

COMMISSIONERS  
Steve Glass, Region I  
Vacant, Region II  
Duston L. Hunt, Region III  
Gabe Estrada, Region IV  
Tom Sidwell, Region V  
John Norris, Region VI  
Cyle Sharp, At-Large

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**New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) Meeting**  
**Raton Convention Center**  
**901 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street**  
**Raton, NM**  
**Wednesday, October 30, 2019**  
**3:15pm**  
**Draft Minutes**

All items for discussion and possible action

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: Commissioners Glass and Estrada were absent. Commissioner Sidwell attended via phone-closed roads due to bad weather conditions prevented attendance. All other commissioners were present-see roll call.
2. Approval of Agenda: Commissioner Norris moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Sharp seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (07/08/2019): Commissioner Sidwell moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Norris seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
4. Open Meetings Resolution: Commissioner Norris moved to approve the open meetings resolution. Commissioner Sharp seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**New Business**

5. Public Comment (*2 minutes per person*): Mary Jo Fahl (NM Resource Conservation and Development-RC&D) reported the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development (NMARCD) council entered into an agreement with NM Farm and Livestock Bureau to help with the Ag. in the Classroom program. Cody Cummings is contact person for Ag in the Classroom and is reaching out to SWCC and SWCDs to collaborate and educate everyone on the program.
6. Appointed Supervisors
  - Colfax: Kimberly Barmann (7)

- Valencia: Sue Small (6), Richard Bonnie (7)
- Central Curry: KC Schooley (7)

Commissioner Sharp moved to approve the appointed supervisors. Commissioner Sidwell seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

7. WQ&C Grant FY2021 RFP approval (NMDA): Commissioner Sidwell moved to approve the RFP. Commissioner Norris seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
8. Resolution regarding watershed district election law changes (Dusty Hunt): Chair Hunt presented the resolution that would allow landowners to vote in watershed district elections and serve on watershed district boards. Per the current state election law, a person must reside within the district boundary in order to vote or serve on the board. A major issue is there are many landowners that have significant acreage within watershed district boundaries, but don't reside there, and are taxed through mil levies. This is taxation without representation. Mary Jo Fahl (RC&D) stated a watershed district under Caballo SWCD has only 1 landowner that actually lives in the watershed district, so the current law essentially eliminates the district. Chair Hunt said the resolution was presented to NMACD and this issue would be presented to the appropriate state legislators.
9. Spotted owl court injunction regarding timber harvest-Forest Service (James Melonas): Mr. Melonas wasn't in attendance, so no report was given. Howard Hutchinson (San Francisco SWCD) gave a summary of the issue. Wild Earth Guardians maintained the forest service wasn't maintaining accurate records or doing enough to protect the Mexican spotted owl, and got the courts to issue an injunction against timber harvesting and other activities in New Mexico national forests. This prevents wood gathering/harvesting for fuel and cooking, as well as Christmas tree cutting, including the National Christmas tree. The court granted a special dispensation to allow for fuel woodcutting/gathering. The court is considering whether Christmas trees can be cut, and the Forest Service issued a press release stating people will be able to harvest Christmas trees, fuel wood, and limited tree thinning.
10. Legislative update (NMACD): Debbie Hughes presented a draft bill about a Natural Resource Trust Fund Act that may be presented in the upcoming legislative session.

Potential issues in the upcoming session are methane rules and tax changes and labor laws.

### **Old Business**

11. Health Soils Program (NMDA): Julie Maitland presented an update on the healthy soils program (HSP). The deadline for proposal submission is November 6<sup>th</sup>, at 5pm.
12. Workforce Development (NMDA): Julie Maitland reported the Agriculture Workforce Development (AWD) webpage will be published October 31<sup>st</sup>.
13. Region III MOU with Forest Service: Chair Hunt stated there is no MOU yet.

### **Reports/Verbal Highlights (5 min. each; written reports required 72 hours in advance)**

14. Commissioners: Commissioner Norris: There is a pilot project to repurpose water to get it up to EPA standards. The issue is once the water is rehabilitated, the oil company owns it. Eventually, all the water could be lost to oil company use. Commissioner Sidwell: Southwest Quay has no one running in 2 of the positions up for election. Chair Hunt reported incumbent supervisors are participating in election forums. The other commissioners had no report at this time.
15. Governor's Office: none
16. New Mexico Department of Agriculture: Julie Maitland had no other information other than the previously reported HSP and AWD.
17. Natural Resources Conservation Service: Xavier Montoya reported the new Farm Bill isn't completed yet, but hopefully there will be new rules in December.
18. Forest Service: none
19. Farm Service Agency: none
20. New Mexico Environment Department: none
21. Water Quality Control Commission: Howard Hutchinson gave the highlights of the WQCC minutes-see minutes.
22. National Association of Conservation Districts: Brent Van Dyke reported the next NACD meeting is February 8-12, 2020 in Las Vegas, NV.

23. New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts: Debbie Hughes presented the NMACD annual report, the TSP employee report, and the executive highlights-see reports.
24. New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts: none
25. NMSU College of Agriculture: none
26. New Mexico Conservation District Employees: Melissa May reported the annual meeting will be around January 21, 2020, and requested any new contact information from all the SWCDs.
27. Next Meeting: TBA
28. Adjourn: Commissioner Sharp moved to adjourn. Commissioner Norris seconded and the motion passed unanimously.