

Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District (HNRCD)

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 16, 2020

Palominas Fire District Training Center Facility

9222 S Kings Ranch Rd, Hereford, AZ 85615

A. Call to Order

Chairman John Ladd called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m.

B. Introductions

Board Present: Lucinda Earven, Mike Hayhurst, Steve Boice, John Ladd

Board Absent: Jim Lindsey

Others Present: Don Decker, NRCS,
Jack Ladd, HNRCD Board Advisor
Kathy Morris, HNRCD Cooperator
Joanne Roberts, HNRCD Board Clerk

C. Call to the Public: NONE PRESENT

D. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

1. Regular Meeting August 19, 2020

Motion: Chairman John Ladd moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 19, 2020 as written.

Second: Supervisor Hayhurst seconded the motion.

Vote: Carried unanimously.

Discussion: None.

2. Special Meeting, August 31, 2020

Motion: Supervisor Hayhurst moved to approve the special meeting minutes of August 31, 2020 as written.

Second: Vice Chair Lucinda Earven seconded the motion.

Vote: Carried unanimously.

Discussion: Chairman Ladd stated that at recent NCBA meeting they changed the way they motion for approval and asked if the Board wanted to consider using, "all in favor, any opposed" as a standard motion. After a brief discussion on Robert Rules of Order, it was determined not to make any changes.

E. Agency and Committee Reports

1. USPP: Vice Chair Lucinda Earven reported the regular quarterly meeting scheduled in August was cancelled. It is scheduled for some time in November 2020. She further stated the Technical Committee meeting was also canceled and it is scheduled for 21 October, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. at the Sierra Vista City Hall building. Ms. Earven does not normally attend the Technical Committee meetings.

A brief discussion on what agencies and organization attends and the value of the Regular Meeting ensued when Chairman Ladd inquired as to the last time the Regular Meeting was held. Ms. Earven will remain as the Board's primary contact for this group.

2. NRCS: Don Decker provided a handout on the procedure for reopening the NRCS local office. He highlighted the office status due to Covid-19. The office is still closed to customers and the staff alternate between an office and telework schedule. If any signatures are required, business is conducted in an open venue like a park.

Mr. Decker stated there is a Farm Production and Conservation- NRCS (FPAC) 3-phase criteria for opening an office with each phase having 14 days associated with each phase. This is a federally driven process that is initiated through the State when the numbers of Covid-19 occurrences are met. Phase 1 has not begun but individual offices can petition to move into the phase procedure.

A brief discussion on the criteria for attending physical meetings, when the new Douglas office opened initially before the Covid-19 closure, and when the office is reopened for receiving customers, the HNRCD would like to schedule a Regular Board Meeting in the new office.

Chairman Ladd requested an update on the White-Water Draw (WWD) – HNRCD Grant. Mr. Decker stated he had a conversation with Deborah Smith a month ago and they (AACD) had received the money but it was unclear when they were going to implement. She thought perhaps in September. However, the new staff person had not been hired. It was confirmed the grant was for both WWD and HNRCD even though when the grant award announcement came out, it only listed WWD. It was explained that this was most likely because HNRCD is not a member of the NACD (which is another item on today's Agenda). Mr. Decker confirmed that \$7000.00 was HNRCD contribution and WWD would be responsible for administration and workshops.

Chairman Ladd inquired on the Equip cycle. Mr. Decker did not have hard dates but believed the cut off would occur in December 2020 and NRCS would have everything submitted in Spring; likely late March 2021. He further noted that last minute air quality Equip money became available because a tribe turned down \$800,000.00. Cochise County is designated as eligible because it is a county of air quality concern. Generally, air quality does not affect the range but is used for farmlands. Air quality historically has never been brought up as a high resource concern in Cochise County with the exception of the dust abatement with the Highway 10 issue. Mr. Decker noted that six contracts were derived from the money compared to just one contract for the tribe.

