

CABALLO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES

July 30, 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

Harvey Morrow, Chair
Ronnie Garay, Member
Samantha Gillis, Sec-Treasurer
Keith Franzoy, Member

Not Present

Frank Garay, Vice-Chair
Dee Wear, Member
Casey McGuire, Member

Others Present:

Kathryn Kruthaupt, NMDA Natural Resources Specialist
Tyson Nicoll, CEO of SOW Biochar
Susan Downs, Caballo SWCD Programs Manager
Chantal Orosco, Caballo SWCD Business Manager

Minutes- Harvey Morrow asked for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes. *Ronnie Garay made a motion that the minutes from June 25, 2025, meeting be approved. Samantha Gillis seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously.*

Treasurer's Report- Chantal Orosco presented the treasurer's report, noting that the report was pretty simple, we received several payments for Healthy Soils and the ISC partnership. *Keith Franzoy moved the treasurer's report to be accepted as presented, Samantha Gillis seconded; the motion was carried unanimously.*

Approval of Agenda – *Samantha Gillis motioned to move the action items to the beginning of the meeting to allow voting members to leave early since it is the middle of onion and chile harvesting. Keith Franzoy seconded; the motion carried unanimously.*

Federal Mileage Rate Change- Chantal Orosco reports that the Federal Reimbursement rate went up from 67 cents per mile to 70 cents per mile. She asked that the board vote on adopting this. Harvey Morrow asked Kathryn Kruthaupt the procedure, Kathryn advised that that is the minimum, but the board could choose to do more but could not do less. *Ronnie Garay made a motion to accept the 70 cents per mile federal reimbursement rate. Samantha Gillis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

FY 26 Final Budget & Resolution- Chantal Orosco presented the new finalized budget. She advised that the numbers had changed based on the new fuel rate and also adding in to the budget if the board saw fit to allow PTO in addition to sick leave as well as potentially adopting a PERA retirement plan in the future. This new budget also reflects the Supervisor Per Diem Meeting payment of \$45/meeting if all board supervisors were to attend the meetings every single month and added in the new salary price points that were approved at the last board meeting in June. *Samantha Gillis made a motion to approve the FY 2026 Final Budget as presented, Keith Franzoy seconded.*

There was then a motion to adopt the FY 26 Budget with a Resolution made by Keith Franzoy and seconded by Samantha Gillis. This was a roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote

Samantha Gillis- Aye
Ronnie Garay- Aye
Keith Franzoy- Aye
Harvey Morrow- Aye

NRCS Progress Report – Susan Downs presented the information that was sent to us in the July NRCS report, as there were no NRCS employees present. They are currently working on hiring a farm bill specialist to assist Kristie in the Southern District Areas.

NMDA Specialist Report – Kathryn Kruthaupt reported that Caballo SWCD will receive the full \$28,000 funding for the point system. As far as the \$160,000 noncompetitive awards go, we really need to be sure to apply for the money as soon as possible, because we need to spend that within a year in order to get reimbursement. She also noted that there has been talk that NMACD is pushing for mandatory training for board Supervisors and that there may be a grading system coming through for SWCD's that will show how active their board supervisors are as far as who is attending training, who is working in schools. SOS is going to be giving an election training this coming month as a webinar.

NMACD Report – Susan Downs reports that the NMACD state meeting is going to be held October 19-22 at the Uptown Sheraton Hotel.

Jornada Report- Susan Downs reports that Jornada has finished hiring contract employees to start the river interactive panels.

Business at Hand

Watersheds-

- McLead Dam- Zach Libbin, Shane Franzoy, Casey McGuire, and Susan Downs all met at the office to discuss 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 still, Susan keeps getting the run around.

