

COMMISSIONERS
Steve Glass, Region I
Ross Garcia, Jr., Region II
Jennie Bierner, Region III
Boe Lopez, Region IV
Clint Harden, Region V
Eddie Vigil, Region VI
Cyle Sharp, At-Large

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New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) Meeting
Via teleconference
Wednesday, March 23, 2022
9:00 am
Minutes

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: Commissioner Harden joined the meeting late; all other commissioners were present-see roll call
2. Approval of Agenda: Commissioner Glass moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Bierner seconded and the motion passed by all present commissioners.
3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (06/22/2021): Commissioner Garcia moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Sharp seconded and the motion passed by all present commissioners.

New Business

4. Public Comment (*2 minutes per person*): none
5. Mil Levy Resolutions:
 - ChavesCommissioner Glass moved to approve the mil levy resolution. Commissioner Garcia seconded and the motion passed by all present commissioners.
6. Appointed Supervisor Approvals:
 - Chaves: John Sisk (6), Cody Munson (7)Commissioner Sharp moved to approve the supervisors. Commissioner Lopez seconded and the motion passed by all present commissioners.
7. Agricultural Workforce Development (AWD) Internship Program update: Katie Mechenbier (NMDA) gave an update of the program. Currently, the program has 24

interns throughout the estate; \$118,075 has been awarded with \$6,924 remaining. The deadline for applications is April 1, 2022.

8. Healthy Soil Program (HSP) grant update: Katie Goetz (NMDA) and Dean Bruce (NMDA) gave an update of the program. Mr. Bruce reported the FY23 application period opened Mar 18th, and will end May 12th at 5:00pm. There is \$1 million for the program. Ms. Goetz showed the HSP web page and gave a brief overview of the page, including links to recorded webinars, FAQs and the application. Mr. Bruce highlighted the eligible entities and application requirements. Ms. Goetz thanked the SWCC for its support for the HSP program, both with the outreach and review process. Rigoberto Lopez (NRCS) asked if the NRCS conservation practices were part of the HSP program. Mr. Bruce reported NMDA tried to align the HSP practices with NRCS practices, and showed HSP conservation templates created with NRCS.

Commissioner Harden joined the meeting at this point

9. Legislative update
 - Disposition of 2022 HB2 Allocation-\$3,000,000 for Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD):

Jim Wanstall (NMDA) gave a brief overview of the allocation for the SWCDs, and reported since any unspent funds will revert to the state in 2 years, the proposal process like the WQ&C grant wouldn't be feasible. Mr. Wanstall offered several suggestions for the SWCC for disposition of the funds. Mr. Wanstall also said this is a great opportunity for district capacity building.

Debbie Hughes (NMACD) reported the legislative intent is to leverage the funds with other funding. Ms. Hughes stated there are many funding sources available to the SWCDs that can be used with this funding, and she will send out a list.

Chair Vigil asked commissioners to contact the SWCDs in their regions to solicit input. After discussion, Chair Vigil asked for 3 commissioners to form a subcommittee to decide the rules regarding the distribution of the funds. Chair Vigil and Commissioners Glass and Bierner will be on the subcommittee. The subcommittee will meet starting next week.

Old Business

10. Water Quality and Conservation (WQ&C) subcommittee nominees: Patricia Depner (NMDA) reminded the Commission to provide nominees for the WQ&C review subcommittee.

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

Commissioner Sharp left the meeting at this point

11. Commissioners: Commissioner Glass reported Valencia SWCD is hosting mulch workshops, and will host the Earth day science fiesta; San Juan SWCD moved to their new building and will have a grand opening, and are doing various restoration projects; Coronado SWCD will submit proposals for the WQ&C and HSP programs to continue work in the Placitas open area, and are collaborating with the county commissioner and department of transportation to do erosion repair Piedra Elisa dam; Ciudad SWCD is working with the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) to start a community soil lab in Rio Rancho, and they have 2 intergovernmental agreements- to manage Tierra biozone education center and the hiring, posting, and management of the urban water federal partnership ambassador.

Commissioner Garcia: East Rio Arriba SWCD is finishing the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCCP) grant totaling \$2.2 million; they are partnering with Taos SWCD on weed treatment, and with Claunch-Pinto SWCD on riparian restoration.

Commissioner Bierner: Colfax SWCD has a new natural resource director, Ryan Lawlor, and they are getting back into schools-there will be a high school career day and a county-wide Ag. education day.

Commissioner Lopez: Colfax SWCD had a successful forest thinning and is seeking more funding to continue the work, they are working on a cost share for noxious weed spraying, a grant writing w/forestry for other funding for after the Ute park fire, and an Arbor day program in April.

Commissioner Harden: Central Curry SWCD is working to get irrigated land out of production to preserve water in Ogallala, other SWCDs in the region are continuing their projects; Roosevelt SWCD has a cloud seeding project.

Chair Vigil: his SWCD had a weed meeting to determine how much funding they will get; Lea SWCD is very active.

12. Natural Resources Conservation Service: Rigoberto Lopez gave an update with Kenny Alcon on the ongoing projects and potential funding for SWCDs: Environmental Watershed Program in Ruidoso, Roswell, and Hondo areas to mitigate damage on rain abatements; EQIP-taking applications, although funding hasn't been allocated yet; Conservation Innovation grant is open from March 1st-April 22nd for new, non-traditional practices (ex: non-lethal predatory technologies)-\$50,000 is available for awards from \$5,000 to \$50,000; RCCP is open until April 13th. These programs could be used to leverage funds from other sources. There is a Borderland Initiative program for Texas, Arizona, California, and New Mexico to address damage from illegal immigration that affects producers. All the programs are on the NRCS website. Healthy soil is a priority and NRCS is in partnership with NMDA to conduct trainings on the HSP.
13. Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC): Chair Vigil reported the WQCC tri-annual report was finalized.
14. National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD): Brent Van Dyke reported about the recent NACD annual conference, and upcoming conferences. Mr. Van Dyke was elected the chair of the National Conservation Foundation which oversees the Next Generation Leadership Institute-interested supervisors should apply for the 1-year program. The NM Envirothon will be in April.
15. New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts: Debbie Hughes reported highlights of the report-see report.

16. Next Meeting-June 22, 2022 at 9:00am
Commissioner Glass left the meeting at this point

17. Adjourn: Commissioner Garcia moved to approve adjourn. Commissioner Bierner seconded and the motion passed by all present commissioners.