Chairman Ladd mentioned the recruitment for the air quality committee but again noted it has never been a real resource concern.

- 3. USFS:** No one present to report.
- 4. BLM:** No one present to report.
- 5. AZGFD:** No one present to report.

6. CCRN: Chairman Ladd reported on an article written in the July – August 2020 Military Engineer Technical Times where the Horseshoe Draw aquifer recharge project was acknowledged. Chairman

Ladd received the information in a CCRN newsletter. He stated Horseshoe Draw had water four times this season even though there has not been much rain. He confirmed the water came from Mexico.

A brief discussion on how much recharge was recorded for 2019, how much was attributed to evaporation, and applied versus reasonable evaporation calculations. Chairman Ladd stated that flowmeters were installed in 2015 but the only data analyzed and released was from 2019. Vice Chair Earven inquired as to why the other years were not analyzed and who was responsible for collecting and analyzing the data. It is a Nature Conservancy contract and Chairman Ladd has spoken to the Nature Conservancy program coordinator but was not provided detailed information on why the earlier data has not been analyzed. He further informed the Supervisors that they have not/will not use the data collected from the drone work conducted by Mary Darling. In addition, recharge from above the inlet in Horseshoe Draw is not calculated and the discharge side is soaking in water but is not calculated.

7. SLRP: Supervisor Hayhurst noted he was aware of a meeting sometime in October but had not received any additional information. Vice Chair Earven stated she received an update earlier today (September 16) via email and the meeting is scheduled for October 28, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in Tucson at the Abrams Health Center, 3950 Country Club Road. The notification was sent from Alanna Riggs to the District's email address and forwarded by Joanne Roberts to the Supervisors. The meeting is in person and each Supervisor needs to reply to the invitation.

8. ADEQ: No one from the Agency was present to report. However, Chairman Ladd informed the Supervisors he had heard that ADEQ still has one-million dollars of grant money available. Vice Chair Earven inquired as to why CCRN does not approach them and Supervisor Hayhurst wanted to know what happened to Hans Huth from the Agency.

Chairman Ladd stated the grant money was originally available for Horseshoe Draw because e.coli was detected and CCRN does not have any contaminate projects. They have sediment runoff but the trigger to apply for ADEQ money is the presence of a contaminate like e.coli.

Supervisor Hayhurst stated ADEQ had been to his ranch ten times looking for projects. But he was unable to match money for projects that he can do himself. He discussed projects with ADEQ such as filling in ditches and building cattle exclusion fences.

F. District Financial Reports

1. Payment Schedule

Motion: Supervisor Hayhurst moved to authorize payment of items 1-3 on the Payment Schedule.

Second: Vice Chair Earven seconded the motion.

Vote: Carried unanimously.

Discussion: Vice Chair Earven stated that Item 3 (Homestead monthly fee) should not be under the education payment category according to Supervisor Jim Lindsey, Treasurer. Further discussion on what payment category it should be applied to and whether it is still necessary to stipulate the category based on conversations with Debra Smith.

Handouts of reconciled credit card statements were provided to and approved by the Board.

Motion was withdrawn.

New Motion: Vice Chair Earven moved to accept the payment of items 1-3 on the Payment Schedule with the payment category removed for item 3.

Second: Chairman Ladd seconded the motion.

Vote: Carried unanimously.

Discussion: Chairman Ladd stated the category needs to be clarified.

2. Financial Reports—File for Audit

Motion: Supervisor Boice moved to file the financial reports for audit.

Second: Supervisor Hayhurst seconded the motion.

Vote: Carried unanimously.

Discussion: None.

G. Old Business

1. Wildlife Attractors Workshop: Supervisor Boice stated the event is still on hold. The U of A (south) is not fully open. Cooperator Kathy Morris indicated that we should wait until people want to attend and Supervisor Boice agreed that we should not be in a hurry to reschedule it if people are not willing to attend.

