

CABALLO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES

August 27, 2025

The Caballo Soil and Water Conservation District meeting of the Board of Supervisors was called to order at 9:37 a.m. by Harvey Morrow, Chairman, in the Caballo SWCD Office, located at 3000, HWY 187 Salem, New Mexico.

Supervisors Present

Harvey Morrow, Chair
Frank Garay, Vice Chair
Keith Franzoy, Member
Ronnie Garay, Member

Not Present

Samantha Gillis, Sec-Treas
Dee Wear, Member
Casey McGuire, Member

Others Present:

Kathryn Kruthaupt, NMDA SWCD Specialist *by phone*
Nicole Chavez, NRCS Soil Conservationist
Susan Downs, Caballo SWCD Programs Manager
Chantal Orosco, Caballo SWCD Business Manager

Minutes - Harvey Morrow asked for a motion to approve previous meeting minutes. *Frank Garay moved that the minutes from August 27, 2025, meeting be approved. Keith Franzoy seconded; the motion carried unanimously.*

Treasurer's Report - Chantal Orosco presented the treasurers report, noting that we had some expenses for the Garfield Elementary School vermicompost and composting grant, and that we had received a deposit for the point system in the amount of \$30,300. *Ronnie Garay moved the treasurer's report to be accepted as presented, Frank Garay seconded; the motion was carried unanimously.*

Approval of Agenda – *Frank Garay moved to approve the agenda as presented. Keith Franzoy seconded; the motion carried unanimously.*

NRCS Progress Report – Nicole Chavez presented the report, noting that the NRCS has completed the contracts for the year, and will begin working on CSP renewals but that they were waiting on guidance still because it sounds like some things will be changing. Kristi Wright will be coming back to her position as District Conservationist October 6, and that she will have two people helping while she is out. Nicole will be returning to regular duties September 20.

NMDA Specialist Report – Kathryn Kruthaupt presented the report, noting that any HSP Individual applicants should consider getting their conservation plan now, due to staffing shortages statewide. Applications for HSP will be open in January

and closing February 20 so it is a tight turnaround with the staffing shortage to get everything in place. Kathryn mentioned that the archaeological field training is open for applicants, Caballo is one of the only districts who has signed an employee up for the training so far. Kathryn will be out on annual leave September 29 through October 8, and if we have anything come up, her email will have a response for whom to forward the questions to.

NMACD Report – Susan Downs noted that we will cover the things going on with NMACD later on in the agenda, since it mostly pertains to the conference.

Jornada Report- Susan Downs reports that Jornada has finished with their thinning project with Kingston for defensible space and are now working on the NRCS Urban Ag Grant. Merry Jo has contractors lined up and they plan to start work this coming quarter.

Business at Hand

Watersheds

- McLead Dam- Susan reports we are waiting on Zach Libbin to finish the designs due to the spillway concerns that were brought up several meetings ago. He is finalizing the information and submitting it to the Dam Safety Bureau.
- Reed Thurmond- Susan reports that we are still waiting on State Land Office, and she is starting to wonder if she shouldn't bypass the person she has been waiting for, since we have had no responses so far.
- Rodey- Susan Downs reports that we are still waiting on a kickoff date for the work to begin here, resources have been pushed to Rincon Arroyo at this time.
- Informal Dam Inspections- Susan Downs reports we are still waiting for the finalized reports.
- Vigil Arroyo- Susan Downs reports everything has been put to a standstill due to the concerns we are addressing at Rincon Arroyo at present.
- Rincon- Susan Downs reports that the work has been steady and we went to look at it last Wednesday to see where EBID was on this project. At the time they were putting contour in to move the water off of the railroad embankment, but it washed out again with this weekend's rains. Susan and Chantal have been working to get rental agreements signed for a D-6 dozer from Ag Equipment Rentals in Las Cruces. We won't have to pay a transport fee because EBID is picking it up this morning, and the rental agreement is set for a month.

Ultimately, during all of these significant rain events, all of the structures worked, they caught and flowed water as they were intended to without incident throughout the district, despite having 1.5-3 inches dropped throughout the district.

NMACD and NACD Dues- Chantal Orosco presented the dues statements from both the National Association of Conservation Districts and the NM Association of Conservation Districts, noting that NACD says that we average a contribution of

\$750 per year but that their minimum is \$775 per year, and that we had not been able to contribute last year due to issues with their website and no response from them. Chantal then read the tiers aloud for NMACD, noting that we typically pay \$1,500 per year to NMACD. *Frank Garay moved to pay \$775.00 in dues to NACD and \$1500 to NMACD. Ronnie Garay seconded; motion carried unanimously.*

NMACD Envirothon Resolution- Susan Downs read aloud the NMACD Envirothon Resolution, which states that NMACD will formally recognize the value of the NM Envirothon to the SWCD's of the state and commits to increasing support, funding, and advocacy for its continued success, and that NMACD will assist NM Envirothon to collaborate with educational institutions, conservation organizations, and state agencies to ensure the programs long term sustainability and expansion. *Ronnie Garay moved to support this resolution. Keith Franzoy seconded; motion carried unanimously.*

First Savings Bank CD Maturity- Chantal Orosco presented that the First Savings Bank CD would be coming to maturity October 17. She asks that we come up with a plan for the \$180,000 to be rolled over to another CD or whether the District would like to invest it in the Local Government Investment Pool. Chantal said that the current amount in the investment pool is sitting at \$28,000 and has been there since 2012- this investment account has only been growing larger, and the interest is compounded, meaning we are making money on the interest every month which is then reinvested, and since she has been here she has only ever seen \$100-120/month reinvestments with this account, never anything less. She further explained that the state says that the money is there when we need it, there are no minimum or maximum amounts, that we can withdraw at any time through wire transfer and there are no penalties. Chantal said that East Torrance uses this investment pool and moves hundreds of thousands of dollars into it every year. Frank Garay noted that this is not FDIC insured so there is a possibility that we could lose everything depending on the market. Harvey Morrow said he was in favor of putting money into a higher interest investment account. *Ronnie Garay moved to take half of the CD when it came to maturity to roll over into another CD for a year and to move the other half into the LGIP. Frank Garay seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously. This was a roll-call vote.*

Frank Garay- Aye
Keith Franzoy- Aye
Ronnie Garay- Aye

Motion carried unanimously.

