



WINKELMAN NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Quarterly Meeting June 16, 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, Hattie Hedrick (Absent), Kyle Thompson (WNRCD Coordinator), and Chris Postel (WNRCD Clerk).

Agencies - Organizations

Alisha Phipps (NRCS), Chad Nichols (Pinal County Sherriff), Deb Smith (AACD), Mario Preciado (AZ State Land Department), Tom O'Connor (Kearny Town Council), Kami Ballard & Ana Vargas (Resolution Copper), Cindy Freeman (Sunzia), and Daniel & Tommy Dean, Katie & Sarah Cline, Becky Dunn (Cooperators).

Minutes of Past Meetings

Reviewed minutes 2/17/21, 3/12/21 & 4/13/21. Barbara McGuire moved to accept the minutes with changes. No discussion. Gary Vinson seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Financial Report (See Attached Report): District/State funds, \$33,929.59 and \$24,393.58. The Financial Report was reviewed. Steve Turcotte moved to accept and file the financial reports. Carol DuBois seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Old Business

Grant Update:

AZ Water Protection Fund Grant (See Attached Update & Knight Invoice): Per Kyle, a draft restoration plan has been created, vegetation surveys completed, site visits by the Arizona Conservation Corps carried out, plant purchase agreements completed with the Oracle Community Garden, and soil sampling and salinity testing done by NRCS. However, 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 FWS. The AZ Water Protection Fund Grant manager has offered to get in touch with FWS to determine why there is a hold up.

Pinal County Partnership Grant: Per Bill Dunn, we are due 2 payments (\$22,250) after the 2nd quarter report has been submitted (Due July 14). We need to review the budget vs actual spent to determine if funds need to be obligated. Per Steve Turcotte, the funds need to be obligated by June 30.

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. A new grant proposal is being created to fund an additional round of tanks in the district that is due September 1. Site visits have been done, and currently, a proposal is being written.

New Business

AACD Summer Conference (Deb Smith): The conference will address the following resolutions:

Conservation Easements, OHV Mitigation, and 30x30. These resolutions are still being revised. A session will be held on "How to Conduct a Local Work Group meeting." The conference is Aug 9-11 and the registration fee is \$75. The Wigwam hotel room rate is \$96/day (Federal rate). Bill Dunn, Steve Turcotte,

Carol DuBois, Senator Barbara McGuire, and Kyle Thompson will attend the conference. The Clerk will register them but each person needs to make their own hotel reservation.

AACD Update (Deb Smith)

- Soils Health bill has just passed, funding up to \$10 million for soil practices. A Soil Health committee needs to be formed to develop a Soils Health program. A lobbyist needs to be hired.
- House Bill (#2001) would provide \$70 million for fire & reclamation work, no cap for fences or water lines. This will be a special session.
- An AACD professional development program will be rolled out in August.
- Grant writing support is available.
- 2021 AACD dues will be sent out in August.
- The CONSERVE AZ magazine is out and will be twice/year. The goal is to educate the public.
- AACD Newsletter can be saved as a PDF now.
- AACD needs photos for marketing.

AACD Resolutions:

- Pima 30x30: Bill Dunn moved to have the WNRCD support the Resolution. No discussion. Barbara McGuire seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
- White Water Draw Conservation Easements: Tabled
- Coconino OHV Mitigation: Barbara McGuire moved to have the WNRCD support the Resolution. No discussion. Steve Turcotte seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Sunzia Update (Cindy Freeman, Environmental Manager): The project has been going on for 9 years with a focus on securing right-of-ways by year-end. Permitting will be done in 2021-2022. Construction is scheduled to start by the end of 2022 with commercial operations starting in 2025. Since 2018, they have been working on an application to get a BLM re-route and updated EIS due to the military White Sands area. A substation (Sunzia West) is being planned near Red Rock and will have 2 inter-connection points.

The meeting was suspended at 12:19 for potluck and resumed at 1:02

Resolution Update (Kami Ballard): Nothing to report, they are still working on their EIS.

Telegraph Fire Update: Tabled

State Land Reports: The Ed Center (Direct Payment) requested amount should be changed to \$60,000.

Reports from Agencies & Other Organizations

NRCS (Alisha Phipps and Tom Reis – See Report): NRCS is updating 2 ranch plans. Now, 7 team is comprised of the Sells, Tucson and Douglas offices. In terms of EQIP, 17 applications have been funded, 3 from Winkelman (all rangeland). In terms of CSP, 7 applications have been received. Local Workgroup Meeting requirements need to be gathered by July 30th this year. In place of a meeting, it was suggested to have a questionnaire/survey sent out. After the results are compiled, a teleconference will be conducted to discuss the results and any other concerns or questions.

Az State Land Department (Mario Preciado): Nothing new to report. 3 staff cover the entire state regarding trespassing.

Arizona Game and Fish (Per Alison Haywood's Email): We have a new Terrestrial Wildlife Program Manager, Kirby Bristow. Deer and javelina tags have been reduced in many units, mainly due to drought conditions. Please let us know if you are finding any wildlife that appears to have died due to drought conditions. 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.

Pinal County Sheriff's Office (Deputy Sheriff Chad Nichols): The Deputies have been moving game cameras around to try and catch fence cutters.

Reports from Supervisors & District Staff:

Kyle Thompson: For the Resource Assessment Project, he has been collecting and compiling information. He has been contacting other agencies and Cooperators regarding their projects and resource concerns. The report and action plan will be completed in the Fall. So far, NRCS has not given any Resource Assessment funding to AACD.

Call to the Public: None

Adjourn: Gary Vinson made a motion to Adjourn the meeting at 1:42 pm. Carol DuBois seconded it. Motion carried. 5-0

Final Minutes Submitted by: Chris Postel, WNRCD Clerk

Date: September 15, 2021

Approval of Minutes: _____

Date: _____