A brief discussion about capturing winter/seasonal visitors, examples of some events that recently took place where attendance appeared to be lower than usual, the reason for having the event at the U of A (south) and appropriate season for flowering plants.

Vice Chair Earven and Supervisor Boice both stated that the event should be rescheduled for next spring; possibly late February or March. Chairman Ladd thought perhaps May. Supervisor Boice stated he did not know Jan's (Groth of Cochise County Master Gardeners, U of A South) schedule which led to Vice Chair Earven stating the topic should be tabled for now and moved back onto the Agenda in 3 to 4 months.

2. HNRCD October Meeting Date Change: Joanne Roberts reported the Cochise County Complex building was closed this month and most likely will to be closed in October to the public. She is waiting for a re-confirmation from the Cochise County Clerk as to whether the previous reservation made by Kathy Morris for October 13 is still viable. Ms. Roberts indicated that if it is not, and if everyone is amenable she will try to schedule the Palominas Fire District Training Center for October 21 which is the normal third Wednesday of the month meeting date. With everyone in agreement, Ms. Roberts stated she would advise the Board.

3. Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Letter of Support: Chairman Ladd inquired if Ms. Sharma Torrens had given any indication of when the Executive Action would be competed. Ms. Roberts stated when she spoke with Ms. Torrens that she hoped it would be in November or December but believed it would most likely be after the first of the year.

The Supervisors all agreed that they support writing the letter but until they see the template letter that Ms. Torrens presents, no action can be taken. Supervisor Boice asked to be reminded what exactly the grant was to be used for.

Mr. Decker stated that Ms. Torrens's AACD grant was for a series of workshops advertising the Conservation Stewardship Program. He further stated office wide there were 10 applicants and only two were funded. It was a poor funding ratio across the state. Because a need has been shown through this years' application, next year should have be better outcome if producers are willing to apply.

Supervisor Boice and Chairman Ladd stated that it was a lot of work with 80 different variables. Mr. Decker noted the successful applicants demonstrated a complexity of operations and the more willing the applicant was to do things like planting large acreage of pollinating species the more points the application received. He also believes there is a lot of eastern bias and variables that are not applicable to this area.

Supervisor Boice stated he began the process but for him the cost benefit was not worth the time he put into it.

H. New Business

1. National Association of Conservation Districts Dues: Cooperator Morris led the discussion with stating that the last time the District paid dues was in 2013. Previous discussions on this topic and the benefits of being a member led to putting this item on the Agenda. Ms. Roberts read off the contribution levels and Supervisor Boice thought an appropriate level would be \$250.00 (Bronze).

Additional discussion on the State membership in which the District paid \$1500.00 this year, where the membership dues come from (state or local), and the District has already seen the benefit through the Farm Specialist position grant.

Motion: Supervisor Boice moved to pay \$250.00 for Bronze level National Association of Conservation Districts membership.

Second: Vice Chair Earven seconded the motion.

Vote: Carried unanimously.

Discussion: None.

2. Automatic Pay Deposit: Chairman Ladd asked what this was referring to. Vice Chair Earven stated it is for Ms. Roberts monthly pay to be automatically deposited into her bank account. However, the bank would charge the District a \$25.00 monthly fee for this service. The Supervisors agreed to keep the monthly payments via hard check. No action was taken.

I. Education Programs

1. Tombstone High School Ag Program: Supervisor Lindsey was not available to report. However, Supervisor Hayhurst advised the Board that the equipment purchased for the welding program had not been used and are still in unopened boxes. He further stated the District has been very willing to support the Tombstone Agriculture Program as has the School Superintendent but nothing is happening.

A lengthy discussion on what changes have occurred in the program, what the breakdown has been, what events, activities, or supplies have been purchased with the \$10,000.00 that the District provided to the program. Supervisor Hayhurst stated he believed there were 50 students enrolled but also believes many of these students do not have interest in agriculture and are taking the course for a science credit in place of chemistry or other biology classes. Supervisor Boice stated the greenhouse was not functioning when the soils workshop took place. The Board agreed they would like to continue to support Tombstone but they need to be accountable and perhaps with a reduction in funds.

