



Meeting Notice: STATE OF NEVADA STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING DRAFT MINUTES



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6 Date and Time: Thursday November 21st, 2024, 9:00am – 11:30am
 7 Meeting Location: Nevada Department of Agriculture, 405 S 21st, St. Sparks, Nevada 89431.

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9 **1. Call to order, Determination of Quorum:**
 10 **(For Possible Action)** Introductions and roll call.

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12 ***Chairman Tibbitts called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.***
 13 ***A quorum was confirmed.***

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15 **Commission Members Present:**
 16 Chair Commissioner Jake Tibbitts, Area 1
 17 Vice Chairman Commissioner Eric Rieman, Area 2
 18 Commissioner Mark Damron, Area 3
 19 Commissioner Doug Martin, Area 2
 20 Commissioner Maggie Orr, Area 3
 21 Commissioner Jerry Annis, Area 1
 22 Commissioner Agee Smith, member at large.

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24 **Commission Members Absent:**
 25 Commissioner Dr. Paul Meiman, University of Nevada, Reno College of Agriculture,
 26 Biotechnology & Natural Resources and Cooperative Extension (CABNR/UNCE), Elko.
 27 Commissioner Meghan Brown, Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA).

28

29 **Guests:**
 30 Casey Adkins, SETT Representative
 31 Cassin T Brown, DAG office
 32 Kevin Piper, NvACD
 33 Christian Fritsen, NDEP
 34 Rick Orr
 35 Amber Pike, Lincoln CD
 36 Denise Houston. Lincoln CD
 37 Holly Gatzke, UNCE
 38 Christ Rose, NRCS
 39 Dominique Etchegoyhen, DCNR
 40 Marlee Jenkins, DCNR

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44 **2. Public Comments:**

45 None

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- 47 **3. Review and consideration of approval of November 21st, 2024, agenda: (For**
48 **Possible Action) Any items that need to be taken out of order, edited, or removed may**
49 **be proposed for consideration at this time.**

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51 **Commissioner Orr made a motion to accept the agenda as presented, Commissioner**
52 **Smith second. Motion passed unanimously. ACTION TAKEN**

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- 54 **4. Review and consideration of approval of meeting minutes: (For Possible Action).**
55 **Approval of minutes from July 30th, 2024.**

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57 **Chairman Tibbitts noted there is clarification needed on lines68-70. The clarification is**
58 **corrected to now read “Chairman Tibbitts voted on the approval of funding which**
59 **included the Eureka application funding but disclosed for the record that he (Jake**
60 **Tibbitts) did not have any personal gain from the application or the funding of the**
61 **application. The affiliation with the Eureka CD application did not affect his vote.**
62 **Commissioner Smith abstained from the vote due to possible conflict of interest in the**
63 **award and possible benefits to private property related to funding. ACTION TAKEN”**
64 **Chairman Tibbitts noted a few spelling errors, but no other changes in content**
65 **presented in the minutes.**

66 **Commissioner Orr made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected, Commissioner**
67 **Damron second. Motion passed unanimously. ACTION TAKEN**

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- 69 **5. Discussion and Review of the Conservation Districts’ Annual Reports: (For**
70 **Discussion Only) Review and discussion of all Conservation Districts’ Proposed**
71 **Budgets and Proposed Work Plans, and the Final Financial Reports and Annual**
72 **Reports (NAC 548.110).**

73 **Chairman Tibbitts noted these were provided to the commission in advance for review**
74 **and consideration.**

75 **Ms. Aten noted that there were a few corrections to the online posted review sheet, the**
76 **updated sheet was presented in person and in the meet packet. The noted changes**
77 **were that Big Meadow CD did spend all their state awarded funding, and this was just**
78 **an error in their fiscal report. Ms. Aten verified the spending through checks written by**
79 **the district.**

80 **Another update was that Esmeralda CD did spend all their allocated state funding, and**
81 **the fiscal records were lost in the mail, but received shortly before the meeting. The**

