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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**

# AUGUST 7, 2024

**MEMBERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT GUESTS**

Bob Nichols Eddie Vigil Ronnie Maes, USFS

Rick Baish Katie Kruthaupt, NMDA

Jeff Rabon Trystan Harpold, NMSF

Colt Howland

James Evrage **STAFF**

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. James Evrage motioned to approve the agenda, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the July regular meeting were reviewed, James Evrage motioned to approve the minutes, Clifton Varbel seconded, motion passed unanimously. The minutes from the July special meeting were reviewed, James Evrage motioned to approve the minutes, Jeff Rabon seconded, motion passed unanimously.

## FINANCIAL REPORTS

The financial report was reviewed, James Evrage motioned to approve the monthly report as presented, and pay the bills listed, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**CORRESPONDEN****CE**

The Otero County Contract for Services was received and processed.

We are waiting for final approval of our budget submissions. All documents have been provided.

NMACD has provided the draft agenda and registration information. Eddie Vigil has confirmed he will be attending. Vicky does the registration and delivers the calendars. Colt Howland will also be attending as the new Region VI chair. James Evrage motioned to pay the registration and actual costs to attend the NMACD Conference in October, Jeff Rabon seconded, motion passed unanimously. Vicky will submit the registrations. Hotel reservations need to be done by the participants.

**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. Team 9 EQIP has 8 applications preapproved, 3 in approved status and 19 obligated to contract. A meeting was held with the USFS and the CRMP’s have been signed. CSP has 4 applications in approved status and 7 obligated to contract. The Local Work Group meeting has been scheduled for August 27th in Truth or Consequences. More information will be provided soon.

South Central Mountain RC&D – Laura was unable to attend but provided a written report. The Otero Working Group meeting is August 14th from 1-3 pm. The EWP for the South Fork Fire has been approved and they are finalizing the contracting. A meeting will be held on Friday to discuss the ongoing hazardous fuels projects with NM State Forestry. They are preparing for a Source Water Protection thinning in Timberon. Phase 4 of the BLM/Timberon project is complete and they will finish obligating phase 5 soon.

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. They are working on a project to address the erosion happening from the Mayhill fire burn scar.

Bureau of Land Management – We received an email yesterday regarding the new master agreement application that was submitted on February 27th. They need additional information (some internal) by close of business this Friday. Vicky will work to continue this funding.

SWCD – The Musk Thistle treatments have ended. We are waiting for new purchase orders for all the EMNRD projects. The July invoice was submitted to Otero County. The summer newsletter has been completed and published to the website. The newsletter highlights the work on the watershed dams. Jeff Rabon has visited Curtis Canyon Dam, and the water went up the channel about half-way. The channel seems to be holding. He will go back and take photos.

**OLD BUSINESS**

NRCS has been working on the contracting for the Dam Rehabilitation Plans. The contracting has to be completed before the end of the fiscal year in September. Eli Gnann will be in the office next week and Vicky will check on the status.

## NEW BUSINESS

The Land of Enchantment Legacy proposal to pay for drone mapping of African Rue in Otero County was submitted last week. Adam Hoppes gave an overview of how the drone can be used for this purpose. There was discussion on restricted/controlled air space. Colt Howland has been working with Holloman AFB to get the permissions in place. There is also a possibility of a partnership with them to do some boundary mapping.

Small Conservation Projects – Jake Carner has applied to do erosion control and repair his dirt tank. The erosion is happening in proximity to wells that service Holloman AFB. Rick Baish was concerned that this could happen again and destroy the improvements. Vicky will contact Jake for more information on how he plans to address the problem.

Vicky is working on the Watershed Project Development professional services agreement with the NMACD contractor. John Tunberg has not provided the information needed to finalize the agreement. Once Vicky has the agreement prepared a special meeting may be necessary to get the project started. The project must be completed by May 15, 2025.

A meeting needs to be held with the USFS to discuss phase two of the watershed dam project. Ronnie Maes checked his schedule, and we can meet on October 3rd at 10am in our office. Vicky will contact Mark Cadwallader and see who else should be invited.

NRCS has prepared a coordinated resource management plan for Amy Bell Teague. James Evrage motioned for Bob Nichols to sign the plan, Colt Howland seconded, motion passed unanimously.

The Otero Working Group meeting will be held August 14th from 1-3pm at the Otero County Emergency Services Building.

The Otero County Cooperative Weed Management Area will hold the fall meeting on September 4th from 1-3pm. It is an in-person meeting with a virtual option.

The annual luncheon will be held on December 4th. It was decided to continue using the Smokey Bear Conference room. Bob Nichols suggested using Triple Nickell barbeque for the catering. Vicky will get in touch with them for pricing and food options.

With no further business to discuss, James Evrage motioned to adjourn, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:22 am.

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Bob Nichols, Chairman Jeff Rabon, Secretary/ Treasurer