- Rodey- Casey McGuire says that there is a groundbreaking project with ISC and EBID to work on the dam. Casey says that they have been working through concerns with the private landowner and expect a groundbreaking in the near future with photographs and shovels full very soon, estimated project start is only 1 month to 6 weeks out. ISC, EBID, and Caballo SWCD will be invited to the groundbreaking.
- Informal Dam Inspections- Susan Downs, Zach Libbin, Heather Abeyta-Check, and Nicole Chaves had been on inspections last week, they did two full days, but the rains came and there were some they could not get to. They have rescheduled for tomorrow (Thursday), hoping to get them completed. Everything has been good so far, and there are only a few minor issues without any real flood events happening this monsoon season yet.
- Susan Downs presented an issue that arose with the new hard rains that we have had the last couple of weeks. She advised this was an FYI from the rain the day before- Brawley and Rutledge were flooded out by an arroyo and asked EBID to use the excavator to push the bank back up to where it had been prior to the storm event. We would be responsible for paying the EBID employees to work it, estimation of 10 days of work, but we need the landowner's permission to do so first in writing, and we will bring this to the board during the next meeting. This would be a project under O&M and was already included in the budget for this year.

Auditor Update- Chantal Orosco reported that Scott Northam will be in the office on August 20 to start receiving the paperwork for the FY25 Audit.

ISC Cover Crop Update 25/26- Susan Downs reports that we have been paid back \$49,996.00 and of that \$6,403.18 was paid back in admin reimbursement charges. There has been a little over 600 acres implemented and numbers will be changing at the end of August once the ground dries up a bit.

NFWF Update- Susan Downs reports that she has put in two separate proposals, one at the Bennet Lateral Ponding and one for Nordstrom Pond. Susan says that the goal will be to try to control the flow more, which would control the sediment load going into the river during rain. Susan reports that there have been 63 proposals so far, ISC is the fiscal agent, and we are partnering with them and the WRRI to complete these proposed projects.

Grant Updates- Susan Downs reported that we have identified and hired a contract employee to do the noxious weed mapping inventory along the Rio Grande Corridor.

There was also a Placitas Arroyo stakeholders meeting at the office where we will begin upland restorations, NMSU has students implementing practices at test sites to try to restore water to the upland areas during the rain, rather than letting them just run across the desert and into arroyos.

Susan Downs did receive the Water Quality & Conservation (WQC) grant to help pay for and sponsor the Hatch Valley High School Envirothon team this year.

Chantal reported that she received 3/5 grants that she had put in for, and was just waiting to get to work on them, State Forestry is having problems with their grant administrator, who had been put on sick leave suddenly and unexpectedly, but advises that New Mexico State Forestry has told us that we would be extending the grant implementation periods if need be if this continues to hold us back.

Chantal also reports that she got the grant for Garfield Elementary Worm Bin and Composting system, she is waiting to hear what needs to be done still.

Chantals final grant was for children's activity books. We are waiting for the MOU from NMDA to move forward with this at this time, but as soon as we get it, we will begin ordering the books- which should go hand in hand with soil health and the worm bins.

Harvey Morrow mentioned that it would be nice if Susan and Chantal looked for a way to dispose of the drip tape that the farmers pull out every couple of years. The tape is either sitting in piles around the valley, or they get caught on fire and that can't be great for the air quality. Potentially look at NMED or Jornada to see if they have any suggestions.

Personnel Committee- Has not met at this time.

Points System- Susan Downs got full points for the district, meaning we will have our full funding.

Fall Seedling Order- Has been placed, it will be a small order, only \$335.00 worth of trees which will be delivered the week of September 22. Total of 148 seedlings.

Annual Plan of Work- The board reviewed the current plan of work for the month of August and agreed that everything was moving along quickly.

Correspondence- Chantal reported that we received approvals for appointed supervisors, the interim budget, and also the request from Tyson Nicolls to present information about Bio Char at the meeting. Tyson then presented information about his company, Southwest Bio Char and the benefits that it brings to producers, including the methane emissions from dairies.

Adjournment

Seeing no other business, *Ronnie Garay made a motion to adjourn at 1038 am, Samantha Gillis seconded; motion carried unanimously.*

Presiding Official

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