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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**

# JULY 3, 2024

**MEMBERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT GUESTS**

Bob Nichols Sid Gordon, OCCEA

Rick Baish Katie Kruthaupt, NMDA

Jeff Rabon Dylan Burruss, NMDA

Colt Howland Caleb Finch, USFS

Eddie Vigil **STAFF**

Clifton Varbel Vicky Milne

James Evrage

**NRCS STAFF**

Kristi Wright

**CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 am.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

Rick Baish and James Evrage completed the oath of office for appointed supervisors.

**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 June meeting were reviewed, Rick Baish motioned to approve the minutes, Colt Howland 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. The adjusted annual budget was reviewed. Rick Baish motioned to approve resolution #1 to adjust the budget to end of fiscal year numbers, James Evrage seconded, motion passed unanimously. The fourth quarter budget was reviewed. Rick Baish motioned to approve resolution #2 accepting the report, James Evrage seconded, motion passed unanimously. The final budget for fiscal year 24-25 was reviewed. Rick Baish motioned to approve resolution #3 to accept the fiscal year 24-25 budget, James Evrage seconded, motion passed unanimously. Vicky will submit the reports to DFA and the Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

**CORRESPONDEN****CE**

The Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund Landscape Scale Project was approved. Bob Nichols signed the memorandum of agreement, and we are awaiting the final documents to begin the project.

The Water Quality and Conservation Project to increase our noxious weed program was approved. Bob Nichols signed the memorandum of agreement and we have received the purchase order to begin the project.

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) will award competitive grants to eligible applicants for projects that improve the state economy and environment by managing noxious weeds in New Mexico. The grants are funded through New Mexico’s Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund to achieve the purposes of the New Mexico Noxious Weed Management Act. Sid will work with Vicky on a project proposal. A special meeting will be held when the proposal is completed so we can meet the deadline of July 30th.

Gabe Vasquez requested information in January on projects that can be funded utilizing the Water Resources Development Act. On December 18th a meeting was held to discuss Otero County’s request for planning assistance to states through the Army Corp. of Engineers for a flood management study. With approval from Otero County Vicky submitted the request from Otero County to Austin Yager with Gabe Vasquez’s office and put him in contact with R.B Nichols the Otero County Attorney. We were notified on Monday that the project is included in the WRDA and is listed as a priority project.

**REPORTS**

NM Department of Agriculture – The NMDA report provided information on upcoming deadlines, meetings, and grant opportunities. Katie introduced Dylan Burruss as the new Noxious Weed Coordinator for NMDA. He provided some background information and will be working with the Coordinated Weed Management Areas. Vicky will add him to our email list.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Kristi provided a report. Team 9 EQIP has 33 applications preapproved, 8 in approved status and 13 obligated. There are a few contracts that need CRMP’s signed by the USFS. If they are not signed the funding will be moved to other applications. CSP has 11 applications preapproved, 7 in approved status and 1 obligated. Kristi will provide information on CSP to Vicky for the summer newsletter. Starting next week there will be three teams working in Ruidoso on the Emergency Watershed Protection damage survey reports for the fires. The lead planner position is Alamogordo has been reannounced through USAJOBS.gov. Virtual fence scenarios were approved for FY 2025.

US Forest Service – Caleb Finch attended the meeting on behalf of Ronnie Maes.

SWCD – The Musk Thistle treatments have started. The first invoice was submitted to EMNRD for herbicide. The June invoice was submitted to Otero County. The rolling river trailer project is complete. The summer newsletter needs articles.

**OLD BUSINESS**

BLM new agreement submitted March 13, 2024. Lane is working with the finance people to get the contract finished.

The agreed upon procedures contract has been submitted to the Office of the State Auditor for approval. James Evrage motioned for Bob Nichols to sign the contract when approved, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

The Region VI meeting was held on June 6th. Colt Howland was selected to be the region chair. Congratulations Colt. As part of the meeting there was discussion on developing new projects. Rick gave our priorities as dams and the potential for wildfires. This led to a discussion on promoting the phase one work on the dams. A potential article in the Mountain Monthly or the Cloudcroft Reader. Caleb had contact information for them and provided it to the group.

## NEW BUSINESS

The Land of Enchantment Legacy proposal to pay for the updated story map on our website was not funded. Rick Baish motioned to approve the new contract with Bell Geographic to complete the work, James Evrage seconded, motion passed unanimously.

The Otero County Contract for Services will be out soon. Rick Baish motioned for Bob Nichols to sign the contract when received. James Evrage seconded, motion passed unanimously.

The point system worksheet is due July 15th. Vicky has completed and submitted the form with total points of 205 since they can adjust the points earned. This ensures that we get the full 100%.

The Society of Range Management will be holding their summer tour with visits to the Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon fire rehabilitation sites. They have asked for sponsors. We provided beverages to the NRCS prescribed burn course and Amalia is in need of them for this event as well. James Evrage motioned to sponsor the SRM tour, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

There was discussion on the South Fork and Salt Fires that have affected the Mescalero Apache Tribe and the Village of Ruidoso. Vicky will contact Greg Mendez to see if we can aid them.

With no further business to discuss, Rick Baish motioned to adjourn, James Evrage seconded, motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:47 am.

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Bob Nichols, Chairman Jeff Rabon, Secretary/ Treasurer