

**HEREFORD NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT (HNRCD)
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**Thursday, September 23, 2021
Palominas Fire District Training Center Facility
9222 S Kings Ranch Rd, Hereford, AZ 85615**

A. Call to Order

Chair John Ladd called the meeting to order 5:00P.M.

B. Introductions, Roll Call, and Housekeeping

Board Present: John Ladd, Chair, Lucinda Earven, Vice-Chair, Steve Boice, Supervisor, Jim Lindsey Supervisor, and Pat Call, Supervisor

Board Absent: None

Others Present:

Joanne Roberts, HNRCD Clerk of the Board

Jennifer Krentz, NRCS Douglas Field Office, Soil Conservationist

Tricia Gerodette, Public (by telephone)

Kathy Morris, HNRCD Cooperator

Tom Crosby, Supervisor, Cochise County

Deb Smith, Executive Director, AACD

Scott Feldhausen, Gila District Manager, Bureau of Land Management

Joy Banks, HNRCD Cooperator

Joanne Gasper, HNRCD Cooperator (by telephone)

Matthew Jewell- Natural Resource Manager II-Service Forester, DFFM (by telephone)

Allana Pierce, Vice-President, 4H Brush Poppers Equestrian Club

Theresa Pierce, Public, Parent, 4H Brush Poppers Equestrian Club

Kate Cox, Club Leader, 4H Brush Poppers Equestrian Club

Brooke Ochoa, Member, 4-H Brush Poppers Equestrian Club

Lena Ochoa, Public, Sister to Brooke

A quorum was met.

C. Call to the Public

A.R.S. 38-431.01 authorizes the Board to make an open call to the public during a public meeting, to allow individuals to address the Board on any issue within the jurisdiction of the public body. The time will be limited to three minutes per speaker.

Ms. Deborah Smith recognized and thanked the Chair and HNRCD for their work and support of all the Conservation Districts policies, resolutions and efforts in conservation.

D. Consent Agenda

1. Minutes of the August 19, 2021 Regular Meeting

2. Financial Reports File for Audit July 1 through August 31, 2021

3. Payment Schedule for September 2021

Hereford NRCD Final Minutes 23Sept2021

Motion: Supervisor Pat Call moved to approve consent agenda items D1, D2, & D3.
Second: Supervisor Steve Boice seconded the motion.
Vote: Carried unanimously.
Discussion: None

Strategic Discussions: Presentations and Feedback

E. Education Center Report

1. Tombstone High School FFA Program Expenditure of Funds Update and Discussion
No discussion.
2. Education Committee Report
Supervisor Lindsey had no update to report.

Discussion Items

F. Agency and Committee Reports

1. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Ms. Jennifer Krentz provided an NRCS Activity Report. The Douglas Office finished CSP obligations and are in the process of getting all of the permits for cultural resource and engineering clearances for fiscal year 2021 EQIP contracts. The Douglas Office is also in the process of compiling information for the 2021 NRCS drought survey which is done once a year. The report is separated by conservation districts (WWD and HNRCD). Ms. Krentz is covering crop information and Mr. Don Decker is covering range. They are interested in receiving input on drought hotspots where there are dry areas and/or well issues as well as low forage production information that could fall under the drought umbrella.

Ms. Krentz continued to report on the decision by the National office to provide retro-active payments for livestock irrigation and water pipelines because of the increases in the price of materials needed to complete those practices. Payments are being made only for practices that were implemented during fiscal year 2021 (January-December). Affected producers have already been notified and payment will be a direct deposit without further signatures or paperwork.

Chair Ladd asked if the Douglas Office is open. Ms. Krentz responded negatively but office appointments are being scheduled. However, if someone does want to make an in-person appointment they will have to attest to being vaccinated for Covid-19 (Covid) and sign a form to that affect. She and Mr. Decker are making field appointments upon requests.

Vice-Chair Earven inquired if the retro-payment monies are from the Farm Bill. Ms. Krentz responded negatively and informed the Board it is Covid relief money. Ms. Deborah Smith also noted that counties and cities are also getting Covid relief money and Phoenix is putting some of their money into conservation easements.

