



WINKELMAN NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Quarterly Meeting

October 21, 2015

Draft Minutes

October 21, 2015
Aravaipa Canyon Ranch

The meeting was called to order at 10:37 a.m.

Board and Staff

Bill Dunn, Francie Meyer, Steve Turcotte, Gary Vinson, Carol DuBois (Absent), Hattie Hedrick (Absent), Chris Postel (clerk)

Agencies

Kristen Egen (NRCS), Rana Tucker (Az Game & Fish),

Members and Guests

Becky Dunn, Rick Bader, Sam Hosler (Town of Kearny), Beverly Miller, Donna Woods, Stan & Molly Yoder, Jack & Catherine Mann, Samuel Reidhead, Pat Reed, Catherine Reed, Cathy Foster, Rod Prast

Minutes of Past Meetings

Discussion minutes: 07/15/2015, Francie Meyer moved to accept the minutes. Gary Vinson seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report- Tabled
Approval of Bills: none presented

New Business

- **SunZia Status:** Winkelman and Redington are negotiating agreement(s) with SunZia to insure that conditions (aerial construction, no co-location, no new roads, etc) are put into the CEC. Chris Postel is attending these hearings. Our main goal is to protect the natural resources and to be able to serve in an advisement capacity (planning, re-habitation, monitor erosion).
- **Pinal Rural Fire District:** The Pinal Rural Fire District was approved on August 26 by Pinal County and will cover 307 square miles. They have 3 ambulances, 1 structure fire truck and 2 wild land fire trucks. Based on receiving operational funding, they plan to be operational by 2/1/2016. They will be applying for grants and have hire Rob Prast as the fire chief. Arizona State Forest has been very helpful during this 3 year process.
- **Add CAC student paper, "Taylor Grazing Act," on the WNRCD website:** Francie Meyer read the student's paper (See attached) and all agreed to add to the website and face book page.

Old Business

- **Sonoran Desert Tortoise Listing Status:** The tortoise was ruled not to be endangered due to the influence of the Meyer's 20 year study and the District's adoption and publishing of the Best Management Practices.
- **District Facebook Page Committee report:** Jane Turcotte. The face book page is live. Last week, the page had 484 sharings and 86 likes. Links will be added to the Arizona State Association and WNRCD websites. The WNRCD website will also add a link to the face book page. The most reviewed post (Amber Barton) was about the problems created by trespassers, such as trash & 4x4 off road vehicles.

- **Kearny River Fire Initiative:** Rena Tucker, Kristen Eagen. Still working on permits, funding sources, and area plans. It is estimated that the Tamarisk Beetle will be within the watershed in about 2-3 years.
- **Regional Conservation Partnership Program:** The Pre-proposal was submitted on July 8 but we were not selected for the next proposal step. The denial reasons will be analyzed and would be used to determine if it makes sense to re-submit next year.
- **Tonto National Forest Coordination:** No change in status
- **Ray Federal Credit Union Checking Account:** Two checking accounts were opened. Also, the CU assisted with the copying (5 reams of paper were used) and assembly of the 18 notebooks.

Reports from Agency Personnel

- **NRCS:** Kristen Egen. See Attached report. With 8 active contracts, ongoing conservation planning at: Rail 3 and Triangle Bar. Next EQIP ranking deadline is 1/8/16. Every quarter, the applications are being ranked. NRCS has a lot of job openings, with few applications in critical areas. Is the District interested in having a Drone work shop?
- **AZ Game and Fish** – Rana Tucker. Looking for a new ranch manager for the Triangle Bar and the bid process deadline is October 20. She is working on a Coordinated Resource Plan and needs volunteers. Game Branch has a new newsletter and will send the PDF copy to the District to be posted on the website.
- **BLM, State Land Department & USFS** - none

The meeting was suspended for lunch at 11:58 and resumed at 12:51.

Supervisors Reports

- **Bill Dunn** –
 - The **State Association** received a \$3,000,000 grant (5 years) for brush management that will be matched by NRCS. These brush management projects will be conducted by the Districts. So, a Local Work Group needs to be scheduled to identify areas/needs and prioritize them.
 - State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) – Frank Pratt (Arizona State Legislature) will hold hearings to investigate the problems and issues, permits/applications are being held up due to the time that it takes to conduct an archaeological survey. Supervisor(s) would attend these hearings.
 - Arizona State Land – Bill is scheduled to meet with Lisa Atkins, Commissioner, on November 2 to discuss that the NRCDs should be organized as a separate division. The status of hiring Amber’s replacement and what the District can do to assist. Also, the status of SunZia CEC application, especially the terms & conditions to insure that the Districts will be used as advisors or consultants before/during construction and in the maintenance phase.
- **Steve Turcotte** – Gov. Ducey’s office has convened a committee to shorten the review process for improvements (well, fence, etc) on State Land (Producers with Grazing Leases). Based on this new process, total processing time was estimated to be reduced from 180 to 90 days. Currently, State Land is using the new process on 3 test cases and Steve’s request is one of them. Based on Steve’s conversations with State Land, they think that the overall processing time will be about 60 days.
- There were no other reports from the Supervisors

Call to the Public

Sam Hosler, Kearny Mayor, thanked everyone for their efforts on the Kearny River Fire Initiative and the support from the WNRCD.

Donna Woods, please sign the petition to recall Diane Douglas, State Schools Superintendent.

Education Center Meeting: Tabled.

Executive Session: SunZia status and discussion. Convened at 1:30 and adjourned at 1:55

Steve Turcotte made a motion to empower Bill Dunn to negotiate, finalize and sign the Terms & Conditions document. Francie Meyer seconded the motion. Discussion: Point #7, does “life of the project” need to be defined, in the CEC application or should it be defined in terms of years (20,30 etc). No further discussion. All supervisors approved the motion. Motion carried.

The Winkelman NRCD Quarterly meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Minutes Submitted by: Chris Postel, Winkelman NRCD Clerk

Date: October 22, 2015

Approval of Minutes: _____

Date: _____

Winkelman NRCD Quarterly Meeting – October 22, 2015