

**CABALLO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES**

December 18, 2024

The Caballo Soil and Water Conservation District meeting of the Board of Supervisors was called to order at 9:06 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
Samantha Gillis, Sec-Treas
Dee Wear, Member
Casey McGuire, Member
Ronnie Garay, Member

Not Present

Keith Franzoy, Member

Others Present:

Kathryn Kruthaupt, NMDA SWCD Specialist *by phone*
Kristi Wright, NRCS District Conservationist
Sarah Whetzel-Fisher, Carlyle Stewart, and Zach Withers from Rocky Mountain Farmers Union *by Zoom*
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 motioned that the minutes from the November 20, 2024, meeting be approved. Dee Wear seconded; the motion carried unanimously.*

Treasurer's Report- Chantal Orosco presented the treasurers report, noting that there was not much activity, aside from a \$10,000 deposit from the Sierra County Treasurer for Mil Levy and the NMACD hotel fees were on this months credit card statement. *Casey McGuire moved the treasurer's report to be accepted as presented, Dee Wear seconded; the motion was carried unanimously.*

Approval of Agenda – Susan Downs suggested that we move items around, due to the awards being presented, and the guests having business to attend to elsewhere. *Samantha Gillis moved to approve the agenda by moving the awards and the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union guest speakers to the beginning of the meeting. Dee Wear seconded; the motion carried unanimously.*

NRCS Progress Report – Kristi Wright presented the report, noting that she had updated guidance on virtual fencing and telemetry projects for EQIP and CSP

applicants. Please see the attached report for further information, or reach out to the NRCS for further information on these new guidelines.

NMDA Specialist Report – Kathryn Kruthaupt presented the report by phone, reporting that the division director job opening had closed and that two people from the Las Cruces area had applied for the position, she will update once she hears anything. NMDA is ramping up on the upcoming grant cycles, noting that HSP opens on January 15 and closing on March 19, Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund is now renamed in their division to District Opportunities Grant (D.O.G.) and will be opening on February 3 and closing March 16. The Noxious Weed Program will be opening on March 3 and closing on April 11. Please see the attached report for further information

NMACD Report – Susan Downs reports that she and Chantal had attended the NMACD Conference and that it was very busy, with a lot of people there. She advised that the Employee Association had raised

Jornada Report- Susan Downs reports that Jornada has received the monetary amount from the EDD grant for \$52,000 for trail signage along the East side of the Rio Grande from below the Elephant Butte Dam, at the river bridge to the bend in Williamsburg, where they will have mileposts and wildlife signage. Mulberry project is finishing up.

Business at Hand

Rocky Mountain Farmers Union (RMFU) Sarah Wentzel Fischer, who is also president of the Quivira Coalition made introductions by zoom, she is the state representative for the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union. Carlyle Steward is the outreach and membership coordinator as well as the AgWell program coordinator for New Mexico, Zach Withers owns Polks Folly Farm and Butcher Shop and is the president of New Mexico Rocky Mountain Farmers Union. They used this time to speak about the union, which is located in Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico. They are seeking membership from people in Southern New Mexico. They help with cooperative development (where they can help organize cooperatives between producers), agriculture education (they have agriculture k-12 and adult camps for ag-related education), and legislation (where they develop policy platforms based on the needs and desires of the actual members who are producers and who act as boots on the ground to advocate for the everyday producers- they take information and create policy that they then will lobby for at state and federal levels. There is a potential that they may be coming into NM with insurance for home, auto, and farm. RMFU has programs like the Fallen Farmer fund to help pay for burial expenses, Ag Assist, which helps get farmers and ranchers back on their feet after a disaster, Ag Well, which is a mental health platform for producers. In order for a chapter to form, you would need 5 active members, meeting once a year with an event for fundraising potentially. The website for the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union is www.RMFU.org membership fees are \$90/year.

Awards Susan Downs presented awards in the form of monogrammed cutting boards as follows:
Outstanding Conservationist- Slim Whitlock.