2. Bureau of Land Management (Bureau LM [Bureau])

Mr. Scott Feldhausen provided a Bureau Activity report. Mr. Feldhausen noted changes in leadership and the shifting around of staff. He noted how busy the Gila District was during fire season with 80,000 acres burned. Most of the office overhead is still present, but he is still moving people around. Half of the staff were away for 6 months for fire duty. Covid is also an issue. The office is running at about 25% capacity and they are trying to keep public rooms open. The public needs to wear masks inside the building.

Mr. Feldhausen continued to provide information on the Border issues and looking into impacts from the finished and unfinished work on the Border wall. There is a lot of erosion and he has reviewed these issues with Chair Ladd. A report with recommendations was submitted to DOI on these impacts. The wall structure has caused the base load to back

upstream on the San Pedro River (River) and all washes across the Bureau's land including the Guadalupe Canyon (with new roads) and Baker Flat Wilderness Area. This will eventually change the flow of the River. He has requested funds for repairs.

With regards to SPRNCA grazing lease renewals, Mr. Feldhausen stated the goal is for the proposed decision to be released before the holidays. The Bureau appreciates the willingness of permittees to work together to find solutions understanding the continuation of livestock on the SPRNCA is the most contentious issue. The proposal is to keep the allotments. He further stated that they/he needs to educate and inform the upper leadership on Resource Management Plan mitigation and the perspective from the plaintiffs that reject grazing allotments including the long history of building partnerships. Mr. Feldhausen spoke briefly about past funding issues and some new funding that will be used to address fencing issues as well as to increase monitoring. The Bureau has two notices of intent to sue for trespass livestock.

He asked for the District's input on how to work better with landowners and the community and noted that 60% of trespass livestock come from other than the Bureau lessees or Bureau lands. Conversation continued and touched on non-branded trespass cattle, alternative solutions using "cowboys", funding, staffing, certified inspectors and the department of agriculture responsibilities, involvement between Border Patrol, the Bureau, and law enforcement, NEPA for fire, fuel and vegetation treatments for the Safford Field Office and Las Cienegas, the recently signed MOU between the Bureau, Fort Huachuca (Fort), Cochise County, and City of Sierra Vista, and the proposed fence workshop now being discussed with HNRCD and other partners.

Chair Ladd noted he would like to have at least one fence workshop before December 30, 2021 and several over a year's time and would like to discuss trespass livestock and fence issue reporting procedures by volunteers and legal issues associated with using volunteers. Volunteers need to be knowledgeable about livestock and understand land management boundaries. He further stated that the HNRCD preference is not to involve high school students in this workshop because of the safety risks and insurance issues. Mr. Feldhausen asked for help with the messaging for these issues and to help guide the process. Chair Ladd stated he believes this can be a good long-term beneficial partnership.

There were further comments and brief discussion on removal of trespass horses on the SPRNCA, legal authority to remove them and other livestock, responsibility of the state livestock officers and the Sheriff's ranch deputies, incorporating information into the workshop, boundary fence survey requirements, maintaining existing fences versus building new fences, and fencing materials to be supplied by the Bureau to private landowners that have a shared boundary fence.

3. Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network (CCRN)

Supervisor Call had no update to report other than an upcoming meeting scheduled in October. He further stated he sent a video of storm damage to the Horseshoe Draw structure, that he took using drone technology, to the CCRN partners. This was the same video provided to the Board. He noted the basin filled over the spillway and into the wings and damage was significant due to the volume and force of the water. Supervisor call stated the inlet had a 5-foot high water mark while the spillway was 2 to 3 feet.

Chair Ladd is in contact with Cochise County for maintenance and repair work. Chair Ladd noted the County is monitoring the outflows but the monitoring devices have been wiped out. They need to install new devices at the same locations. There are no cost estimates at this time for repairs and he does not want any new access roads built.

4. Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape Partnership (FHSL)

Chair Ladd had no updates to report. Vice-Chair Earven asked Mr. Feldhausen if he is involved with this group to which he replied positively. Mr. Feldhausen stated the annual Partnership meeting is scheduled for October 20. Work over the past year has been focused on the Strategic Implementation Plans. The group is adjusting its strategic focus on DOD emphasis on climate resiliency, water conservation, threatened and endangered species, and open spaces which aligns perfectly with Fort Huachuca. As a result, it looks like more money will be available for the FHSL projects. Mr. Feldhausen stated the Fort was please to sign the MOU discussed in his earlier report in this meeting (Agenda Item F2).

