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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**

# JUNE 5, 2024

**MEMBERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT GUESTS**

Bob Nichols Eddie Vigil Laura Doth, RC&D

Rick Baish Clifton Varbel Tony McWilliams, RC&D

Jeff Rabon James Evrage Rick Ledbetter, Roosevelt SWCD +1

Colt Howland Greg Mendez, MAT

 **STAFF** Mark Cadwallader 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. Rick Baish motioned to approve the agenda, Jeff Rabon seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the May meeting were reviewed, Rick Baish motioned to approve the minutes, Colt Howland seconded, motion passed unanimously.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

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

**CORRESPONDEN****CE**

Otero County Community Services grant for FY25 was approved.

NM Department of Finance and Administration approved the interim budget.

NMACD will be hosting region meetings in June. Regions 3 & 6 will meet on June 6th in Las Cruces at the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum.

SW Quay sent a check for the winner of the FFA competition from Mescalero along with a request for 2025 sponsorship. Jeff Rabon motioned to sponsor in the amount of $100, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**REPORTS**

NM Department of Agriculture – The NMDA report provided information on upcoming deadlines, meetings, and grant opportunities. NMDA/SWCC is currently meeting to review the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund applications.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Kristie provided a report. Team 9 EQIP has 35 applications preapproved, 10 in approved status and 8 obligated. CSP has 11 applications preapproved, 7 in approved status and 1 obligated. The lead planner position is Alamogordo has been filled. Christian Hopkins will be here July 1st from NRCS Texas.

South Central Mountain RC&D – Laura provided a report. The application to update the Community Wildfire Protection Plan has been funded. The Otero Working Group will hold their next meeting on June 24th. The NM RC&D will be the fiscal agent for the technical assistance funds for the Rural Community Forester.

US Forest Service – Ronnie Maes provided a written report. The Lincoln National Forest is still proceeding with a decision date of mid-August for the South Sacramento Restoration Project. Dam Maintenance Completion Report from Mark Cadwallader is expected soon. The Lincoln National Forest has entered into agreement with Rio Grande Returns to implement the Silver Springs Restoration Project. Our new forest hydrologist, Chad Novak, began a couple of pay periods ago and is working on the Silver Springs Watershed Restoration Action Plan (WRAP). Chad Novak will also be working toward completing WRAPs for Agua Chiquita and Rio Peñasco here on the Sacramento Ranger District. The Sacramento Ranger District is making progress toward analyzing the effects of the Cloudcroft Fuels Reduction and Forest Restoration Project (aka, Cloudcroft Wildland Urban Interface) The Sacramento Ranger District will be re-scoping the Denny Grassland Restoration and Fuels Reduction Project. The district has completed prescribed burns in the Sixteen Springs Project Area for this spring. We will resume in the fall. The Moser Fire, unknown cause, began on May 20th just east of Cloudcroft Ski Area off the north side of Highway 82. It consumed 96 acres on Forest Service and private property. Chad Novak assessed the burned area and recommended rehabilitation to address soil loss and runoff issues that will likely occur during rain events.

SWCD – The applications for the Musk Thistle treatment are coming in. Vicky is working with the contractor and EMNRD on the timeline for treatments/invoices. The May invoice was submitted to Otero County. The rolling river trailer has been painted. The spring newsletter was completed and uploaded to the website.

**OLD BUSINESS**

BLM new agreement submitted March 13, 2024.

Capital Outlay – phase one completed. Mark Cadwallader shared his report.

NMDA Legacy Fund applications were submitted.

FY25 Water Quality and Conservation application was submitted.

## NEW BUSINESS

Roosevelt SWCD - Weather Modification project for agreement approval. Rick Ledbetter presented the information. They cannot work on federal lands, so the majority of Otero County is out. Jeff Rabon motioned to have Bob Nichols sign the agreement, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

NRCS has notified us that the Dam Rehabilitation Projects were funded. Contracting should be completed in June with all work to be completed by the end of September.

Kristi provided the updated Unfunded Agreement for review/approval. Jeff Rabon motioned to approve the agreement, Colt Howland seconded, motion passed unanimously.

James Cadwallader has completed his small conservation project. Rick Baish motioned to reimburse him the maximum amount of $7,500, Jeff Rabon seconded, motion passed unanimously.

NRCS has provided three Coordinated Resource Management Plans for SWCD signature. After review Rick Baish motioned to approve Bob Nichols signing them, Jeff Rabon seconded, motion passed unanimously.

The annual plan for FY25 was presented. Rick Baish motioned to approve the plan, Jeff Rabon seconded, motion passed unanimously.

The Agreed Upon Procedures contract has been submitted to the Office of the State Auditor. Colt Howland motioned for Bob Nichols to sign the contract when approved, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

The November meeting date needs to be changed to the 13th. Jeff Rabon motioned to approve the date change, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

With no further business to discuss, Rick Baish motioned to adjourn, Jeff Rabon seconded, motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:20 pm.

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Bob Nichols, Chairman Jeff Rabon, Secretary/ Treasurer