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Bob Nichols, Chairman Eddie Vigil, Member

Rick Baish, Vice Chairman James Evrage, Member

Jeff Rabon, Secretary/Treasurer Colt Howland, Member

Clifton Varbel, Member

**OTERO SWCD MINUTES**

# OCTOBER 2, 2024

**MEMBERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT GUESTS**

Bob Nichols Katie Kruthaupt, NMDA

Rick Baish Ronnie Maes, USFS

Jeff Rabon Sid Gordon, OCCEA

Eddie Vigil **STAFF** Nick Smokovich, NMSF

James Evrage Vicky Milne John Tunberg, Contractor

Clifton Varbel Justin Padilla, BLM

Colt Howland **NRCS STAFF**

Aaron Wheeler

**CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was reviewed. James Evrage motioned to approve the agenda, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the September regular meeting were reviewed, James Evrage motioned to approve the minutes, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

## FINANCIAL REPORTS

The financial report was reviewed, James Evrage motioned to approve the monthly report as presented, and pay the bills listed, Colt Howland seconded, motion passed unanimously. The quarterly report was reviewed, James Evrage motioned to approve the report, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously. Vicky will submit it to DFA and the SWCC.

**CORRESPONDEN****CE**

The Bureau of Land Management awarded our new master agreement and the new invasive plant management agreement.

The auditor for the agreed upon procedures report has provided the engagement letter and picked up the files. He anticipates finishing the report mid-November.

**REPORTS**

NM Department of Agriculture – The NMDA report provided information on upcoming deadlines, meetings, and grant opportunities. There will be an operations training on October 18th. The timeline for applying for the legacy funds has changed. They anticipate opening the application window in February.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Aaron read the report. The Team 9 Local Work Group proposal was submitted to the State Office. Team 9 EQIP finalized obligations. They have over 4 million dollars contracted, of that over $848,000 has gone to the Otero Watershed Project. Sign-up deadlines have been announced. November 8th will be the application deadline for EQIP.

Otero County Cooperative Extension – Sid provided a report. They still do not have a 4-H agent. The Society for Range Management will host a fall tour in Carrizozo.

NM State Forestry – Nick Smokovich provided an update on the progress of the hazardous fuels projects. Trystan is working on a Landscape Scale Restoration Project in Perk Canyon. The Timberon project is looking good.

US Forest Service – Ronnie Maes provided an update. The South Sacramento Restoration Plan EIS is going out soon. The Cloudcroft WUI should go out next spring. The Forest Plan Revision is ongoing.

Bureau of Land Management – Justin Padilla provided an update. The new master agreement is progressing. The purchase order for $90,000 was placed in the new agreement. Justin and Lisa will be splitting up the permittees in Otero County.

SWCD – The Otero County Fair went well. We distributed calendars and information about FSA and NRCS programs along with noxious weed information. The fall African rue project has started. The noxious weed calendars are ready for delivery. The fall newsletter has been completed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

NRCS has been working on the contracting for the Dam Rehabilitation Plans.

The Otero County Cooperative Weed Management Area meeting was held last month. There were two representatives from Holloman AFB, Otero County Road Department and NMDA Noxious Weed Coordinator were present. There was discussion on the work being done at Holloman to control Salt Cedar.

## NEW BUSINESS

The legislative luncheon will be held on December 4th. There was discussion on topics (dams, drones, projects) and speakers. Vicky will contact NM Tech for potential updates.

The drone mapping project will cost $5,000. Holloman AFB has confirmed that all we need to provide is the date, time, location of the mapping for their approval. Colt Howland motioned to approve the project, Jeff Rabon seconded, motion passed unanimously.

John Tunberg introduced himself to the group. He will be working on the project proposal(s) for the Land of Enchantment Legacy Funds. Vicky gave a brief overview of the two projects that were developed years ago. Due to the shortened timeline to complete the proposal for new project funding we need to decide on one proposal to develop. The Tularosa Creek Watershed Action Strategy will be the easiest one to proceed with. The project needs to start above the headwaters on Mescalero Apache Tribal lands and then proceed downward. Vicky will get in contact with the new Mescalero DRMP director to discuss the project. Nick Smokovich discussed the potential for a landscape scale project. He suggested working with Trystan Harpold on a work plan. John will be contacting the partners for input.

With no further business to discuss, Rick Baish motioned to adjourn, Clifton Varbel seconded, motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:04 am.

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Bob Nichols, Chairman Jeff Rabon, Secretary/ Treasurer