



WINKELMAN NRCD, WRMC & Redington NRCD

Quarterly Meeting September 20, 2023 Final Minutes

Location: Oracle Community Center, Oracle, AZ

Executive Session

Call to Order: The Winkelman Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCD) by Bill Dunn and Redington NRCD Executive Session was called to order by Andy Smallhouse at 9:06 am. The Districts exited the Executive Session at 9:50 am.

Regular Meeting

Call to Order At 10:06 am, the regular meeting of the Winkelman District was called to order by Chairman Dunn and the Redington District was called to order by Chairman Andy Smallhouse. Andy Smallhouse moved that Bill Dunn serve as Chairman of the joint meeting. Seconded by Jess Barry.

Motion Passed 6-0.

Attendees Board and Staff:

WNRCD: Bill Dunn, Steve Turcotte, Carol DuBois, Liz Tuck (Taking minutes), & Kyle Thompson (WNRCD Coordinator). Absent: Chris Postel (WNRCD Clerk), Barb McGuire, & Gary Vinson. Redington NRCD: Tyler Williams, Andy Smallhouse, Mo Fisher, Jess Barry, & Deborah Smith.

Attendees Agencies – Organizations: Jake Woehlecke (Ranch Bot), Nancy Caywood & Patty Caywood (West Pinal NRCD), Ashley Hall (UA Coop Extension), Marty Suter (AZ Dept of Ag) AZGFD, Troy Kelley and Raina Johnson (Southwestern Power Group), Cindy Freeman, Alexiss Adams, & Jack Ford (Rio Sol Transmission), Dan Wolgast & John Windes (TNC), Heather Speith, Mynesha Holliday, & Alisha Phipps (NRCS). Cooperators: Becky Dunn, Francie Meyer, Katie Cline, Catherine Mann, Nick Cline, Roger Beebe and Jennifer Wilson

Hiring Contractor: The Districts will hire and negotiate a contract with two individuals.

Review/Approve Contractor's Invoices: The contractor's invoices to Redington and to Winkelman would be paid immediately. Supervisor Turcotte moved to approve the invoices. No discussion. Supervisor DuBois seconded. **Motion Passed 6-0.**

Redington Supervisor Appointment

Jess Barry moved, and Mo Fisher seconded a motion for Redington to appoint Tyler Williams as their newest Supervisor. Tyler is a resident and landowner in the Redington District.

Motion Passed 3-0.

Approve WNRCD Meeting Minutes: Reviewed minutes 5/17/23, 6/17/23, 7/11/23, Supervisor Turcotte moved to accept the four previous minutes of the Winkelman District. No discussion. Supervisor DuBois seconded. **Motion Passed 3-0.**

WNRCD Financial Report (See Attached Report) & Invoices: District/State funds, \$96,931.30 and \$11,041.74. The Financial Report was reviewed. Steve Turcotte moved to accept the report as of August 31, 2023 & file the financial reports. Carol DuBois seconded. **Motion Passed 3-0.**

AACD Update Deborah Smith reported that the Annual AACD conference was a success. New stakeholders attended and different types of new technology were displayed and discussed. Winkelman, Tonto and Redington NRCDs have worked with partners to implement over \$10 million in conservation practices.

NRCS Update Per Alisha Phipps, Team 7 received a \$1.2 million allocation for general EQIP. Statewide NJRCS has \$8.4 million for the Conservation Stewardship Program. \$800,000 is planned for Tucson. NRCS is taking applications until December.

El Rio Sol Transmission Update (Cindy Freeman):

Sun Zia has sold their project to Pattern Energy. Construction has started in San Manuel. People from Oracle wanted changes because of their designation as a dark sky town. The first line that will be built will deliver DC power. This will give potential power connection capabilities to areas close to the line. The second line will deliver AC power; lines can be intercepted to serve customers along the line. Line 2 is being built by Southwest Power Group who is now owned by the El Rio Sol Transmission Project. Construction of this line is expected to be completed by 2028. Bill Dunn asked if Pattern Energy would be interested in partnering with the Winkelman and Redington NRCDs to complete projects that would preserve natural resources and Pattern Energy said "yes" they would.