Outstanding Land Stewardship- Ronnie Garay

Harvey Morrow also received an award of recognition for his 30 years of service on the Caballo Soil and Water Conservation District as Supervisor.

Watersheds-

- McLead Dam- Susan reports that Zack Libbin with Libbin Engineering is now planning on attending the January meeting with designs and information on the dam.
- Susan reports that informal dam inspections will be taking place mid-January.
- Fiero Arroyo some work has been done, so far the total cost of labor has been \$1,225.00 and Casey will be turning in the fuel reimbursement. There is probably another day or two worth of work total. Casey reports that after work is done here, that he will be moving the excavator to the Wasson Channel to focus on woody species removal.

MOA/MOU NRCS Kristi Wright presented the contract, explaining that it had not been updated in several years but that it would probably have to be done sometime within the next year since people listed were retired. She will bring the document if it is updated to be adopted at that time, please see the attached MOA/MOU for any information. Harvey Morrow asked for a motion to adopt this Memorandum of Understanding *Dee Wear made a motion to adopt the current MOA/MOU that has previously been in place. Samantha Gillis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

Open Meetings Act Resolution Susan Downs presented the new resolution, noting that we had to strike the conference call from the previous one for supervisors to attend, and that we added the website as means to advertise the meeting dates and times. *Frank Garay made a motion to adopt the new Open Meetings Act Resolution, Dee Wear seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

USPS Brochure Mailing Chantal presented that she had been working with the post office to get the brochures mailed out, and though it would be quite the process, she advises that the total number of households that they would reach would be 1,920 and the mailing cost would be around \$428.17. *Frank Garay made a motion to move forward with every door direct mail mailing of the brochures. Casey McGuire seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

Spring Seedling Orders Susan Downs reports that the available trees were pretty slim pickings, it was selling out very fast. This item was originally budgeted for \$500 but after shipping the total cost for almost 400 seedlings came out to just over \$700.00 with shipping.

Farm Bureau Reimbursement-Chantal Orosco reported that the check for \$110.20 had been received and was deposited to the account.

Water Solv by HCT Susan Downs reports that she had sent videos to Samantha, Keith, Frank, and Dee demonstrating the Rio Grow application for HCT. Wyatt with Rio Gro had come down on Monday the 16 to talk with Ronnie and Susan

about the system. For Ronnie's 14-acre pecan orchard, the total cost with chemicals came out to right around \$12,000. HCT is interested in possibly getting numerous producers with a variety of crops to work together in the valley to show the difference that it makes. Ronnie Garay reports that the water and soil sampling alone came out to almost \$800. Susan offered to try to arrange a meeting with Wyatt and the board to talk about this more in the future.

Oath of Office- Harvey Morrow performed Ronnie Garay's oath to office at approximately 10:44 am December 18, 2024.

Soil & Water Conservation Day at the Legislature- Susan Downs reported that we had been looking at ways to advertise the things we needed to and would like permission to purchase a retractable banner with photos on it. *Frank Garay made a motion to purchase the banner. Dee Wear seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.*

Chantal Orosco Monthly Report- Chantal gave a brief report of the things she has been doing here at the office. Please find attached a copy of the report.

Susan Downs Monthly Report- Susan Downs gave a brief report of the things she has been doing here at the office. Please find attached a copy of the report.

Plan of Work- The Board reviewed the Plan of Work for December and January. Susan noted that she will need to follow up with Kim O'Byrne at the Hatch Valley Schools regarding Ag Day in the Hatch Valley.

Correspondence- Caballo SWCD has received two certified letters from the Dona Ana County Treasurer regarding the mil levy allocation, like we do every year and we also received a letter requesting donation for the NM Envirothon.

Adjournment

Seeing no other business, *Samantha Gillis made a motion to adjourn at 10:58 am, Dee Wear seconded; motion carried unanimously.*

Presiding Official

Presiding Official

