



MINUTES

Conservation District of Southern Nevada Monthly Board Meeting

Conservation District of Southern Nevada – 5820 S. Pecos Rd. A-400, Conference Room
February 22, 2006– 2:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Supervisor Judy Currier, Vice-Chair
Supervisor John Hunt, Treas./Secretary
Supervisor Elise McAllister
Supervisor Dirick Van Gorp
Supervisor Beth Hewitt

Wilisha Daniels
Jarrod Edmunds, NRCS
Richard Vigil, NRCS
Elyse Benson, NRCS
Ron Smolinski, DAQEM

Supervisor Currier called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

OPEN MEETING

Consent Agenda: Consent Agenda items are considered by the CDSN Board to be routine and may be acted upon in one motion. However, the Board may discuss any consent item individually if requested when the Consent Agenda is considered for approval. (Action item)

1. Compliance with Nevada Open Meeting Law
2. Approval January 2006 Agenda
3. Approval of December 2005 Meeting Minutes
4. Correspondence
5. Pay Bills

Supervisor McAllister made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Supervisor Van Gorp seconded the motion. The motion passed.

6. Introductions

Supervisor Currier asked the attendees to introduce themselves.

Business Agenda:

7. Financial Report (Discussion/Action Item)

Supervisor Currier asked Wilisha about the \$10,000 Great Basin Project. Wilisha said it was a weed removal project for CWMA. Supervisor McAllister made a motion to approve the Financial Report. Supervisor Hewitt seconded the motion. The motion passed.

8. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – Jarrod Edmunds (Discussion/Action Item)

Jarrod stated Elyse is working with Kim on a NRCS grant, and a weed mapping project. Richard Vigil stated he would answer questions that CDSN for him. He met with the NRCS staff to discuss challenges with NRCS Nevada, and the direction of the agency. Richard stated that the 2007 Farm Bill is currently being worked on, and cooperative conservation is also being discussed in the bill. NRCS is currently working under the 2002 Farm Bill until the new Farm Bill is in effect. Richard stated that as State Conservationist, he intends to have an office in Clark County. He also stated he has not received instructions to cut back offices in southern Nevada, and he desires to keep an office in Clark County. He stated that the “Special Project” office designation was developed because of the

structure of the Las Vegas office. The “Special Project” office name has been used in other states. He stated Jarrod submitted a letter to the national headquarters stating why a field office is needed in southern Nevada. The national headquarters decided to keep the office and change the name to “Special Projects” instead of an “Area Office,” because there is not a field office in Las Vegas. The special projects area office will have a GS-12 manager, which is Jarrod. Supervisor Hunt asked if there is a way for the CDSN to lobby on the 2007 Farm Bill. Richard stated that he would need to appeal to the NACD. Supervisor Hunt asked what areas in the Farm Bill should CDs target. Supervisor Currier stated that Chris Freeman reported to the Commission that he testified on the 2007 Farm Bill Urban uses and received the endorsement of recommendations set forth by an urban community. Supervisor Hunt asked for a copy of the testimony. Supervisor Currier suggested that we contact Chris Freeman, and have him fax down a copy of the recommendations. Supervisor Hunt would like insight on the Farm Bill. Supervisor Currier asked Wilisha to contact Chris regarding the recommendations. Supervisor Hunt suggested that a sub-committee meet to discuss and review the recommendations. Richard suggested that the Board identify a natural resource program. Jarrod suggested that we target the resource concerns on non-agricultural land, which can become a problem in agricultural lands. Richard recommended that CDSN identify the resource concerns and tie it into a program such as water quality/quantity. Supervisor Currier recommended that the sub-committee meet to discuss the urban issues that Chris addressed.

9. Letter to Richard Vigil – (Discussion/Action Item)

Supervisor Currier asked the supervisors to direct concerns and questions to Richard Vigil instead of addressing the status of the letter. Supervisor Hunt asked Richard about legislation for specialty crops, and if the crops will be addressed in the Farm Bill. Richard stated that the 2007 Farm Bill talks about the rural market, which might address specialty crops. Jarrod stated that he could not find the program addressing specialty crops. Richard said he would look into programs for specialty crops. Jarrod stated that a plant material center was funded in Fallon for the Great Basin for restoration projects. Supervisor Hunt also stated that he received an email from the national office regarding the cut backs of the RC&D coordinators. He asked Richard what he could tell the supervisors about the RC&Ds. Richard stated that he supports RC&Ds and will send the three coordinators to the national conference this year. He stated that RC&Ds are starting to look at a performance base criterion in order to exist. Supervisor Hunt stated the RC&Ds used the 2002 Farm Bill as justification. Supervisor Hunt also asked if CDSN could use the NRCS office to communicate with conservation districts regarding weeds. He would like to contact bordering states to discuss weed issues in other counties. He stated he would like CWMA to be aware of what is happening in other states. Richard suggested that Supervisor Hunt write a formal letter spelling out his request and he will act on it. Richard stated that he will be visiting all of the chairs of CDs in Nevada. Jarrod also said that NRCS received SNMPLMA money to conduct a soil survey on the Sheep Mountain range which will employ three soil scientist for three-four years. He also stated that the Spring Mountain climate study was also funded, which will survey snow. Three weather stations will be installed and information will be available on the internet 24 hours. Jarrod reported that Teri Knight was a ghost writer on two RC&D projects that were funded in Lincoln County.