82 **Board Chair also verified the full amount was spent by the CD.**
83 **The only district who was unable to show their full spending was White Pine CD, they**
84 **were short by \$745 of spending their \$4,500 awarded.**
85 **Chairman Tibbitts noted that the boards are still not budgeting for the full amount**
86 **expected from that State. It would be good to ensure they are putting the correct**
87 **amount in the proposed fiscal reports.**
88 **Chairman Tibbitts noted some reports are signed by staff such as district managers, but**
89 **not the chairman. It is fine if the district managers sign at the direction of the board, but**
90 **how can the commission be sure the board is reviewing the documents and approving**
91 **them, not just the employees. Ms. Aten noted that in a few instances where employees**
92 **are signing CD staff are present at all annual meetings where these plans are drafted,**
93 **and that the boards have review the information and are requesting the employees sign**
94 **the completed documents for submission. The template also only asks for a signature,**
95 **not the Chairmans signature. But that can be changed if the commission would like to**
96 **ensure the chairman's review before submission.**
97 **Also note the approved-on date at top of form is also missing the date.**
98 **Chairman Tibbitts noted that the incorporated cities and county reps are still missing**
99 **representatives on their boards. Mostly the cities are missing their appointee. He asked**
100 **that we provide support to the CDs and engage with the cities to ask for representation**
101 **on the boards.**
102 **Ms. Aten will update the vacant seats on the summary page for the next meeting.**
103 **Commissioner Orr suggested CDs can suggest to the cities and counties who they**
104 **would like to have sit in the representative's seat. This might be a good way to start**
105 **filling vacancies on boards.**

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107 **6. Determination of Districts "In Good Standing" for FY24', and decision on release of**
108 **FY25' funding. (For Possible Action) List of those Districts that meet the criteria of "Good**
109 **Standing" based on submissions. NAC 548.110.**
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111 **Chairman Tibbitts noted that all districts are in good standing and that they do not have**
112 **to spend all their state funding to be found in good standing, but they will be awarded**
113 **less money from the state if that spending is not full obligated.**
114

115 **a) Commissioner Smith made a motion to find all the Conservation Districts in good**
116 **standing, Commissioner Orr second.**

117 **Discussion: Commissioner Orr thanked the CD Program staff for helping get all the**
118 **districts in good standing.**

119 **Motion passed unanimously. ACTION TAKEN**

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b) Commissioner Reiman made a motion to award all CD their state funding of \$5000 except for White Pine CD which will be awarded \$4,246 and the remainder of \$754 will be split among the other 27 districts, Commissioner Orr second. Motion passed unanimously. ACTION TAKEN

7. Updates from Agencies and Partners: (For Discussion Only)

a) Nevada Department of Agriculture

None- thank you to NDA for allowing us to use their meeting room for the SCC meeting.

b) University of Nevada Reno/ University Cooperative Extension

Holly Gatzke: Our realignment of our staffing is coming. We have several of the counties, not all of them staffed with what we're calling an extension coordinator, right now they are covering Eureka, White pine, Lander, Lyon County, Churchill, Pershing and Mineral. I'm really thrilled that we've been able to hire people that are energetic, positive, know how to and their jobs. These positions are to be connections with the community, manage the office and bring in programming to diversify what's happening in that area and support any experts that are in the area. UNCE has taken the extension educator position and kind of split it in 2 instead of hiring somebody with all the expertise and asking them to take care of an office and do all these other things. UNCE is hiring people to do that in clusters and then having educators like Gary McCuine spend 100% of his time is now AG and natural resources education, this has proven to be successful.

Tracy Shane was hired on as the extension livestock specialist. Andrew Waaswa, located in Fallon was brought on as an extension educator in crop and soil health.

c) Natural Resources Conservation Service

Chris Rose: noted there were several NRCS updates over the last few days at the annual meeting, and the NvACD business meeting. He noted a few things that were not mentioned at those updates include: One of NRCS's priorities is to ensure NRCS employees and DCs are attending all CD meetings moving forward.

Commissioner Orr asked about small acreage fund pool.

Mr. Rose noted this was discussed at the STAC and that he would check into those fund pools to see if that was addressing in the funding qualifications.

Commissioner Martin asked about the two fund pools earmarked for Nevada specifically, one was NAQI funding and the other CIG funding.

