



WINKELMAN NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Quarterly Meeting

February 17, 2021

Final Minutes

Location: Teleconference

The Winkelman Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCD) meeting was called to order at 1:17 pm.

Board and Staff

Bill Dunn (Absent), Steve Turcotte, Barb McGuire, Carol DuBois, Gary Vinson (Absent), Hattie Hedrick (WRMC Director), Kyle Thompson (WNRCD Coordinator), and Chris Postel (WNRCD Clerk).

Agencies - Organizations

Alisha Phipps & Tom Reis (NRCS), Sarah Gandaria (AZGFD), Matt Jewell (AzDDFM), Jeff Love (Pinal County Sheriff), Brook Gladden and Carolyn Harbison (AACD), Mario Preciado (AZ State Land Department), and Shad Beebe (Cooperator).

Minutes of Past Meetings

Reviewed minutes November 18, 2020. Barb McGuire moved to accept the minutes with changes. No discussion. Steve Turcotte seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Financial Report (See Attached Report): District/State funds, \$48,723.62 and \$22,546.70. The Financial Report was discussed. Steve Turcotte moved to accept and file the financial reports. Barb McGuire seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Reports from Agencies & Other Organizations

NRCS (Alisha Phipps and Tom Reis – See Report): NRCS is updating 2 plans. The reorganization is done and the 7 team area comprises the Sells, Tucson and Douglas offices. Per Tom Reis, he is the new team leader and started on February 15. He is a resource conservationist and has been with NRCS for 24 years. In terms of EQIP, 17 applications are being processed, 6 from Winkelman (all rangeland). \$548,498 in funds are available for the Tucson and Douglas offices. Based on the local workgroup meeting, these funds will focus on water development, irrigation efficiency and brush management. Bill Dunn asked why is there less EQIP funding. Per Tom, about 8 million was budgeted for Arizona with about \$950,000 being allocated to Team 7. Shad Beebe confirmed that the next application deadline is February 26.

Az State Land Department (Mario Preciado): He is completing applications and have some staffing issues.

AZ Department Forestry & Fire (Matt Jewell, SE Service Forester): Governor Ducey passed the Healthy Forest Initiative (\$22 million) for brush management. Funding for hazardous fuels reduction is also available. Applications can be submitted in May.

Arizona Game and Fish (Sarah Gandaria): Alex Smallwood is now the Wildlife Manager for GMU37A. Habitat Partnership Committee had a funding meeting for the applications (Submitted in September 2020), about 60% of Region 5's applications were funded. The Landowner Relations Program currently is planning for next fiscal year's projects, habitat improvements & recreational access. So, any rancher and farmer interested in partnering will need to contact her prior to July 10th to have their projects reviewed on the July 16th ranking deadline. Projects need to demonstrate benefits to multiple wildlife species.

AACD (Brooke Gladden): Bill was sent 5 books (10 tickets each) for the 2021 Gun Raffle. The Winter Meeting has been rescheduled for April 27. The Summer meeting is scheduled in Phoenix for August 9-11. AACD is reviewing the BLM Archaeological Agreement for the Winter Board of Director's meeting.

Pinal County Sheriff's Office (Deputy Sheriff Jeff Love): The Deputies have been responding to the fence cutting incidents and there are fewer Canadian snow birds this year. Per Shad Beebe, there is twice as much 4-wheel traffic and trash dumping in his area. Per Carol, ATVs travel along the roads at night. Per Mario, ASLD has only law enforcement for trespassing, not fence cutting.

Old Business

Grant Update:

- AZ Water Protection Fund Grant (See Attached Update & Knight Invoice): Per Kyle, the plan is to start removing salt cedar by heavy equipment and hand cutting in March (No work allowed after 3/31/2021). We are still waiting for the US Fish & Wildlife service to approve the restoration plan. The Knight invoice was discussed. Motion: Carol DuBois moved to approve the invoice (\$33,450). Steve Turcotte seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed 4-0.
- Pinal County Partnership Grant: Per Bill Dunn, work is starting to get done, cutting-piling mesquite and obtained a burn permit. A report is due in March.

NACD Invoice: Motion: Barb McGuire moved to approve the invoice at the Gold Level (\$775). Steve Turcotte seconded. No discussion. Motion passed 4-0.

New Business

Resolution Copper Update: Per Bill, it was a good teleconference with them. They have done the legal work and monitoring, seems that they are doing it right. Copper production is about 15 years away.

Landowner Agreement (Water Protection Fund – See Attached Agreement): Per Kyle, he drafted the document which was reviewed by Bill. If anyone has questions, let him know.

Resource Assessment Project: Per Kyle, he is gathering data on conservation needs. But NRCS has a lot of data but access is limited due confidentiality. Deb Smith (AACD) will define this project. His salary for this project, \$33/hr, needs to be approved. His current rate is also \$33/hr for the WP Fund. Motion: Barb McGuire moved to approve Kyle's rate at \$33/hour for Resource Assessment. Steve Turcotte seconded. No discussion. Motion passed 4-0.

AACD Accounting Update: Carolyn Harbison (She is a clerk for 3 NRCD districts) is getting the accounting setup. She can do the accounting using a spreadsheet. Steve Turcotte indicated that he preferred that a spreadsheet be used to do the accounting.

Reports from Supervisors & District Staff:

Steve Turcotte: There is still having a lot of fence cutting going on. The Pinal County Deputy Sheriffs (Tyler & Jeff) have been responsive but they cover a large area and also do rescue.

Barbara McGuire: The Gila River Music Festival is planned for May. Pioneer Days has been cancelled.

Call to the Public: None

Adjourn: Barbara McGuire made a motion to Adjourn the meeting at 2:56 pm. Steve Turcotte seconded it. Motion carried.

Final Minutes Submitted by: Chris Postel, WNRCD Clerk

Date: June 16, 2021

Approval of Minutes: _____

Date: _____