

## **WINKELMAN NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Quarterly Meeting      September 15, 2021      Final Minutes

Location: General Kearny Inn, Kearny AZ

The Winkelman Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCD) meeting was called to order at 10:07 am.

### **Board and Staff**

Bill Dunn, Steve Turcotte, Barb McGuire, Carol DuBois, Gary Vinson (Absent), Hattie Hedrick, Kyle Thompson (Absent), Amber Barton (WRCD Contractor), and Chris Postel (WNRCD Clerk).

### **Agencies - Organizations**

Alisha Phipps, Tom Reis, Yissel Martinez, and Samantha Yazzie (NRCS), Mario Preciado (AZ State Land Department), Ana Vargas (Resolution Copper), Ashley Hall (UA Coop Ext), and Todd Hale (Asarco Land Mgr). Cooperators: Francie Myer, Jack & Catherine Mann, Shad Beebe, Becky Dunn and Rick Bader.

### **Minutes of Past Meetings**

Reviewed minutes 6/16/21, 6/21/21, 6/30/21, and 7/13/21. Barbara McGuire moved to accept the minutes with changes. No discussion. Carol DuBois seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

**Financial Report (See Attached Report):** District/State funds, \$50,879.41 and \$18,448.04. The Financial Report was reviewed. Barb McGuire moved to accept and file the financial reports. Steve Turcotte seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

### **Old Business**

#### **Grant Update:**

**AZ Water Protection Fund Grant (See Attached Update):** Per Kyle, we have been held up by Section 7 clearance required by the AZ Water Protection Fund. There has been a lot of difficulty contacting and working through questions about the clearance with USFWS. After a phone meeting with the FWS Point of Contact in June, I was told that things would move along and the project was likely to be approved. However, communication has since stopped. I have reached out to the AZWPF grant Manager to help move things along again.

**Pinal County Partnership Grant:** Per Bill Dunn, we received 2 payments (\$22,250) after the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter report had been submitted (Due July 14). The grant has been closed out.

#### **AZGFD HPC Stock Tank Cleaning and Sealing (Kyle Thompson-WNRCD Coordinator):**

Per Kyle, The AZ Game and Fish funded the WNRCD to improve dirt tanks within the district through the Habitat Protection Committee grant. All work, except 1 tank on the DuBois Ranch, was completed in the summer of 2020. Another grant HPC proposal was submitted on August 31, 2021 with the support of AZGFD for another round of cleaning and possibly sealing. Proposals are being reviewed and moneys will be awarded about February/March 2022.

**Telegraph Fire Update (Bill Dunn):** The legislature funded \$10 million for infrastructure effective July 1. NRCS could provide funds in the October/November timeframe and has EQIP funds for fire loss. Amber Barton was hired to document fire loss on 10 ranches and 16 private property owners. She has been in contact with NRCS and AzDFFM. It is estimated that the infrastructure loss is \$7-8 million. The ranches must work with a 501-3(C) or local government to apply for the funds. AACD will be partnered with. Funding from NACD (32,000) and a rancher group (\$20,000) has been received. Grazing may be limited for the next 2 years on US Forest Service land.

## **New Business**

**Joint Local Work Group (LWG) with Tonto NRCD (Bill Dunn):** Keisha Tatum (NRCS) wants the Winkelman and Tonto to conduct a LWG meeting to specify fire areas and designate practices by the end of September. She could make Jonah Cude (NRCS Intern) available to assist us. Per Rick Bader, we should consider putting in fire breaks now to slow down future fires. Contact organizations, such as AzGF, Asarco, & TNC, for funding the cost of fuel and labor. He would donate the equipment time. Bill Dunn suggested appointing a Fire Task force committee and the following volunteered: Rick Bader, Todd Hale (Asarco), Jack Mann, Bill Dunn and Carol Dubois.

**Sonoran Desert Tortoise Workshops Update (Bill Dunn):** Workshops have held in Kearny (WNRCD) and Amado (Pima NRCD). Two more workshops are planned up north. No contact from USFWS.