Arizona Department of Agriculture Grant Update (Marty Suter):

Marty is the new, Grant Program Coordinator and discussed the Livestock Operator Fire and Flood Assistance Program. It funds landowners and lessees who require reconstruction assistance as a result of infrastructure damage caused by a wildfire and associated flooding. She recommended asking for these funds if a producer has gotten a grant from another program and may have found that due to rising prices some of the existing grants no longer cover the costs to complete projects. Marty is available to help producers write the request for project funds. Funding for these projects is awarded on a quarterly basis. The next two grant submission deadlines are December 29, 2023 & March 29, 2024.

Ranch Bot (Jake Woehlecke)

Jake Woehlecke demonstrated his monitoring system for water in tanks, ponds, etc. It is solar powered and satellite assisted. The software is on your phone; so, you can monitor any time without having to ride out to the water source. Andy Smallhouse has purchased the system and says it saves him a lot of time. He likes the emergency notification on his phone when a tank is completely empty.

CDB Lawsuit Against Coronado National Forest The Center for Biological Diversity (CDB) and the Maricopa Audubon Society sued the Secretary of Interior and Agriculture, the USDA Forest Service (Coronado National Forest) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service seeking an injunction against existing authorized grazing and an injunction against renewal of grazing authorizations and asking the agency to re-consult with FWS. There are 177 grazing allotments in the Coronado National Forest that might be considered, because the petition asks for re-consultation not on critical, but "occupied" habitat of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and Sonoran Chub. The Southern Arizona Cattleman's Protective Association has hired attorney Norman James, a top Endangered Species attorney, to seek intervenor status for it in the lawsuit. The initial attorney fees are estimated around \$25,000.00 just to achieve intervenor status. They are asking each producer who has grazing rights to donate \$1,000.00 to the fund for Mr. James. Katie Cline reported that they have already raised \$30,000.00 and will be holding at least two fundraisers in November. Andy

Smallhouse suggested the Redington district consider trying to join as an intervenor in the lawsuit. No action taken.

UA Coop Extension Ashley Hall stated that she can deliver a course for beginning ranchers. There are other courses she can deliver but prefers to hear what stakeholders in a District want to learn about. They will be conducting workshops for high school students. She asked both Districts to help promote the NRCWY camp at Mingus Mountain for high school aged kids that will occur this summer.

Grants Update: Water Protection Fund (Kyle Thompson, WNRCD Coordinator) Kyle has found resources that can provide plants and seeds for willows. So far, the district is below budget in expending grant funds. There is \$30,000 left to purchase plants and seeds and the district needs to plant several hundred more plants per our Water Protection Fund grant.

Adjourn Meeting Andy Smallhouse moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:12 pm. Seconded by Carol Dubois. **Motion Passed 6-0.**

The proposed date for the next WNRCD meeting is November 15, 2023

WRMC & RNRCD Education Center Combined Meeting

Call to Order The combined meeting of The Winkelman Natural Resource Management Center and Redington NRCD Ed Center was called to order at 1:02 pm.

West Pinal Ed Center Nancy Caywood, Director of the West Pinal NRCD Education Center gave a presentation about the activities of their robust Ed Center programs. Nancy has created many lesson plans about agriculture and food production. The Ed Center continues to use those plans. Jennifer Salcido visits school classrooms and presents interactive lessons. Nancy also has her own business where she has groups come to her farm and she gives lessons there, often gives hayrides and tours of the farm. 3,000 people visit her farm each year. Each group usually participates in 3 or 4 fifteen-minute lessons. Nancy said if the districts were to use their model they should get sufficient insurance. Nancy said that both American Family Life and the AZ Farm Bureau sell Agri-tourism insurance. She invited us to attend one of their programs.

Financials The following invoices were discussed & approved: Irrigation project for Dudleyville property:

- Bill Dunn presented invoices for materials purchased to complete the irrigation system. This could be a research project to determine the value of this new, less expensive technology. Supervisor Turcotte moved to approve all invoices. Supervisor DuBois seconded the motion. **Motion passed 3-0**

Pinal County Grant Update & Strategy Plan Tabled.

Adjourn Meeting At 1:25 pm, Carol Dubois moved to adjourn. Seconded by Jess Barry. The meeting was adjourned.

Final Minutes Submitted by: Chris Postel & Liz Tuck

Date: 11/15/2023

Approval of Minutes: _____

Date: _____