



Pima Natural Resource Conservation District
NRCS Plant Materials Center
3241 N. Romero Road
Tucson, AZ 85705

**Final Approved MINUTES OF COMBINED PUBLIC MEETING OF
PIMA NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT (PIMA NRCD) BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS**

And

Pima Center for Conservation Education Board of Directors (PCCE)

DATE: Tuesday October 23, 2018

Location: NRCS Plant Materials Ctr., 3241 N Romero Rd, Tucson, AZ

The meeting came to order at 1:20 PM.

Attendees:

Pima NRCD/PCCE Supervisors Jim Chilton, Cindy Coping (Chair), Jonathan DuHamel, Patricia King (Treasurer), and Andrew McGibbon.

NRCS: Kristen Egen, Alisha Phipps, Brett Myers, and Alvaro Campos (Soil Conservationist)

Altar Valley Conservation Alliance: Mary Miller (AVCA Chair), Charlie Miller, Julia Sittig (AVCA Science Coordinator)

Supervisor King moved to approve the minutes of September 25, 2018. Supervisor DuHamel seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

Supervisor King presented the financial status reports for Pima NRCD and PCCE. Supervisor Coping explained some of the details.

Invoices and other payments:

At the September 25, 2018 meeting, the board decided that Supervisor Coping should invoice the District for writing and submitting comments on the proposed USFWS revision to regulations on threatened and endangered species listings and critical habitat designations. At the October 24 meeting, Supervisor Coping stated that in support of her own work, biologist Dennis Parker had performed eight hours of work researching and advising the PNRCD on the comments, and should also be compensated. In addition, other NRCDs have already either approved or sent

checks totaling \$1,000, and at least one additional NRCD has inquired about participating in compensation of Mr. Parker.

Motion: Following discussion, Supervisor Chilton moved that the Pima NRCD pay Mr. Parker \$1,000.00 and pay Supervisor Coping \$1,000.00. Supervisor King seconded the motion. The motion carried 4 ayes, 0 nays, and Supervisor Coping abstained.

At the meeting of September 25, 2018, the Board had approved reimbursement up to \$750 in travel expenses for Julia Sittig to attend the Western Governors' Association's October 10-12 workshop on invasive species and restoration.

WGA Report: At the present meeting, Ms. Sittig submitted the attached written report and made a verbal presentation to the board. She also submitted her receipts for the workshop and travel expenses, which totaled \$880, including the workshop registration fee of \$175.00 plus travel expenses of \$705.22 (\$880.22 combined). Mary Miller stated that the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance had compensated Ms. Sittig for her time to attend the workshop.

Motion: Supervisor McGibbon moved to reimburse Ms. Sittig for \$880.22, using funds from the Education Center. Supervisor DuHamel seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0 by voice vote.

Report: Mary Miller reported on the current activities of the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance and graciously also submitted the attached written report.

Report on Amicus Brief: Supervisor Chilton spoke with Norm James. It is too late to file an amicus brief in the Weyerhauser v. USFWS Dusky gopher frog case.

Report on Pima NRCD and PCCE Public Records Status

The Pima NRCD/PCCE Board had voted at the August 28, 2018 teleconference to withhold final payment of a terminated contract clerk until such time as all records belonging to the District/PCCE were returned to the District office. However, Fred Breedlove, from the State Lands Department, had called the chairman and left a phone message stating that withholding the contractor's paycheck might be illegal. Therefore, the contractor was paid in full despite the fact that many of the Districts records still have not been returned to the District..

Chairman Coping reported that the recently terminated contract clerk (a.k.a. "Program Administrator") had brought into the District's office a badly tattered cardboard box full of completely unorganized papers — with many folders not flat but jammed into the corners of the box--including old purchase receipts, copies of old bank statements, old handwritten notes, duplicate copies of meeting handouts, and many signed Pima NRCD minutes dating back as far as 2016. It appeared that these records had never been organized or stored according to verbal instructions, written policies, or the requirements of the contract.

Also found in the box were some documents belonging to the Winkleman NRCD.