Chair Ladd asked Ms. Krentz if she or Mr. Decker attends these meetings. She responded negatively but believes the State Office is primarily involved. For the Districts, there are expanded opportunities for producers. The expansion of the FHSL boundary, known as the Mitten, will be discussed at the October committee meeting. The proposed expansion will go all the way to the US/ Mexico border for future military training airspace needs.

5. Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (ADFFM)

Mr. Matthew Jewell provided an agency report. Mr. Jewell stated how busy the Agency has been with end of year reporting for federal and state reports as well as recent assistance to the Fort conducting pile burns. DFFM is putting forth two new forest legacy conservation easements; 1) Cochise Stronghold Ranch in the Dragoon Mountains and, 2) Bull Basin, an historical ranch in Northern Arizona near Flagstaff. He mentioned the HNRCD District landowners that reached out to him and stated he will be getting back to their request after the end of year reports are complete. DFFM is expanding their southern district team by adding two more foresters. The agency is going through some restructuring. Mr. Jewell asks that you reach out to him for mesquite thinning and the DFFM conservation easement program for private landowners.

6. Arizona State Land Department - No one present to report.

Chair Ladd asked if anyone was opposed to moving to Agenda Item 11 under New Business Presentations because it is getting late and it is a school night for the students. With no objections, Chair Ladd opened the discussion under Presentations. A summary of the presentation is listed under this Agenda Item in this document.

7. Arizona Association of Conservation Districts (AACD)

Ms. Deborah Smith provided a report. Ms. Smith thanked Chair Ladd for attending the annual conference and the Board of Directors meeting. All 30 State Districts were present.

One of the main reasons for Ms. Smith attendance at tonight's' meeting is to reinforce the launching of the District's Resource Assessment and Conservation Action Plan (RACAP) process. She emphasized that the District has two years to complete the RACAP and that the District will be working very closely with the agencies (e.g. Bureau, Forestry), the County, producers, small landowners and others. She stated the District has funds now to start meeting with these groups to begin the resource assessments. The District needs to schedule 2 to 4 Local Workgroup (LWG) meetings for the next two years. The agencies and organizations will be asked to present specific information to the group, to share shape files and planned projects information to integrate the data for visualization of resources (i.e. build maps) to help focus on where efforts will be strategically implemented over a 5-year period.

Ms. Smith informed the Board of AACD's Statewide Rangeland Resource Management Agreement with the Bureau. She provided an example of project funding and partnership through this agreement for a District in northern Arizona.

Ms. Smith further explained the purpose behind creating a Private Portal for the Districts to upload information. This portal is paid for by NRCS (Keisha's Tatum's funds). She stated its benefits for planning and the allocation of money. The intent is for the RACAP to be an on-line living document with continual updating. She added the District should use the outreach and education money they already have to talk to small landowners and show them how they can work with the District to better manage the lands.

There were comments and a brief discussion on reinstating a small land owner NRCS budget line item and what the best approach to get that accomplished would be, such as presenting the issue at the NACD level, adding it into the Districts' RACAP as a conservation implementation strategy (CIS), prepare and submit a report to Ms. Tatum, or to include as a distinct section in the RACAP. Ms. Smith reinforced that the RACAP belongs to the District's and NRCS is helping by funding parts of the plan that meet their (NRCS's) priority areas and practices. She further stated that even if NRCS funds cannot be used, other partnership opportunities including aligning with the FHSL strategic plan is critical for funding projects and practices not covered by EQIP. The resource assessments and conservation action plan are statutory requirements. The final section of the plan will describe partnerships and funding. Some further discussion regarding working with the FHSL and sharing geospatial information for multiple Districts. The more partners with funding the better. If the District can get their priorities incorporated into other management plans, the better it is for funding opportunities other than NRCS EQIP money.

Ms. Smith continued to inform the Board on the process and maximum funding for the District for this effort. She reviewed the requirements a contractor needs to have to be in compliance when using federal money in order to be hired by the District. AACD can provide a list of contractors if needed as well as their own staff that do this type of work. Ms. Smith stresses the need for the District to get someone or more than one contractor hired now so that training can begin immediately. She advised the Board that funding cannot be released to the District until the contractor has been vetted and approved.