157 **Mr Rose said yes those are specific to Nevada and will not be competing with national**
158 **for funding. The two priorities in CIG are vegetation management and urban ag.**
159 **The other new funding program is the Nation Air Quality Initiative, with 1.5 million in**
160 **that fund. This program is commonly called the “tractor trade” program. This is the**
161 **upgrading of energy equipment replacing diesel to solar or upgrade an older tractor to a**
162 **new one.**

163 **Commissioner Smith asked about upgrading their solar programs in place. Chairman**
164 **Tibbitts noted FSA has a program for this.**

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166 **d) Department of Conservation and Natural Resources**

167 **Dominique Etchegoyhen; he also noted there were several DCNR updates over the last**
168 **few days at the annual meeting, and the NvACD business meeting, he asked if there**
169 **were any specific requests for information or updates.**

170 **Chairman Tibbitts asked about the budgeting cycle and for information regarding that**
171 **process.**

172 **Mr. Etchegoyhen; each budgeting process is confidential to the department and**
173 **programs, but some general things being discussed are the expectations in this**
174 **budgeting cycle and the feedback requires follow up currently. He noted the department**
175 **does not have unlimited resources to meet the needs, and they can use that opportunity**
176 **to make sure the state is aware of the challenges and needs they face. And so that**
177 **process is that it will go to Gov Rec with the projections in every department and be**
178 **balanced against the economy. The governor's office will balance those needs and**
179 **make appropriate decisions to meet those needs. With the unique position of having Mr**
180 **Settelmeyer as director he can highlight the importance of our program and the CDs.**
181 **There is a lot of support for CD, but it doesn't always come through our budget.**

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183 **Commissioner Smith asked about the credit system status.**

184 **Mr. Etchegoyhen: he noted there is more discussion with BLM about NEPA and how the**
185 **process can meet the needs of planning process. The SETT is also looking at the ability**
186 **to generate the credits on public lands and how to work through that process with**
187 **NEPA.**

188 **Commissioner Annis: Feedback for Mr. Etchegoyhen, the updates to the DWR website**
189 **have made finding and accessing information much more difficult. He understands it**
190 **will take time to work out some of the bugs, but that the new update has been difficult to**
191 **utilize and wanted to just provide some feedback regarding those updates.**

192 **Mr. Etchegoyhen: I'll pass that information on to our IT team that's continuing to**
193 **develop that**

194 **Commissioner Martin: he asked about the water buy back bill and the new bill being**
195 **introduced currently.**

196 **Mr. Etchegoyhen: The bill was used in the first year to gauge interest and it was**
197 **successful so there has been another bill which would be the continuation of the**
198 **program. It may be SB36 and would allow for the buy back program to continue.**

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200 **Chairman Tibbitts mentioned the new program is being introduced as a voluntary water**
201 **retirement program versus a strict buyback program which is a cut and paste of SB176.**
202 **But there's a separate bill being called the Omnibus water bill, this is just to stand up**
203 **the program, this is being brought forward by a group of stakeholders, including**
204 **Southern Nevada Water Authority and environmental groups or whatever, that also put**
205 **bill forward to the Natural Resources Committee and it they're very similar in a lot of**
206 **ways, but there's some differences between the two.**

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208 e) **Nevada Conservation District Program**

209 **Ms. Aten gave thanks to Gerry Miller who will be retiring in January and wanted to note**
210 **how much of an impact and how influential he has been in the success of the CD**
211 **program and keeping the CDs in Elko moving forward in conservation. It will be difficult**
212 **to lose Gerry, and we will miss him.**

213 **The CD program has a vacancy in southern Nevada/ Ely currently and will be opening**
214 **that position and the Elko position early in the new year.**

215 **A quick update on the NAC language introduction. The process was reviewed and**
216 **accepted, and we are now at the point in the process of hosting more meetings to follow**
217 **up with the notice of intent to act upon regulation process. More notifications will be**
218 **coming out the SCC soon to discuss the next steps.**

219 **For CDs specifically our staff will be working on providing training updates this new**
220 **year specifically in diversity, equality and inclusion along with civil rights and open**
221 **meeting law.**

222

223 f) **Sagebrush Ecosystem Program & Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team**

224 **Casey Adkins: So as Mr. Etchegoyhen stated, we are under a discussion right now with**
225 **our Council on how the version of the tools and the manual that we currently use for all**
226 **our individual projects, when those will be kind of locked in or standardized. So that**
227 **meeting is on December 13th and it's open to the public. And that will go out in our new**
228 **update.**

229 **The SETT will have an updated versions of manual and tools coming out our 2.0 version**
230 **with the New Year, and that version will also have new habitat maps. If any of you all**

231 *use those regularly, those will be on our website, or feel free to reach out to me and I*
232 *can provide those for you, those come from USGS out of Pete Coates lab.*
233 *Additionally speaking to the public lands and the debit mitigation, I'm the public lands*
234 *lead and I'm actively working on building this initiative out and always looking for*
235 *collaborations now I'm looking at supporting debit proponents to actually work on*
236 *mitigation with the BLM office out of the Bristlecone Pine district. We've had some*
237 *interest from debit proponents, but it's still very preliminary right now as there's little*
238 *guidance from the BLM and NEPA yet. So, we are kind of working in conjunction with*
239 *them through this process and understanding the public lands rule.*

