



WINKELMAN NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Quarterly Meeting September 21, 2022 Final Minutes

Location: Dudleyville Complex, Dudleyville, AZ

The Winkelman Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCD) meeting was called to order at 10:21 am.

Board and Staff

Bill Dunn, Steve Turcotte, Carol DuBois, and Kyle Thompson.

Absent: Chris Postel WNRCD Clerk, Barb McGuire, and Gary Vinson.

Agencies - Organizations

Ashley Hall (UA Co-op Extension), Heather Knight & Yiselle Martinez (NRCS), Allison Haywood (AZGFD), Deputies: Abernathy & Lennon (Pinal County Sheriff's Office), Sam Reidhead (ASARCO), Liz Harris-Tuck (Taking meeting minutes), and Cooperators: Becky Dunn, Hattie Hedrick, Catherine Mann, and Nick Cline.

Minutes of Past Meetings

Reviewed minutes 5/25/22, 6/17/22, 7/17/22, & 7/24/22. Supervisor Turcotte moved to accept all minutes. No discussion. Supervisor DuBois seconded. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Financial Report (See Attached Report) & Invoices: District/State funds, \$24,043.51 and \$23,557.39. The Financial Report was reviewed. Steve Turcotte moved to accept & file the report as of August 31. Carol DuBois seconded. **Motion passed 3-0.** The following invoices for Bill Dunn were discussed:

- Seed spreader - \$653.39
- food for District meeting - \$32.59;
- PO Box Rental-\$72.00
- Total = \$757.98

Supervisor Turcotte moved to approve all three invoices and stated the seed spreader would become the property of the district. Supervisor DuBois seconded the motion. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Old Business

Grants Update: Water Protection Fund (Kyle Thompson):

Kyle is creating a plan to continue removing salt cedars along the Gila River. The plan will also include more revegetation efforts. Since the willows died, he is going to try putting pole cuttings directly into the ground. WNRCD has funds to continue salt cedar removal. He plans a spring project for this year. So far, the district is under budget in expending grant funds. He wants to hire Oracle Community Garden to make seed balls to plant during October through December. Per Ashley Hall (UA Cooperative Extension), she just finished a similar project, working with a 4H club to help make seed balls.

Sunzia Update (See Attached Cindy Freeman email, Sunzia Project Manager):

Discussion: Sun Zia is selling the project to a large company. The first line will be constructed carrying DC current instead of AC, as planned. This required them to return to the Corp Commission with an amended Certificate of Compatibility (COC) request.

People from Oracle wanted changes because of their designation as a dark sky town. It opposes the construction of 5-6 poles at the San Manuel airport that will be 30-40 feet taller than the original plan with lighted towers. It was reported that there will only be a few towers close to San Manuel that will require lighting, per FAA. The Line Siting Committee of the Corp Commission approved the amendments to their COC. The next step is for the for the amendment to go before the Corporation Commission.

Grant Opportunities:

Arizona Land Department of Fire and Forestry Management grants are awarded for specific projects. A 1:1 match is required. When seeking a state grant, money from a federal grant can be used for the match. Money from one federal grant cannot be used as the match for another federal grant. One grant opportunity is through the Az Game and Fish, (Landowner Relations Program). Money is available for fence removal to give access through your property to BLM lands to hunters and others. Most projects that create more watering opportunities for wildlife are available through this grant.

Arizona Land Department Wind Turbine Application Update: Nothing new to report.

New Business

Letter to AZ State Land Commissioner: Tabled.

Steve Turcotte AACD Appointment: Supervisor Turcotte was appointed the Chair of the AACD Rangeland and Forestry committee which puts him on the Executive Committee of the AACD. Bill is going off the Executive Committee Board as Past President.

Pinal County BOS Presentation: Chair Dunn recommended that WNRCD make a presentation to the Pinal County Board of Supervisors (BOS). Board members commented that this was a good idea. It was recommended that the presentation be made during a working session of the BOS.

