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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**

# APRIL 2, 2025

**MEMBERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT GUESTS**

Bob Nichols Colt Howland Katie Kruthaupt, NMDA

Rick Baish Sid Gordon, OCCEA

Jeff Rabon Laura Doth, SCM RC&D

Eddie Vigil **STAFF** Chad Novack, USFS

James Evrage Vicky Milne Justin Padilla, BLM

Clifton Varbel

 **NRCS STAFF**

 Kristi Wright

**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 March meeting were reviewed, James Evrage motioned to approve the minutes, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

The monthly and quarterly financial reports were presented, James Evrage motioned to approve the reports as presented, and pay the bills listed, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously. The interim budget for the next fiscal year was presented. James Evrage motioned to approve the budget and sign resolution 06-2425 and submit it to Department of Finance and Administration, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**CORRESPONDEN****CE**

Otero County Fair Association has provided the fair booth application forms. James Evrage motioned to pay the $125 for the fair booth, Jeff Rabon seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Otero County Fair Association has provided the 2025 Friends of the Fair sponsor form. Rick Baish motioned to pay the $150 for the sponsorship, James Evrage seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Earth Day at the Zoo will be held on April 19th. The service center will have a booth. There was discussion on the rolling river trailer. Hannah Wood may be interested in utilizing it with 4H.

**REPORTS**

NM Department of Agriculture – The NMDA report provided information on upcoming deadlines, meetings, and grant opportunities. The district funding increase requested through the legislature has been successful. They are waiting for the governor to sign the legislation before deciding how they will disperse it.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Kristi read the report. Team 9 has 13 EQIP applications in the preapproved status. There is one in Alamogordo and 12 in Las Cruces. CSP has 4 preapproved applications: three in T or C and one in Las Cruces. NRCS State Technical Committee Meeting will be held on April 9th from 9am – 4pm.

Otero County Cooperative Extension – Sid provided a report. Colt Howland wanted everyone to know the African Rue has arrived for the spring. The pesticide applicator CEU workshop was successful. There will be another Living with Fire meeting. The Otero County Cooperative Weed Management Area meeting went well. We had representatives from Fort Bliss, US Forest Service, White Sands National Park, and the Otero County Road Department. May 5th and 6th the NM Society for Range Management will be hosting a spring meeting and tour in Ruidoso.

South Central Mountain RC&D – Laura provided a report. Timberon Phase VI has 50 acres left. There has been evidence of the spring flows returning after the thinning treatments. There are 50 people interested in the Cloudcroft NFL project. Trystan Harpold is working on new applications. Laura is working on two new grants and a $100,000 project on Carissa Springs. There will be another Otero Working Group meeting on April 16th. The EWP in Ruidoso has 21.6 million dollars spent of the 53 million obligated to the project. They are beginning work in the river channel.

US Forest Service – Chad Novack provided an update. The South Sacramento Restoration Project has been signed. Projects are being developed. The Non-Native Invasive Plant Project EIS is under analysis with USFWS. It is expected to be signed this fall. Adam McCullough is working on a web application for mapping. There was also discussion about the Denny Hill project, their work will be outside the area of Bear Creek Dam.

Bureau of Land Management – Justin Padilla provided an update. BLM is still working on adding funding to our master agreement. The request has been submitted for brush and weed management projects. The BLM is also working on dust mitigation projects in Deming.

SWCD – The commercial applicator for the musk thistle project is still not interested in doing the spray this year. The spring newsletter needs articles.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Drone mapping – Colt has been in contact with a new person at Holloman. We have the protocol to start mapping.

The second phase of the Pinon Jay survey has started.

The landscape scale restoration project through the district opportunities funding was submitted.

## NEW BUSINESS

The NMDA Noxious Weed Management Grant cycle is open. Now that we have approval from the Department of Defense to operate the drone it was motioned by Rick Baish to submit the proposal to map 10,000 acres by drone, James Evrage seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Appointed Supervisors – Jeff Rabon motioned to submit Rick Baish and James Evrage to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission for approval, Clifton Varbel seconded, motion passes unanimously.

South Central Mountain RC&D has approved the contract for services agreements with Otero SWCD for the Cloudcroft NFL project and the State Land Office project. These agreements approve the sharing of the administrative fees for the work performed by each entity.

Curtis Canyon Dam Early Warning System – Colt Howland received an updated cost estimate for the system of $35,900 installed. There was discussion on the request for funding assistance from Otero County. The decision was to keep the request to $20,000 and we will pay for the installation. Colt has agreed to attend the commission meeting with Vicky on April 10th.

The annual funding presentation to Otero County will be April 22nd at 9am. Bob Nichols will be in attendance with Vicky.

With no further business to discuss, Jeff Rabon motioned to adjourn, James Evrage seconded, motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:20 am.

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Bob Nichols, Chairman Jeff Rabon, Secretary/ Treasurer