## **Reports from Agencies & Other Organizations**

### **NRCS (Tom Reis – See Report):**

**FARM BILL PROGRAMS - EQIP & CSP:** NRCS is working on conservation plans (CSP).

Arizona NRCS Contracts approved for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021:

- 134 Contracts
- Totaling \$13,330,104 in funding allocations

Team 7 Contracts approved for FY 2021:

- 35 Contracts, Comprising 25% of the State's workload
- \$2,770,870 in funding allocations, Comprising 21% of the State's workload

Tucson Field Office Workload – Active contracts

- 28 Contracts (27 EQIP, 1 CSP). Totaling \$2,080,800 in funding allocations

EQIP – Fire Response: Due to the drought, over the past year the rangeland community faced many hardships. One of which was the occurrence and severity of wildfires. The Telegraph Fire started June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and was reported as fully contained on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. It burned 180,757 acres. In response to the fires and severity of conditions across the state NRCS focused funds to help producers. One of the programs offered was Fire Response money through the EQIP program. NRCS reached out to current and past EQIP participants within the Telegraph and Mescal Fire boundaries. Agricultural producers who had EQIP practices that were damaged or destroyed by wildfire in fiscal year 2021 (October 1, 2020 - July 16, 2021) were eligible. Thank you to the Winkelman NRCDs quick action and data collected by Amber Barton, the Tucson Field Office was able to fund 2 applications for ranches within the burn area.

**Staffing:** Yissel Martinez is the new Soil Conservationist and will be based in the Tucson field office. Alvaro Campos is resigning and will be working for the Elk Horn ranch.

**Az State Land Department (Mario Preciado):** They are meeting with AzDDFM to define the program for disbursing the \$10 million fund for fire infrastructure losses. Archeological clearances are still a problem. Per Bill, AACD will apply for big landscape projects related to fire losses.

**Arizona Game and Fish (Per Alison Haywood's Email):** Fall hunts will be starting up soon:

- Youth Deer/Javelina Oct 8-14
- Quail opens Oct 15th
- General Deer, Oct 29-Nov 4 & Nov 12-18
- Youth javelina Nov 19-25
- No December archery deer
- Archery deer opens Jan 1st

Wildlife Manager Allison Haywood will be on non-law enforcement duty until December 2021, and then will be on leave for a few months after that. Individuals can still contact her about law enforcement issues

through December and she can refer them to a nearby officer, or they can contact our 24/7 statewide dispatch (1-800-352-0700) center to report any law enforcement issues which will then be referred to the closest available officer.

**UA Cooperative Extension (Ashley Hall):** She will be doing a post firer grazing research project at the Griffith ranch. The forest nutrition for livestock program is on hold. No workshops are planned due to COVID. NRCWAY will be looking for funding and she will know the details by next meeting. Contact her if you are interested in range monitoring.

**Resolution (Ana Vargas):** She is new to the project since April. Congressman Grijalva is sponsoring a resolution that would impact mining and other industries in the state. A letter of support would be helpful. The EIS has been started with 3 new tribes focusing on mining method and water treatment. The USDA review is complete.

**Asarco (Todd Hale, Asarco Land Manager):** He is the new Land Manager and worked previously as a lawyer for 20 years. The Ray Land Exchange is closed but could use a letter of support. Bill suggested that the District could do a letter of support to protect the tax base.

**Reports from Supervisors & District Staff:**

**Steve Turcotte:** The only dirt tanking that is holding water was treated with ES-13.

**Carol DuBois:** Still waiting for the tank to fill.

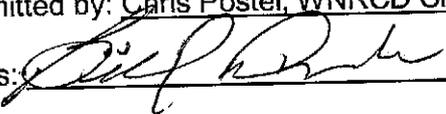
**Bill Dunn:** Per Chris Fletcher (Sunzia Liaison), he is meeting with Sunzia for doing outreach conservation work such as a cleaning tank program.

**Call to the Public:** None

**Adjourn:** Barb McGuire made a motion to Adjourn the meeting at 11:39 am. Carol DuBois seconded it. Motion carried. 4-0

Final Minutes Submitted by: Chris Postel, WNRCD Clerk

Date: November 17, 2021

Approval of Minutes: 

Date: 11/17/21