Ms. Smith noted there is a template for the plan. Part of it describes partner priorities and part of it describes the District's priorities. A brief discussion ensued regarding additional components of the plan such as archaeology requirements, and working with SHPO. Ms. Smith noted there are meetings and discussions going on now with Lisa Atkins on projects that are being held up at SHPO and the State Land Office across the state. Mr. Feldhausen noted how the Bureau has been able to streamline the SHPO process through a programmatic agreement with AACD and any Bureau field office can put money into the agreement. Some discussion on when the Bureau field offices can be involved, how long the agreement is for and when NRCS field office range conservationist can conduct archaeology clearances on private lands.

8. San Pedro NCA Uplands and Grazing Working Group

Chair Ladd had no updates to report but inquired if Supervisor Lindsey had been attending these meetings. Supervisor Lindsey responded positively but for personnel business and he does not represent the District with this Working Group.

G. Old Business

1. Discussion and Update on Memorial and Dedication for Mike Hayhurst

Supervisor Lindsey met with Mr. David Thursby, Tombstone HS Principal. They discussed and identified a location near the football field. Mr. Thursby has called for blue staking the area. Supervisor Lindsey noted there is no water source at this location other than a downspout but Mr. Thursby assured him that the tree will be water regularly by the school's maintenance department or FFA students.

Discussion on accessibility to the area, more details on the location, production and placement of the plaque, dedication date, logistics on picking up the tree and bench, delivery to the Tombstone HS campus on October 13th or 14th, backhoe services and filler dirt.

2. Review/Discuss updates to the Draft Policy Guidelines for Funding Student SAE, 4-H, and Small Landowner Projects Using Local District Monies

3. Status Co-Hosting Small Land Owner Workshops Fencing/Other types of Work- Shop Coordination with BLM and Friends of the San Pedro River, Others?

4. Erosion Control Small Acreage Land Owner Workshop

5. Update and Discussion on BOS Regular Meeting Schedule for Calendar Year 2022

a. "Quarterly" Meetings January 20, April 21, September 15 Location, Time

b. All "Other" Meetings, February 17, March 17, May 19, June 19, July 21, October 20, November 17 Location, Time

6. HNRCD Supervisor Representation on AACD Committees

7. Resolution and Policy Update

Chair Ladd stated the Board approved the recommendations at last month's Board meeting but he wanted to make sure everyone really did review the changes before he signs them. Supervisor Lindsey stated he did not go through them thoroughly and would like time to review in more detail. This will remain on the Agenda for next month's meeting.

At this time Chair Ladd asked for a motion to table Old Business Agenda Items 2 through 6 until next meeting.

Motion: Vice-Chair Earven moved to table Old Business Agenda Items 2 through 6 until next months' regular Board meeting.

Second: Supervisor Boice seconded the motion.

Vote: Carried unanimously.

Discussion: None

H. New Business

1. Horseshow Draw Storm Damage and Maintenance Update

Refer to discussion Agenda Item F3 under Agency and Committee Reports.

2. Professional Service Agreement and Task Order Work Statement, Discussion and Adoption of AACD Template

Vice-Chair Earven asked for someone to summarize the background on this item. Ms. Deborah Smith identified the template contract and task order language was reviewed by an Attorney and the Federal Auditor that oversees AACD work. The language and clauses “cover” the District even when federal money is not involved. Ms. Smith stated there were some questions about the clauses and asked if the Board wanted to address those questions. Ms. Roberts requested that the Board and selected individual(s) convene into an Executive Session because we are discussing her contract.

Motion: Supervisor Call moved to convene into Executive Session.

Second: Supervisor Lindsey seconded the motion.

Vote: Carried unanimously.

Discussion: None

The Regular Meeting was adjourned at 7:08 PM in order to convene the Executive Session (Agenda Item L).

3. Arizona Water Protection Fund Request In-put On Grant Application

Chair Ladd noted the District does not have an application. This item refers to an application that falls within the HNRCD geographical boundary and the Board received a letter from AWPf giving the Board an opportunity to comment on the merits of the application. The Board has until October 29,2021 to submit any comments or letter of support.

Presentations

I. Brush Poppers 4-H

1. Introduction to this newly formed 4-H Horse Club

Ms. Kate Cox, Club Leader and two student members introduced their background with horses and the reason for creating a 4H club that focuses on horses. The club is based out of Sierra Vista but services all of Cochise County. The club currently has 12 members ages 8-19 years and consists of both boys and girls. Some of their accomplishments to date include a horse show with Sonoita and they will also host and participate in an invitational for six counties close to and including Cochise County. It is their own version of a state fair and is to be held this November. The club meetings are topical including, mounted, regular, and presentation meetings. The club invites technical experts to share their expertise in riding, showmanship, clinicians (veterinarians), and the fitting of horseshoes (farrier).