240

241 g) Nevada Association of Conservation Districts

242 *Kevin Piper: It's been a productive couple of days, and he noted his appreciation for all*
243 *the people who helped make the annual meeting successful.*

244 *He noted that he is looking forward to the next steps in the NRCS agreement process*
245 *and helping place staff with CDs and NRCS.*

246

247 h) All Other Partners and participating agencies

248 *Ms. Aten noted she can add FSA to the partner reporting section to encourage updates*
249 *to the SCC. But asked the Commission to let her know if there are specific updates they*
250 *wish to hear, or any individuals from other organization they want to have updates from.*

251

252 *Chris Fritsen with NDEP: Just wanted to bring people's attention that we do have a*
253 *grant funding opportunity open, it's for watershed planning. No match required on this.*
254 *It's a unique opportunity where we have funding that doesn't require match and the*
255 *watershed planning can get things in place where that might open the doors for some of*
256 *our other funding, which unfortunately still requires match at this time.*

257 *We anticipating anticipate opening another grant funding opportunity within the next*
258 *week or so, about \$800,000 requiring a one to one match. A link with information was*
259 *provided in the chat.*

260 [https://ndep.nv.gov/water/rivers-streams-lakes/nonpoint-source-pollution-management-](https://ndep.nv.gov/water/rivers-streams-lakes/nonpoint-source-pollution-management-program/cwa-319h-grants)
261 [program/cwa-319h-grants](https://ndep.nv.gov/water/rivers-streams-lakes/nonpoint-source-pollution-management-program/cwa-319h-grants)

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264 **8. Commissioner Items (For Discussion Only)** Commissioners will provide comments and
265 any reports for the Commission.

266 *Commissioner Orr: FB is no longer being supported by County Companies which*
267 *means they will now have to rely on members to help support them.*

268 **Commissioner Orr also noted that there are two resolutions being provided through**
269 **NVACD to the national association. One is to ask NRCS to include virtual fencing**
270 **options in practices. The other is asking NRCS to allow flexibility in contracted**
271 **practices which don't make sense in the final years of a contract. There are instances**
272 **where practices are contracted early in the development of the plan and the producers**
273 **are held to those even when there are better options that come up. This can mean failed**
274 **installment of practices but do to them being contracted they must be installed.**
275 **Mr. Rose noted he will be sure to follow up on those conversations related to the**
276 **resolutions.**

277

278 **Commissioner Martin: just an observation that yesterday on NVACD tours of the UNR**
279 **experimental farm there were some very insightful and helpful work going on which**
280 **could be very useful to CDs at large. He requested that if we have meetings in these**
281 **regions where there is an experiment farm with information to share that we host a tour**
282 **in conjunction with the SCC meetings.**

283

284 **Commissioner Smith: It was very interesting to see the UNR experimental projects. And**
285 **he asked if UNCE extension still does those experimental tours and encouraged UNCE**
286 **to continue to provide field days for this kind of learning process.**
287 **He also noted all the great work that Gerry has done and noted that working with Gerry**
288 **was a highlight of his career and appreciates all the work he's done for natural**
289 **resources and conservation districts, we all thank Gerry for his service and dedication.**

290

291 **Chairman Tibbitts: the upcoming legislative session might have some things to**
292 **consider for future SCC agendas.**

293 **The Soil Health bill was approved by the interim committee and being moved forward to**
294 **a committee bill. There are multiple water bills being introduced, including the one**
295 **discussed today. Just a note to pay attention to those bills which may impacts CDs and**
296 **natural resources.**

297

298 **Commissioner Smith: he asked NvACD and Kevin Piper about CD legislative day and to**
299 **ensure that is being investigated and booked asap.**

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301 **9. Next Commission Meeting: (For Possible Action)**

302 **Tuesday, January 21st 1pm**

303 **Agenda items:**

304 **Legislative update**

305 *Discussion about CD Day with Legislature and booth at Ag Day*

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307 **10. Public Comments:**

308 *Rick Orr- noted that communication techniques have changed a lot of the years, and*
309 *that right now if you're not on social media or interaction online you are losing*
310 *opportunities to communicate. Information should be presented in a clear and concise*
311 *way so that people know what you are communicating, this goes back to the website*
312 *for DWR not having very clear communication, that is an issue for users.*

