

## CABALLO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

### MINUTES

November 20, 2024

The Caballo Soil and Water Conservation District meeting of the Board of Supervisors was called to order at 9:00 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  
Samantha Gillis, Sec-Treas  
Dee Wear, Member  
Keith Franzoy, Member  
Ronnie Garay, Member

#### Not Present

Harvey Morrow, Chair  
Casey McGuire, Member

#### Others Present:

Kathryn Kruthaupt, NMDA SWCD Specialist  
Susan Downs, Caballo SWCD Programs Manager  
Chantal Orosco, Caballo SWCD Business Manager

**Minutes-** Frank Garay asked for a motion to approve previous meeting minutes. *Samantha Gillis motioned that the minutes from the October 16, 2024, meeting be approved. Keith Franzoy seconded; the motion carried unanimously.*

**Treasurer's Report-** Chantal Orosco presented the treasurers report, noting that the NMACD hotel fees were not on this months statement, and that it would be next month. Also, noting that there was a couple of large checks for the excavator payment and the federal wage taxes. *Dee Wear moved the treasurer's report to be accepted as presented, Keith Franzoy seconded; the motion was carried unanimously.*

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

**NRCS Progress Report** – Susan Downs read through the report provided for those present. Please see the attached report for further information.

**NMDA Specialist Report** – – Kathryn Kruthaupt presented the report, touching on the new grant cycles coming open for Healthy Soils and Land of Enchantment funds. January 24 there will be a zoom training by the Secretary of State for local elections, and the processes that need to be done. 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 was awarded a 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. The grant was through the National Trails. Jornada also received a grant or contract through NRCS for 2.4 million dollars to concentrate on Urban Ag, Forests, and improvement of watersheds. They are also still continuing work with the Grant Soil & Water district for Mulberry thinning.

## **Business at Hand**

**Watersheds-** McLead Dam- Susan reports that Casey spoke to Zack Libbin with Libbin Engineering who plans to have something to present to the board at the December meeting.

- Susan Downs reported that she had called Dean Pritchett to request a scheduled meeting for informal dam structures inspections.
- Formal Dam Inspections were conducted November 14 on Caballo Dams 2, 3, 4 & 5 (4 dams total).
  - ATV and animal traffic were noted on the dams
  - Rodent holes were everywhere, but the most significant was on the Wardy Hedgecock
  - Woody vegetation on the Wasson, which hadn't been cleared around the stand pipe
  - Wardy Hedgecock gate was closed, and water was retained in a green slimy algae.
- Dee Wear asks that when we respond to any of these deficiencies from the Dam Safety Bureau that we respond formally, and timely.
- Fiero Arroyo had more flooding with the rains, and the excavator has not been able to start work yet, because they are waiting for line locates from 811. Should be cleared within the next couple of days.
  - Susan Downs also noted that the run hours on the excavator is at 130 and a service is not needed until 250 hours.

**Soil & Water Day at the Legislature March 15-** Chantal Orosco said that although the time frame is still several months out, she thinks it would behoove us to have a game plan for what the board would like to have presented there to the legislature. Supervisors advised they would like the dams talked about, with photos on a presentation board. Chantal showed the supervisors the brochure that she had composed and reported that 2,000 of them would cost \$400. She said she had ordered more of them than we will probably mail so that we could hand them out at events and for the legislature. Chantal also reported that she had bought a white board, a foam tabletop demonstration board, and tablecloths for presenting, because this last year was busy and we were ill-prepared for things like this. *Dee Wear suggested that we get a game plan and rough draft ready to be presented at the December or January meeting.*

**Spring Sapling Orders** Chantal advised that December 2 the tree farm will start taking orders for saplings and that we will need to be quick about placing orders. Susan Downs mentioned that people are already calling us for trees, and that she was talking to the Village of Hatch about potentially putting a windbreak at the airport.