Brooke Ochoa is a senior member of 4-H. She is new to the program and began training her horse. This horse will be used for 4H activities. Ms. Ochoa informed the Board of the value of the club and what it has helped her with through participation at camps and with public speaking.

Allana Pierce is the Vice- President of the club and she has been riding since she was 4-years old. She trains horses and as the Vice-President she is involved with its members and their contributions to the organization. She informed the Board of the benefits of trying new things, learning from other members, and the comradery that comes by being part of 4H.

Chair Ladd asked what the District can do to support this club. Ms. Cox states interest in volunteering, providing a presentation for their meetings, joining their Facebook, or providing opportunities to help fundraise.

Comments/Announcements

J. Board Clerk, Supervisor, Advisor Comments/Announcements- No announcements were made.

K. Correspondence

- 1. Annual Disbursement Check General Funds
- 2. Arizona Water Protection Commission Grant Application (See Agenda Item H3)

L. Executive Session: Notice is hereby given to the members of the Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District Board of Supervisors and to the general public that the Board, pursuant to A.R.S. §38- 431.02, may vote to convene in Executive Session to discuss personnel and contract issues. No vote will be taken in Executive Session. If authorized by majority vote of the Board of Supervisors, the Executive Session will be held immediately after the vote. The Executive Session will not be open to the public. All persons present at an Executive Session are hereby reminded that A.R.S. §38-431.03 imposes strict confidentiality requirements on discussions that occur in Executive Session. Generally, such discussions cannot be revealed to non-board members, unless necessary to carry out the purpose of the statutory provision that specifically permits an Executive Session. The Open Meeting Law provides for a fine of up to \$500 for violating this confidentiality requirement, and requires that this admonition be given.

Chair Ladd called the Executive Session to order at 7:13pm

Before leaving at 7:28 P.M. Supervisor Call gave his proxy – vote to Chair Ladd.

A quorum remained.

The Executive Session was adjourned at 8:08 P.M.

M. Reconvene

The Regular Meeting was reconvened at 8:08 P.M and immediately adjourned.

N. Board Clerk Contract/Action

No action was taken.

O. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:08 P.M.

Approved by the Board _____ *John W Ladd* _____ *OCT 21 - 2021*
 (Date)

Signed _____ *John W Ladd* _____
 (John Ladd, Chairman)

Hereford NRCD does not discriminate against any person based on race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, veteran status, or any other status or condition protected by law.

ACRONYMS

AACD	Arizona Association of Conservation Districts
ADEQ	Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
Ag	Agriculture
AIM	Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring Strategy (BLM program)
ALWT	Arizona Land and Water Trust
ACGA	Arizona Cattle Growers Association
ASLD	Arizona State Land Department
AGFD	Arizona Game and Fish Department
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CCRN	Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network
CIS	Conservation Implementation Strategy
CRM	Coordinated Resource Management
CSP	Conservation Stewardship Program
CTE	Career and Technical Education
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FFA	Future Farmers of America
FHSL	Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape
FLPMA	Federal Land Planning and Management Act
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FY	Fiscal Year
NC	Nature Conservancy
HPC	Habitat Partnership Committees
HNRCD	Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District
LHE	Land Health Evaluation
LRP	Landowner Relations and Habitat Enhancement Program
Mitten	Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape Boundary
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NACD	National Association of Conservation Districts
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRCWAY	Natural Resource Conservation Workshop for Arizona Youth

RCPP	Regional Conservation Partnership Program
RMP	Resource Management Plan
SAE	Supervised Agricultural Experience
SARC	Small Acreage Resource Concerns
SHPO	State Historical Preservation Office
SLRP	Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape Restoration Partnership
SP NRCD	San Pedro Natural Resource Conservation District
SPRNCA	San Pedro River National Conservation Area
SRM	Society for Range Management
TBD	To Be Determined
THS	Tombstone High School
U of A	University of Arizona
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
USPP	Upper San Pedro Partnership
USPO	United States Post Office
VPA	Voluntary Public Access
WOTUS	Waters of the United States
WPF	Water Protection Fund
WWD NRCD	White-Water Draw Natural Resource Conservation District