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314 **11. Adjournment:**

315 *10:19am*

ACOE – Army Corp of Engineers

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

ADAA: Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act

AMS: Agricultural Marketing Service

ANPR: Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

AO: Administrative Office

APHIS: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

ARRA: American Recovery and Investment Act

ARS: Agricultural Research Service

ATRA: The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012

BMP – Best Management Practice

BWQP – Bureau of Water Quality Planning

CABNR- College of Agriculture, Biotechnology & Natural Resources

CCC: Commodity Credit Corporation

CD – Conservation District

CDSN – Conservation District of Southern Nevada

CFR: Code of Federal Regulations

CODEX: U.S. Codex Office

CR: Civil Rights

CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program (a program within NRCS)

CVCD – Carson Valley Conservation District

DAG – District Attorney General

DCNR – Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

DOC – Department of Corrections

eCFR: Electronic Code of Federal Regulations

EEO: Equal Employment Opportunity

EO: Executive Order

ERS: Economic Research Service

FAS: Foreign Agricultural Service

FFAS: Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service

FLSA: Fair Labor Standards Act

FMLA: Family and Medical Leave Act

FNCS: Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services

FNS: Food and Nutrition Service

FOIA: Freedom of Information Act

FPAC Business Center: Farm Production and Conservation Business Center

FS – Forest Service

FS: Forest Service

FSA: Farm Service Agency

FSIS: Food Safety and Inspection Service

FY: Fiscal Year

GS: General Schedule

IG: Inspector General

MOA: Memorandum of Agreement

MOI: Memorandum of Interview

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

MRP: Marketing and Regulatory Programs

NACD – National Association of Conservation Districts

NACO - Nevada Association of Counties

NAL: National Agricultural Library

NARA: National Archives and Records Administration

NASS: National Agricultural Statistics Service

NCDP – Nevada Conservation Districts Program

NDCNR – Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

NDEP-Nevada Division of Environmental Protection

NDOR-Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation

NDOT-Nevada Department of Transportation

NDOW – Nevada Department of Wildlife

NE Elko – northeast Elko Conservation District

NFC: National Finance Center

NHPA: National Historic Preservation Act

NIFA: National Institute of Food and Agriculture

NRCS: Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRCS-Natural Resource Conservation Service

NRE: Natural Resources and the Environment

NTCD- Nevada Tahoe Conservation District

NV - Nevada

NvACD – Nevada Association of Conservation Districts

OA: Office of the Administrator

OAA: Office of the Associate Administrator

OAE: Office of Advocacy and Enterprise

OALJ: Office of Administrative Law Judges

OAO: Office of Advocacy and Outreach

OASA: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration

OASCR: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.

OBPA: Office of Budget and Program Analysis

OC: Office of Communications

OCA: Office of the Consumer Advisor

OCE: Office of Community Engagement; Office of the Chief Economist

OCFO: Office of the Chief Financial Officer

OCHRO: Office of the Chief Human Resources Director

OCIO: Office of the Chief Information Officer

OCR: Office of Congressional Relations

OCS: Office of the Chief Scientist

OES: Office of the Executive Secretariat

OGC: Office of the General Counsel

OGE: Office of Government Ethics

OHR: Office of Human Resources

OHSE: Office of Homeland Security and Emergency

OHV – Off-Highway Vehicles

OIE: World Organization for Animal Health

OIG: Office of Inspector General

OMB: Office of Management and Budget

OPPE: Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement

OSDBU: Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

OSEC: Office of the Secretary

OTR: Office of Tribal Relations

PIO – Public information officer

RBCS: Rural Business Cooperative Service

RCPP – regional conservation partnership program

RD: Rural Development

REE: Research, Education and Economics

RFP – Request for Proposal

RHS: Rural Housing Service

RMA: Risk Management Agency

RUS: Rural Utilities Service

SCC-State Conservation Commission

SEC – State Environmental Commission

SEP – Sagebrush Ecosystem Program

SETT-Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team

SNOTEL-snow telemetry

SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

STAC – State Technical Advisory Committee (NRCS)

TAC - Technical Advisory committee

TFAA: Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs

U.S.C.: United States Code

UNCE – University Nevada Cooperative Extension

USDA: United States Department of Agriculture

USFS – United State Forest Service

VC – Vice Chairman

VCD – Carson Valley Conservation District