

CABALLO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES

June 25, 2025

The Caballo Soil and Water Conservation District meeting of the Board of Supervisors was called to order at 9:38 a.m. by Frank Garay, Vice-Chairman, in the Caballo SWCD Office, located at 3000 HWY 187, Salem, New Mexico.

Supervisors Present

Frank Garay, Vice-Chair
Ronnie Garay, Member
Dee Wear, Member
Keith Franzoy, Member
Casey McGuire, Member

Not Present

Harvey Morrow, Chair
Samantha Gillis, Sec-Treasurer

Others Present:

Nicole Chavez, NRCS Acting District Conservationist
Kathryn Kruthaupt, NMDA Natural Resources Specialist
Kate Maynard, ISC Water Resources Specialist
Susan Downs, Caballo SWCD Programs Manager
Chantal Orosco, Caballo SWCD Business Manager

Minutes- Frank Garay asked for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes. *Dee Wear moved that the minutes from May 28, 2025, meeting be approved. Casey McGuire seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously.*

Treasurer's Report- Chantal Orosco presented the treasurer's report, noting that the report was pretty simple, the largest payment was for the Interstate Streams Cover Crop Seeds to Rio Gro, but explained we were just waiting for reimbursement for the seed. *Dee Wear moved the treasurer's report to be accepted as presented, Keith Franzoy seconded; the motion was carried unanimously.*

Approval of Agenda – *Dee Wear moved to approve the agenda. Casey McGuire seconded; the motion carried unanimously.*

NRCS Progress Report – Nicole Chavez presented the report, noting that the NRCS is losing their acting South area Engineer, and ending on a positive note that there had been 80% contracting for EQIP and they are now accepting new applicants. Please see the attached report for further information.

NMDA Specialist Report – Kathryn Kruthaupt reported that we should have received information about whether the grants had been awarded or not. Chantal said she had not seen anything come across yet, but Susan Downs said that she had been notified that she didn't get awarded a couple of the grants that she had put in for. Kathryn also spoke about the \$160,000 that will be distributed in a reimbursement fashion for Capacity Building- it was discussed at the SWCC zoom

meeting. The points system or base funding will be left at \$28,000 during this time. The reimbursement will not be allowed for projects or staff vehicles, but rather it will be focused on building employees or utilized for specialized contractors such as engineers, or to develop a land use plan. One innovative way to make this work in our favor is to potentially pay the regular staff out of these funds, freeing up the money that would have been used on other projects. Please see the attached report for further information.

NMACD Report – Susan Downs reports that the NMACD state meeting is going to be in October at the Uptown Sheraton Hotel.

Jornada Report- Susan Downs reports that Jornada is working on a land-grant project at this time.

Business at Hand

Watersheds-

- McLead Dam- Zach Libbin of Libbin Engineering is coming down within the next week to meet with Casey, Susan, and Shane Franzoy (chair of McLead) to go over the plan of work in person.
- Reed Thurmond- We are still waiting on the State Land Office. Susan had to reach out to the State Land Office in Santa Fe because we had not heard from them yet, and she was then told to fill out forms for a right of way amendment but that it would not be in perpetuity of the dam, it would only be for 35 years. Susan is working through this.
- Rodey- Casey McGuire says that there is a groundbreaking project with ISC and EBID to work on the dam. Casey says that they have found private property to move sediment lodes to and says that they are shooting for a start date of 30 days from now. ISC funding has paid for new equipment, and if we have to incur costs as a district, ISC is open to potentially reimbursing us if we request it, but they will have to go to their board to ask for it. At this time, McLead is still a priority.
 - Additionally, private landowner Bill Porter is concerned about the ramifications of stockpiling sediment lodes if he ever wants to sell the property in the future. We are looking at removing 75,000 cubic yards from Rodey, which is much less than Garfield was at 189,000 cubic yards.
- Informal Dam Inspections- Zach Libbin said he is hoping to complete these on July 9th and 10th. We know N. Salem will be hit with inspections due to the north side of the dam being pulled from by people borrowing from what they perceive as the hillside.

Supervisor Stipend Chantal Orosco presented the possibility for supervisor stipends to attend meetings, noting that the going rate for attending a meeting in person for 4 hours or less is \$45.00. There was some discussion, at which time Frank Garay agreed that Caballo used to do the stipends but had discontinued it because they didn't have the mil levy in place at that time, and the monetary amount was so insignificant. Chantal did advise that several supervisors had

mentioned it to her over the last few months, so she thought it was a good time to bring it up prior to the final budget. *Ronnie Garay moved that all supervisors attending the meetings in person should receive a stipend of \$45.00 for less than 4 hours. Keith Franzoy seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

Employee Raises Chantal Orosco stated that the cost of living is increasing every day, and that Susan and herself are struggling, just like everyone else is at this time. Chantal also reminded the board that she had been here for over a year now and had not received a raise at her 6-month employee evaluation back in November. The supervisors had a brief discussion of whether it should be a percentage raise or if it should be a monetary increment. After doing the figuring, Frank said that a \$2.00/hr. raise would be equivalent to an 11% increase. *Ronnie Garay moved to approve a \$2.00/hr. raise for Susan and Chantal, both, bringing Susan's hourly wage to \$22.00/hr. and Chantal's to \$20.00/hr. Keith Franzoy seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

FY25 Q4 End of Year Resolution Chantal Orosco said that we needed to submit a resolution for the end of the year to DFA by mid-July, so we would need to have the resolution now. Chantal presented the Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss for the year to the board. *Casey McGuire moved to accept the 4th quarter year-end report as presented. Ronnie Garay seconded. This was a roll-call vote.*

Dee Wear- aye

Ronnie Garay- aye

Keith Franzoy- aye

Casey McGuire- aye

Motion carried unanimously.