Motion: Supervisor Boice moved to invite Tombstone Superintendent, the Principal, and the Agriculture Program teacher to the October's regular Board Meeting to provide a detailed progress report on the status of the Program and expenditures of funds.

Second: Vice Chair Earven seconded the motion.

Vote: Carried unanimously.

Discussion: If they are not able to attend in October, then an in-person presentation with the progress report will be requested for the November regular Board Meeting.

Cooperator Morris stated she thought Supervisor Lindsey should contact the Program Administrators.

A brief exchange on what other local high schools have FAA programs. Mr. Decker confirmed that Douglas and Elfrieda has active programs but Palominas does not.

A brief discussion for holding recipients more accountable to the District through time specified reports and presentations.

2. San Pedro Spirits 4-H Group: Supervisor Boice reported he initially contacted the 4-H group to inquire if they wanted to organize a fundraiser at the Wildlife Attractors Workshop. He has since followed up with the three Directors and spoke directly with Kim (Fox). She in turn sent a letter of appreciation for their conversation and identified ways the District might be able to assist the group members. A list of items was provided and the Board discussed where some items could be donated from individuals, what vendors could be contacted, and where the District might be able to provide financial support.

Supervisor Boice will follow up on costing items, contacting individuals and vendors. From Supervisor Boice's report, the Board was encouraged by the student's enthusiasm and want to work with groups that are fired up.

Supervisor Boice will extend an invitation to the 4-H group Directors to provide a presentation to the Board at the regular November 2020 Board Meeting.

Verification on whether State or Local Education Funds can be used is needed.

J. Correspondence: Two membership renewals and a Forestry Newsletter.

K. Supervisor Comments: Vice Chair Earven received an e-mail this morning from Jackie Thomas on local working groups. This should be on next month's Agenda under New Business.

Mr. Decker said he can help lead the process. He can send the Board all the information on forming work groups. He noted he has to submit a report on working group results on/by November 30. He stated that most working groups meet by teleconference. There are some Districts with local work groups and others without. NRCS highly encourages them and realizes the HNRCD has not had one for years.

A lengthy discussion on how hard it is to get agencies to come to meetings and types of venues that would encourage participation. Chairman Ladd stated Ralph Ware promoted work groups over a year ago but we have all the agencies represented at the Board Meetings so we did not want to participate in work groups. He also noted that in the last ten years only AGFD and NRCS have entered into agreements with the District's conservation practices. It was suggested the Board organize a very focused local work group meeting with the government agencies to discuss conservation projects, to exchange agency specific information, and to identify the District's most important conservation needs.

Ms. Roberts briefly reviewed her ideas for relaunching the HNRCD newsletter in the first quarter of 2021, updating cooperator membership renewal forms to include preferences for digital or hard copy newsletters, updating the webpage, and reaching out to the Supervisors, cooperators, and organizations

for articles, photographs, and news items. She also will be attempting to use ZIP files for large number of e-mail attachments. Supervisors should advise if they are unable to open the file.

Supervisor Hayhurst provided informational personal observations about the upland treatments on his property. He discussed what grasses were present immediately post treatment and what is now present after 3 years of sight specific drought on his property. Mr. Decker noted that NRCS has long- term monitoring plots on Supervisor Hayhurst’s property and it might be interesting to revive them next season.

Chairman Ladd discussed replacement advisors and whether or not the Board wants to pursue replacing or adding advisors. It is always an issue of participation. Some people who had been approached ultimately did not want to engage for one reason or another. Vice Chair Earven asked what the difference is between an Advisor and Cooperator. Ms. Roberts inquired about a position description for the Advisor. The Board agreed to add this topic to the October regular Board Meeting.