Many of the documents belonging to each district were wrinkled or dog-eared, covered in a layer of dirt that had to be poured into a trash can, and had apparently been exposed to rain. These records obviously

had not been maintained in compliance with the written and clearly communicated Pima NRCD/PCCE policies or according to the written requirements of the now terminated contract.

The chairman spent eight hours organizing the records that were returned by the terminated contractor.

The following documents that belong to the Pima NRCD/PCCE are still missing and, despite requests to the contrary, are no longer expected to be returned to the Pima NRCD/PCCE:

- All signed hard copies of minutes of several Executive Sessions held during the contract period, (solely for those meetings in which the contractor was asked to record minutes).
- Approved and signed hard copies of minutes for several public meetings and teleconferences of the Pima NRCD.
- All Gmail records from the account that the contractor was paid and instructed to establish and maintain as a central point of contact for the District. The terminated contractor was clearly instructed to establish this account and keep it separate from her personal email account. The account ID is clerk.PNRCD@Gmail.com. The contractor told the chairman, in writing, that she considers all such email records as her personal property, despite the fact that the account would not exist had she not been paid and instructed to establish the account. Jackie Thomas has made many attempts to persuade and to provide technical assistance to the terminated contractor to return the District's email records to the District. Such efforts have thus far produced only excuses made by the terminated contractor for indefinite delays (inferred by the chairman to mean forever).

Many of the records, however, were backed up by the chairman, who has retained private files containing both hard copies and electronic District/PCCE records. All email communications between the chairman and the terminated contractor are still archived in the chairman's PNRCD email account, which has been used exclusively for Pima NRCD/PCCE business.

At the beginning of her contract, and at various times during the contract period the terminated contractor had been given clear verbal and written instructions with regard to the Arizona Public Records statutes.

Reducing wasted paper Supervisor Coping proposed replacing the normal paper meeting handouts with an audio-visual presentation format to reduce administrative burden, copying costs and the amount of wasted paper that quickly ends up in landfills. The board concurred that the audio-visual presentation format would be acceptable.

NRCS Report:

A Society for Range Management meeting is scheduled for Jan 9-11 as a collaboration meeting w/ NM state in NM.

Our District Conservationist Kristen Egen is retiring December 28. We are extremely grateful for all that Kristen has done for the District.

Supervisor reports:

Supervisor King reported that since the Coyote Mountains National Wilderness Area has no legal access, so the BLM found someone to sell them 140 acres on north end of the Anvil Ranch. There is a little section of state land next to it. The agency plans to pave an access route into the wilderness area. The plan will endanger important archaeological sites. Despite written protests from at least one local landowner, the BLM made the purchase anyway and plans to pave 6-7 miles of new road into the 140 acre parcel. The public process is over.

Supervisor King participated in a meeting with a number of other NRCDs at the State Land Department. Commissioner Atkins called one representative from each NRCD to discuss the proposed move of the NRCDs to the Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention. She said she wants to work with the NRCDs and needs to know the needs & issues of the NRCDs. Participants asked if she'd try to get the NRCDs fully funded to the limits in statutes..

One issue is hunters and recreational passes on State land with no policing. Wildlife corridors being proposed on state lands in Oro Valley. The next meeting is in January. One problem is elections. The law was changed during the Clinton Administration. To vote in an NRCD election, you must be a cooperator but you don't need to be an NRCD cooperator to work with the NRCS any more. This has resulted in the NRCDs losing contact with cooperators and the loss of local governing authority over soil and water conservation.

Supervisor McGibbon met with a University of Arizona researcher who is working on grazing management in Swiss Alps. There are 5 perennial grass species in the Alps that are also found in southern Arizona. One example is tanglehead. Small farms in the Alps are closing and the economically distressed residents are removing their cattle and moving to the cities. Invasive species problems started when people started removing cattle. The researcher is working on localized marketing programs for each of the small valleys. One example is locally branded cheese to keep the cattle there.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Pima NRCD will be a teleconference at 3:00 PM on November 27, 2018.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 PM.

Approved by a vote of the Pima NRCD/ PCCE Board of Supervisors on this date of January 22, 2019
5 Aye, 0 Nay



Cindy Coping, Chair, January 22, 2019