FY 26 Budget Update Chantal Orosco stated that she had to make changes to the interim budget that was presented at the last meeting and explained the changes. She advised that the biggest change was the conservation programs because we had found out what grants we were awarded. Chantal noted that she had gotten 2/5 of the grants that she put in for-, the largest expense being the noxious weed salt cedar grant from State Forestry, a \$60,000 grant with a 1:1 grant match, we will need to provide \$30,000 for at least 10 acres of salt cedar removal, \$1,000 for conservation education activity books. The previous Interim budget was approved by DFA, but since it is not final, we will be able to make adjustments as necessary, including for the salary/wage increases.

Auditor Update Chantal Orosco informed the board that we are officially under contract with Scott Northam and have had the approval from the Office of the State Auditor.

Region III Meeting- Susan Downs said that she had attended the meeting the previous day in Silver City. She says that most of the talk was about the drought, the Trout Fire, and the \$160,000 distributions, and there was conversation about the mil levies

SWCC Meeting- Susan Downs reported that she had attended the virtual meeting, and that the soil and water districts brought many of their concerns to the board regarding the \$160,000 funding, including that the wording for the reimbursement

stated it was a grant, which implies that the funds were competitive, when in reality NMDA meant it to be a reimbursement. Susan also advised that the appointed supervisors were approved, as was our mil levy resolution that we had submitted last month by the SWCC.

HSP Update- Susan Downs reports that we are waiting on a final invoice and that there will be no applicants for 2026. She advises that she will begin looking at 2027 to try to get more producers involved in it at that time.

ISC Cover Crop 2025/2026- Susan Downs reports that this year the program had 172,000 acres statewide contracted for the FY 25/26- this will be a 12-month groundwater conservation program to fallow land. ISC suggested cover crops to put in the fallowed fields to prevent erosion, and that Caballo has 570 acres in production for this. We have so far spent \$24,000 in seeds, but we will be reimbursed for that. The district is getting a 15% administrative reimbursement fee, and we will be paying a contractor \$15,554 to do the no-till application. At this time, we are still waiting on the invoice from RC Lara (the contractor). So far \$43,551 has come back to the district for this that has been or will be reimbursed.

NFWF- Susan Downs informed the board that there was a \$60 million grant to be administered over 3 years through the interstate streams commission (ISC) and that this was part of the public meeting that she had set up in Hatch and TorC. She advises that she and Casey have some ideas on how to utilize this funding on some of the arroyos in the area, preventing sediment from washing into the Rio Grande and improving the wildlife habitat..

DOG Grants Update- Susan Downs and Chantal Orosco had put in a combined 9 grants for the district. Chantal was notified that she had been awarded two of the grants and Susan was awarded one. Chantal's latest grant was for conservation education activity books in the classroom that will be administered to all 3 Elementary schools in the district, and Susan's grant was to support the Hatch Valley High School Envirothon.

Personnel Committee- Dee Wear has recused himself of the committee at this time due to lack of time to devote to this committee. There are no further updates at this time.

Chantal Orosco Monthly Report- Chantal reports that she has been busy finalizing finishing touches on the salt cedar grant, looking at other grants and opportunities, and she has been working through the contracts with the state auditor, Scott Northam, and reporting to DFA. She said she has also been busy getting the new iPad synced with everything here at the office so that we can start with the noxious weed mapping that Susan got the grant for the year before. Chantal also says that she attended the Rio Gro field day on June 19, which was extremely educational, as their field days always are.

Susan Downs Monthly Report- Susan Downs gave a brief report that she has been very busy working on cover crop, annual reports, and the back and forth between BLM, SLO, and everyone in between in regards to the dams.

Annual Plan of Work- The Board reviewed the drafted 2026 Plan of Work. Chantal and Susan noted that there are a lot more activities coming up this next year due to the grants and funding opportunities. *Casey McGuire moved to adopt the new 2026 Annual Plan of Work. Keith Franzoy seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

The board reviewed the current plan of work for the months of June, July, and August and agreed that everything was moving along quickly.

Correspondence- The only correspondence has been the approval letters of the audit contract, the interim budget, appointed supervisors, mil levy, and the award letters for the DOG grants.

Adjournment

Seeing no other business, *Casey McGuire made a motion to adjourn at 11:38 am, Kieth Franzoy seconded; motion carried unanimously.*

Presiding Official

Presiding Official