Supervisor Boice reported on the September 14,2020 AACD meeting. A link to the meeting presentation is posted on the AACD webpage. Supervisor Boice emphasized the amount of funding for FY2021, the hiring of an Archaeologist (Scott Cortwright) and a staff archeologist in two or three weeks. He included a brief summary on the NRCS opening phase procedures already discussed by Mr. Decker, the need for local work groups and active collaboration with AACD staff for the content of their new website. He reported on website features such as, a new GIS mapping program that will coordinate State and Federal data layers with a planned roll out next summer, a reference library and need for district information and photographs. Additionally, the AACD board will remain in elected positions for a two- year term. He informed the Board of the development of a new magazine called “Conserve Arizona”, a new strategy to write bills and then present them to the legislators at a “sitting in on the lawn” event at the State Capital, the use of social media, and the development of outreach and education lesson plans. The winter AACD meeting date and location/venue is TBD.

Supervisor Boice stated there is a planned Empire Ranch Biological Planning Workshop with a Tour after the classroom style meeting for November 20. However, due to the Covid-19 situation, the meeting may or may not take place. The workshop incorporates multiple stakeholders and discusses improvement on the biological resource and processes on the Empire Ranch. He is keen to replicate this process for the SPRNCA. Cooperator Morris expressed concern that the newest BLM RMP cattle allotments were limited and the District is involved with a lawsuit that wants to eliminate the existing allotments. Further discussion on the differences between the Empire Ranch – Las Cienegas and the SPRNCA groups. It was asked if Supervisor Boice was suggesting the District host a Biological Planning Workshop and Tour. He responded not necessarily but the Board and partners need to figure out how to bring SPRNCA users into the same respectful conversation on the management and uses of its biological resources.

L. Future Meetings / Agenda Items:

HNRCD Regular Meeting

Tuesday, October 13 or, Wednesday, October 21, 2020 9:00 a.m.
TBD depending on meeting room availability. Ms. Roberts to confirm and report.

May include Telephonic option in addition to physical location: TBD

Agenda Items

Sharma Torrens – RCCP Template Letter of Support- [October](#)

Tombstone FAA Program Report and Presentation- [October](#)

Local Working Group - Don Decker – Presentation on the processes and what will be required for the November report - [October](#)

**New Advisors – Benefits and Need for Replacement (see Job Description in the Handbook) -
October**
San Pedro 4-H - November
Debra Smith – Overview of her program – November
Wildlife Attractors Workshop- December

Work Group Meeting
TBD

M. Adjournment: Chairman Ladd adjourned the meeting at 11:53 a.m.

Approved by the Board _____
(Date)

Signed _____
(John Ladd, Chairman)

ACCRONYMS

AACD	Arizona Association of Conservation Districts
ADEQ	Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
AIM	Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring Strategy (BLM program)
ALWT	Arizona Land and Water Trust
ASLD	Arizona State Land Department
AZGFD	Arizona Game and Fish Department
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CCRN	Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network
CRM	Coordinated Resource Management
CSP	Conservation Stewardship Program
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FFA	Future Farmers of America
FLPMA	Federal Land Planning and Management Act
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
NC	Nature Conservancy
HPC	Habitat Partnership Committees
HNRC	Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NACD	National Association of Conservation Districts

NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRCWAY	Natural Resource Conservation Workshop for Arizona Youth
RCPP	Regional Conservation Partnership Program
RMP	Resource Management Plan
SARC	Small Acreage Resource Concerns
SHPO	State Historical Preservation Office
SLRP	Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape Restoration Partnership
SPRNCA	San Pedro River National Conservation Area
SRM	Society for Range Management
THS	Tombstone High School
U of A	University of Arizona
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
USPP	Upper San Pedro Partnership
USPO	United States Post Office
WOTUS	Waters of the United States
WPF	Water Protection Fund

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