Reports from Agencies & Other Organizations

Annual Arizona Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) Board Meeting

Four new resolutions were passed by AACD. WNRCD presented two of the resolutions.

NRCS (Heather Knight & Yiselle Martinez): Yiselle and Heather presented each board member with a water bottle to thank them for their hard work on last summer's fires in the district.

FARM BILL PROGRAMS:

EQIP-General (Environmental Quality Incentive Program)

CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program)

- Taking applications year-round. Application deadline to be eligible for next funding cycle is December 16th, 2022

Tucson Field Office Workload – Active contracts

EQIP: 28 contracts

Totaling \$1.9 million in funding allocations

- 15 contracts within Winkelman NRCD
- 8 contracts within Pima NRCD
- 4 contracts within Santa Cruz NRCD
- 1 contract within Eloy NRCD (managing for Casa Grande NRCS office)

CSP: 7 contracts

Totaling \$1.1 million in funding allocations

- 3 contracts within Winkelman NRCD
- 1 contract within Pima NRCD
- 3 contracts within Santa Cruz NRCD

TEAM 7 STAFF:

- Brett Myers was selected as the Watershed Planner for Team 7 – Started January 17th, 2022
- Emilio Carrillo has taken a position as the Arizona NRCS State Range Management Specialist for the State Office – Started March 14th, 2022
- Alisha Phipps selected as Rangeland Management Specialist, Master Planner for Team 7 – Started May 9th, 2022
- New Hire, Heather Knight. Hired as Rangeland Management Specialist for the Tucson Field Office. Started July 18th, 2022. Heather is a recent graduate from the University of Arizona and majored in Natural Resources, Range Management. Will be shadowing Dave Womack and Alisha Phipps over the next year.
- New Civil Engineer hired for Team 7 (Tucson, Douglas, Sells), Melanie Stephanovic. Melanie will be working with Trevor Towers to assist Team 7 with engineering needs. Melanie previously worked for the Bureau of Reclamation for 2 years in Yuma.

UA Cooperative Extension (Ashley Hall)

- Ashley is currently conducting a study to determine how vegetation recovers after a fire. She will be planting seed balls in grazing and non-grazing areas. She is taking samples of soil and fecal matter for analysis and comparison.
- Another project is the Forage Nutrition Program. She is comparing samples of soil and fecal matter and sending the samples to a lab for analysis. She is looking for volunteers to collect samples, which Ashley will collect.
- UA Cooperative Extension has a series of drought resilience workshops for producers and encouraged the board to take advantage of them. There is no cost for the workshops; all UA needs is a facility and support. The next workshop will be held in Tucson on November 29 or 30, 2022 in Tucson. She will inform the board when details are worked out.

AZGFD (Allison Haywood)

Game and Fish is conducting a wildlife survey that includes Oracle and San Manuel.

PCSD (Ranger Abernathy) Ranger Deputy Abernathy said there are two new Range Deputies to handle all of Pinal County. They are hoping to gather data to show the need for two more rangers, but it will probably be 2-3 years before that happens. He said they handle all types of criminal behavior and issues for ranchers.

Reports from Supervisors & District Staff:

- Steve Turcotte: His water tanks were relined and filled. They are holding water very well. ES-13 a good product.
- Carol DuBois: The repair of their water tanks was completed and they are holding water.
- Bill Dunn: He is no longer on the AACD Executive Board.

Call to the Public:

Sam Reidhead from ASARCO said that the mine received a \$40 million NRCS grant to clean up the holding pond above the Ray Mine in aftermath of the Telegraph fire. NRCS has funds available for fire restoration. Since the fire, the pit and a long culvert are in danger of severe flooding since the holding pond, which covers about forty acres, no longer is a buffer for large floods.

Adjourn: Supervisor Turcotte made a motion to Adjourn the meeting at 11:43am. Supervisor DuBois seconded it. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Draft Minutes Submitted by: Chris Postel & Liz Tuck

Date: November 16, 2022

Approval of Minutes: _____

Date: _____