**Farm Bureau Letter** Chantal reported that Farm Bureau asked us what they should do with a sponsorship award we had given them back in 2013. There is a refund of \$110.00 and options were to have it returned to us or rolled back into another donation fund. *Frank Garay said to direct them to send the money back to us.*

**Water Solv by HCT** Ronnie Garay reported Chantal went with him to a Rio Grow presentation in Mesquite, NM about a water system that injects natural chemicals into your well water as you are pumping it out, which breaks the chemical bond of salt and calcium, to make water more hydrating for plants. Chantal mentioned that it was supposed to save at a minimum of 15% water, and increases the longevity of drip line and systems, because the calcium wouldn't clog the emitters. Dee Wear suggests getting more information, and if this system is portable, he will propose that the District purchase one, to test out, if Ronnie would be ok with being a test site, and following through to see if it really is as great as they say it is, and if it is, roll it out to other producers in the district as a cost share item, noting that SWCDs should be at the forefront of agriculture innovations, spearheading the way for normal every day people to follow better practices. This matter was tabled pending further information.

**Personnel Committee** Chantal reports that with two employees now, it would be good to have an HR or Personnel committee to come up with policies and evaluations for the employees to better gauge where they are productivity-wise, and to ensure that we are all doing what we can to keep growing. Dee Wear, Frank Garay, and Samantha Gillis volunteered to be on the committee and would take the suggested packets home with them to decide how they want to structure our district SOP's and will bring it back for the December meeting. *Keith Franzoy moved that Dee, Samantha, and Frank be appointed to the personnel committee, Dee Wear seconded. Motion carried unanimously*

**Auditor Update**-Susan reported that Dan Austin was on the way to give us an exit interview. He ended up showing partway through the meeting. Dan said he had no findings and that he was glad to have worked with us.

**Leavitt Group Insurance**- Chantal reported that Leavitt Group decided that we could drop the burglar coverage since we didn't want to have to pay for a 24/7 monitored system. She said that she was talking to Brynn Guillot who said she was not happy with the underwriters, and that she was not sure why they were being so weird about our insurance when no other district in the state needs it. Chantal said that they ended up dropping the coverage but that was not changing the price of the policy.

**District Standard Operating Procedures** Was decided to be tabled for policy review to be reviewed and recommendations at the December Meeting

**CD Savings Account Update** Chantal reported that Frank, Dee, and Samantha had met her at First Savings Bank on October 17 where they opened a CD Savings account for \$180,000.00 at 4% interest for a year. Chantal has marked her calendar for when the year is up to decide what to do then. Chantal also reported that they were able to remove Slim Whitlock from all First Savings Bank accounts entirely and add Frank.

**Approved Cost Share Applicants Update** Susan Downs reports that Christina Medina seems to be in the process of moving, and David Trujillo is in the middle of installing a new roof so he is on hold with gutters for now, and he will need to follow up with the NRCS to redo the irrigation system plans since he moved everything around.

**NMACD Conference Update** Chantal reported that NMACD was really great with a lot of great information. She said that the only complaint that she would have is that they didn't plan for as many people to show up as they did, so much of the conference was standing room only. Susan Downs said that the legislative session was very informative with Crystal Diamond Brantley & Gail Armstrong.

**HSP Grant Seed Update-** Susan reports that she is waiting for Jason Franzoy to pick up the last of the seed but that Chantal has been nagging him for weeks now and has not had any luck getting him to come get it.

One producer disc'd his under

Susie is going to see if we can pay to have one part of Annie Mae Ortiz field be pushed over and leave the other standing to see what difference that made in soil health next spring.

**Invasive Weed Grant Update** Susan Downs says that it is closing December 2 but that the new cycle is opening. Chantal asked if that meant that we couldn't apply since we still had not completed the last grant. Susan said no, we could still apply for another.

**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 October and November. Susan reported that she had spoken to Dean Pritchett about dam inspections but nothing was finalized at this time.

**Chantal Orosco 6-Month Employee Evaluation-** Frank Garay said that he thinks that we need to table this for now, because he isn't even sure what purpose an evaluation would have at this time, and that I need to come up with information about what I want to be doing so that they can evaluate accordingly.

**Correspondence-**

**Due to upcoming Holidays, the December board meeting would have to be moved up by a week.**

**The next board meeting is to be held December 18, 2024.**

**Adjournment**

Seeing no other business, Samantha Gillis made a motion to adjourn at 10:30 am, Dee Wear seconded; motion carried unanimously.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Official