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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**

# SEPTEMBER 4, 2024

**MEMBERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT GUESTS**

Rick Baish Bob Nichols Ronnie Maes, USFS

Jeff Rabon James Evrage Katie Kruthaupt, NMDA

Eddie Vigil Trystan Harpold, NMSF

Colt Howland **STAFF** Sid Gordon, OCCEA

Clifton Varbel Vicky Milne

 **NRCS STAFF**

 Kristi Wright

**CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 am.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was reviewed. Jeff Rabon motioned to approve the agenda, Colt Howland seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the August regular meeting were reviewed, Jeff Rabon motioned to approve the minutes, Colt Howland seconded, motion passed unanimously. The minutes from the August special meeting were reviewed, Eddie Vigil motioned to approve the minutes, Jeff Rabon seconded, motion passed unanimously.

## FINANCIAL REPORTS

The financial report was reviewed, Colt Howland motioned to approve the monthly report as presented, and pay the bills listed, Eddie Vigil seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**CORRESPONDEN****CE**

The Department of Finance and Administration has approved our budget reports.

NMACD has requested a silent auction item to support the employee’s association. Rick Baish motioned to approve up to $100 be spent on an auction item, Jeff Rabon seconded, motion passed unanimously.

BLM is finalizing the new master agreement. All new projects will be in this agreement.

The application for drone mapping of invasive species was not funded. There was discussion of a smaller project to establish the benefits of using a drone. Colt Howland mentioned that the Range Improvement Task Force is using drones to map brush. There may be a way to coordinate a project with them. Vicky will work with Colt on the small-scale project to present at the October meeting.

NM State Forestry has issued the new purchase orders for the hazardous fuels projects and the Sacramento mountain noxious weed project.

NM General Services Division has invoiced for our Liability and Workers Compensation policies.

**REPORTS**

NM Department of Agriculture – The NMDA report provided information on upcoming deadlines, meetings, and grant opportunities.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Kristi provided a report. The Team 9 Local Work Group meeting was held on August 27th in T or C. Team 9 EQIP is finalizing applications. September 13th is the deadline for obligation. They have over 4 million dollars contracted to date as a team, 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. Safety note: Rattlesnakes are out.

Otero County Cooperative Extension – Sid provided a report. They do not have a 4-H agent. The African rue is already blooming. The Society for Range Management did a tour of the Hermits Peak Calf Canyon restoration work. He hopes they will be able to bring some of that type of work to the South Fork Fire area.

NM State Forestry – Trystan provided an update on the progress of the hazardous fuels projects. A planning meeting was held on August 9th. All work must be completed by November 30th so that the invoices can be submitted and paid prior to December 30th.

US Forest Service – Ronnie Maes. The South Sacramento Restoration Plan EIS should be done this fall and the Cloudcroft WUI next spring. The Forest Plan Revision is ongoing.

Bureau of Land Management – Lisa Phillips provided an update by email. The new master agreement is progressing. The purchase order for $90,000 is being placed in the new agreement. The existing range agreement has no new funding until the Pinyon Jay Survey is completed. The Bureau of Land Management is discontinuing the use of convenience checks. These checks are used to pay for the noxious weed calendars that Lane Hauser orders. It was suggested that we look into Venmo or PayPal to allow them to make payments. Any service charges can be included in the cost per calendar. Vicky has asked NMDA for assistance and researched the rules through NM Finance. It appears that this would be a lot of work for one payment.

SWCD – The fall African rue project will start in October. The noxious weed calendars will be here next week. The fall newsletter needs articles.

**OLD BUSINESS**

NRCS has been working on the contracting for the Dam Rehabilitation Plans. The contracting must be completed before the end of the fiscal year in September. Vicky spoke with Eli Gnann last month and they are negotiating on the price. There was discussion on just doing Curtis Canyon Dam if funding is limited. Jeff Rabon motioned to approve submitting Curtis Canyon Dam as a stand-alone project, Colt Howland seconded, motion passed unanimously. Vicky will send the information to Eli Gann.

Watershed Dam Project Planning meeting will be held on October 3rd at 10am. Mark Cadwallader will be here along with USFS staff to prepare a work plan for next spring. Vicky will post a special meeting notice in case we have four board members present.

## NEW BUSINESS

Otero County has provided a subdivision for review. It is in Chaparral. Eddie Vigil reviewed Outback Acres and found no deficiencies. The approval will be submitted to Otero County.

Small Conservation Projects – Jake Carner has applied to do erosion control and repair his dirt tank. Vicky and Colt spoke with Jake last month. He is taking the location into consideration to avoid this happening again. Jeff Rabon motioned to approve the project, Colt Howland seconded, motion passed unanimously. Sally Walker Ranch has submitted a project to improve their livestock watering pipeline. Colt discussed the project and then abstained from further action. Eddie Vigil motioned to approve the project, Clifton Varbel seconded, motion passed unanimously.

The Otero County Fair will be held September 19th-22nd. We will have a booth set up with program outreach and educational materials.

The legislative luncheon will be held on December 4th. Triple Nickell BBQ has provided a menu. They charge an additional dollar per person to set up and serve. It was decided to keep it the same as last year.

The Otero County Cooperative Weed Management Area will hold the fall meeting this afternoon from 1-3pm. It is an in-person meeting with a virtual option.

With no further business to discuss, Jeff Rabon motioned to adjourn, Eddie Vigil seconded, motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:52 am.

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Bob Nichols, Chairman Jeff Rabon, Secretary/ Treasurer