LGIP Form Updates Chantal Orosco presented several forms to the board members to update the account information and online user access in order to be able to move money around if needed in this account. She also advised that she and a board member would have to go to the bank to get one of the forms notarized as well.

NM Tax & Revenue Updates- Susan Downs advised that somewhere in the time of 2014-2016 that the FTIN number had changed for the district, and no one notified NM Tax & Revenue, and we now need to get the business information updated so that we can utilize the tax-exempt forms if we need them. No one

knows who we are when we try to call them at this point, because our NM Tax ID doesn't match the Federal one.

Replacement of Office Windows-Chantal Orosco reports that she had gotten a second bid that was comparable to the first, but it would have wooden trim rather than the vinyl that Casa Armijo was offering. *Frank Garay made a motion to replace the office windows with the vinyl contractor. Keith Franzoy seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.*

Caballo SWCD Website- Chantal Orosco reminded the board that this had previously been tabled at the last meeting, and after some discussions and reminders that the website needs to be able to read to people who may be blind and the cost was going to be approximately \$2500 annually, the board agreed that it was in our publics best interest to keep the website up because the newspapers were becoming a thing of the past and the newspaper was generally not circulated in the valley anymore. *Frank Garay moved to start moving forward with getting the website within ADA compliance. Keith Franzoy seconded; motion carried unanimously.*

Point System Update- Susan Downs reported that after fighting with the vendor portal for a little over a week, she and Chantal got everything squared away and that we have received the full funding of \$30,300.00.

State Land Lease- Chantal Orosco reports they finally received the contract for the state land lease, and that they had paid the check for this year of \$5,000- contract will be for the next five years. We are just waiting for our signed copies to make it back to us from the state.

Auditor Update- Susan Downs reports that the audit report is now available to the public, everything has been approved, and this closes out our FY 24 entirely.

ISC Cover Crop 25/26 Update- Susan Downs reports that as of August 29 there were 127 applicants for totaling 6,103 acres between Caballo and the Dona Ana soil and water districts, we will have final numbers by October. The only person we have not able to get planted this year was Samaniego which was a total of 9.6 acres.

NFWF- Susan Downs reports the district has officially applied for two projects on the Nordstrom and the Bennett Lateral, we are just waiting to see who is awarded the projects- there was a total of 60 applicants statewide.

Grant Updates

- **Garfield Elementary School**- Chantal Orosco reports that she was just at the elementary school Monday and had put a worm science binder together for the teachers to utilize for science projects to do with the worms. Chantal did advise that the NM Ag in the classroom had provided the grant, but that there were not enough worms or bucket farms, so the district spent about \$500 getting scales, thermometers, binders, worms, and sifters for each class to utilize. She reported

further that the kids and teachers were very excited to be learning about worms, and she will be going into the schools once a month to check with all the classes to make sure the worms are alive and to do some one-on-one teaching about recycling and waste and healthy soils.

- WQC Grant- Susan Downs reports that she has ordered all equipment needed for the Hatch Valley Envirothon utilizing the WQC grant that we received. Everything should be coming into the office within the next week or so and everything for this grant is reimbursable.
- D.O.G. Educational Outreach- Chantal Orosco said that the papers were signed and finalized, we will be moving forward with ordering \$5,000 in workbooks about recycling and healthy soils- these will be distributed throughout the district to the various elementary aged kids.
- State Forestry Weed Mapping Grant- Susan Downs reports that RJ Garay has been working on mapping the Rio Grande corridor for noxious or invasive weeds, Ronnie Garay says that last he heard RJ was getting pretty close to Salem Rapids.
- State Forestry Salt Cedar Grant- Chantal Orosco says that we have finally gotten the contract, we signed it and are waiting for the signatures on their end but it was told they will extend the project deadline if needed.
- Partners for Fish & Wildlife Grant- Chantal Orosco says that she is working on putting a plan together to put this grant together in coordination with EBID on the irrigation water ways throughout the district to take out salt cedar and replace it with native species of willows and the Rio Grande Cottonwood as well as native grasses. She is unsure how many acres we can accomplish yet. She has reached out to Joah Franzoy and Josh Smith to see if they would like to participate. Nicole Chavez said she had the deed for EBID's waterways proving it is privately owned and would be sent to Chantal later.

Plan of Work- The Board reviewed the Plan of Work for September and October, Susan Downs showed a photo of the soil project we are working on for the Sierra County Fair Display.

Correspondence- Caballo SWCD has received letters from NMACD asking for nominations to the NMACD board. It was agreed that no one here really has the time to join the board and that there were probably plenty of younger people who would be interested in filling the spaces. Susan Downs also notified the board that we had discharge permit information sent to us and it was just a routine discharge information for the chile processing plant over here in Salem.

Adjournment

Seeing no other business, *Frank Garay made a motion to adjourn at 11:05 am, Ronnie Garay seconded; motion carried unanimously.*

Presiding Official

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