack of board attention.

Ms Aten spoke about the Elko districts historical County funding and that the boards may not have been spending their state awards fully due to combining them with County awarded funding. The Elko CD in red on the matrix had limited records and in most cases the full amount of state funding and the full amount of County spending was not spent. The NVACD's shared staff person, Mrs. Cassinelli, who assists with the Elko CDs, was able to find some financial forms days before the meeting, which were included as best they could in the SCC materials. Although none of these forms showed full spending by the CD noted in red on the reporting sheet, and none of the late reporting would remove the CD from the red category.

Commissioner Smith asked why the Elko CDs were not receiving funding from the County moving forward. Discussion was had about the new Elko County weed and pest district that was formed by the County. The money allocated to the formation of the new district would limit direct funding to the Elko CDs in the future. But there would still be capacity to help fund CD projects brought forward to the County on a case-by-case basis. This change in funding for the Elko CDs may change how those CDs function moving forward.

Commissioner Smith asked about Ruby Valley CD pointing out that on the spreadsheet there is no report of meetings or reports. Chairman Tibbitts replied that we have no way of knowing if they do not turn in anything. Mrs. Cassinelli said that they did meet and possibly spent funding but that everything was turned in very late for consideration at this meeting. Materials were sent to the program only a day or two before the meeting, which would be close to 2 months late.

Chairman Tibbitts suggested anything with a red box should not be found in good standing at this time due to the missing paperwork and not meeting the statues as outlined above in discussion. That would include the following CDs: Lamoille, Ruby Valley, Starr Valley,

Tonopah and White Pine.

This Item is for discussion only.

7. Determination of Districts “In Good Standing” for FY25’, and decision on release of FY26’ funding. (For Possible Action)

- a) **List of those Districts that meet the criteria of “Good Standing” based on submissions and meetings. NAC 548.110.**

Motion made by Commissioner Smith that Conservation Districts in the presented matrix spreadsheet with a red box are not found in good standing at this time. This would include the following CDs: Lamoille, Ruby Valley, Starr Valley, Tonopah and White Pine. Motion was second by Commissioner Damron. Motion passed unanimously. ACTION TAKEN

- b) **List of Districts the Commission authorizes the release of funding from the State based on “good standing” requirements and eligibility in NAC 548.115.**

Motion made by Commissioner Orr to release funding to all conservation districts who were found in good standing and release funding immediately and hold funding for those noted above not in good standing until the timeline of hearing process is passed. Once the date has passed, if no other districts are awarded the remaining funding will be distributed to the conservation districts in good standing. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. ACTION TAKEN

Commissioner Annis asked if it would be helpful for Commissioners to travel with NCDP staff to district meetings of those not found in good standing to help encourage the CDs and offer to help those CDs?

Ms. Aten: Yes, it is always helpful to have more ideas and information in the room. Sometimes the CD boards just need encouragement or ideas to stay motivated. But the lack of communication with the NCDP staff has been the most challenging part of trying to assist them.

8. Commissioner Items. (For Discussion Only)

Commissioner Orr: Lincoln CD completed a large landscape scale grant for treatment of Russian Olive.

Commissioner Smith: Excited to have NvACD shared position staff on board to increase capacity in Elko.

Commissioner Martin: thank you to NRCS for coming to the meeting and helping create more opportunities.

Commissioner Annis: after Mr. Sullivans presentation it would be great to look for ways to get CD participation in the water curtailment planning process.

9. Public Comments:

None

10. Next Commission Meeting. (For Discussion Only)

Possible future Agenda items for consideration, Sage Grouse Grant FY26, redetermination if provided. Meeting for first week in March 2026.

11. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 2:38pm