10. Future Programming Opportunities for Non-Agriculture Districts (Discussion/Action Item)

Supervisor Currier stated the committee will meet to address this issue. She suggested the Board ask Chris Freeman come to a meeting after his visit to Washington, to update them on the recommendations.

11. NRCS/CDSN MOU Review (Discussion/Action Item)

Supervisor Currier asked the Board to review the MOU in the packet. Jarrod suggested that the MOU be reviewed to ensure we are still within the guidelines. He also suggested that the Board reviews it and bring their comments to the next meeting.

12. MSHCP/Desert Conservation Program Update (Discussion/Action Item)

Supervisor Hunt stated that CDSN is no longer apart of the MSHCP, and the non-governmental agencies have been asked to reapply. The number of committee members has been reduced to 12. He

also said the new program did not fit our organization. Supervisor Hunt stated that the committee members can not be funded through the program. Supervisor Currier stated the program is starting from scratch, and if we would like to participate we will need to reapply and be selected. If we choose to apply for a seat on committee, then CDSN can not apply for the grant programs. Supervisor Currier stated that Supervisor Bechtel will need to step down if we apply to the committee or for funding. Supervisor Currier suggested that we leave our opportunities open to apply for money. Additionally, she stated Supervisor Hunt was the representative for CDSN and can continue to attend the meetings as the general public. Supervisor Currier also stated the Board has to decide if we want apply to the committee, or leave our options open to apply for funding. Supervisor Hewitt asked why the Board has not applied in the past. Supervisor Currier stated we have worked on pet projects in the past, but opted not apply in recent years. Supervisor Currier stated the application to serve on the committee is due March 10, 2006. Supervisor Hunt made a motion that the Board shall not apply to the committee by the March 10, 2006 deadline. Supervisor Van Gorp seconded the motion. The motion passed.

13. Liability Insurance Update – Wilisha Daniels (Discussion/Action Item)

Supervisor Currier stated that district employees and supervisors are not covered for the use of NRCS vehicles on CDSN business. Only NRCS Earth Team volunteer work is covered. She suggested mileage reimbursement to employees for personal vehicle use. Wilisha stated that she reviewed the Policy and Procedure Manual, and found nothing in the policy regarding mileage/personal vehicle usage. Supervisor Currier stated that the Board can decide between the state or federal mileage rate, to be included in the manual. Supervisor Van Gorp made a motion for CDSN to use the IRS accepted mileage rate. Supervisor McAllister seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14. Conservation Easement Status (Discussion/Action Item)

Supervisor McAllister will talk to Brian Robison about the Muddy River conservation easement. He will gather information on the easement in the next few weeks, and get back to the Board. Supervisor McAllister will have more information at the next meeting.

15. “Our Places Tell Stories” Conference – Wilisha Daniels (Discussion/Action)

Wilisha reported that she and Gretchen attended the conference. She said the conference was a great networking opportunity and very informative. She also passed around some information that was distributed at the conference.

16. Staff Report – Wilisha Daniels (Discussion/Action)

Wilisha reported she met with Kim about the status of Gretchen’s projects. She stated Kim is looking in to applying for an extension on the straw bale project in Moapa. She stated that we completed the USDA weed removal grant project. Wilisha also met with Jodi to review resumes CDSN received from the Great Basin Institute for the Conservation Technician position. She asked the Board how they would like to proceed with the interview/hiring process. Supervisor Hunt recommended that CDSN interview the candidates due to the wide variety of projects that the new person will oversee. Supervisor Currier asked what Supervisor Bechtel would prefer. Wilisha stated that at the last meeting the Board decided to keep the same interview panel. Supervisor Wardlaw stated our standard practice/procedure is to have an interview panel that staff will arrange, and we do not need to agendaize the interviews. Wilisha also reported that CDSN will participate in the upcoming Earth Day events.

17. Supervisor’s Report (Discussion/Action Item)

Supervisor Currier reported that she gave Wilisha a reminder on due dates of documents and reports due to the state. She passed around a copy of a presentation that the state engineer gave to the Water District regarding inter-basin transfer request. She also stated we were asked to complete a funding questioner that she gave to Wilisha. She reported that the commission completed and adopted a new strategic plan. She also stated that Kelly McGowan contacted the district regarding possible projects/funding opportunities that the DCD could apply for to assist the district. Supervisor Hewitt

stated that she is working with Kim on a waste water/landscape recycling proposal. The project is in the initial stages and could be an opportunity for CDSN. The Henderson campus will like to develop this pilot project that could be used on other CCSN campuses. Supervisor Hewitt stated Kim and Richard Ritz are meeting to discuss options for the project. Supervisor Hunt suggested talking to the health department before starting the project. Supervisor Wardlaw suggested talking to Ethel M, which is a good example of how to use gray water.

Supervisor McAllister reported progress was being made on the straw bale house. The foundation and sittings are all completed, and they are still planning to complete the project at the end of April. She also stated that there will be a community day on the farm. The CCSD is also going to write an article in their school magazine about the Ag farm. She reported that the school district wrote a letter stating they will retain the farm. She also reported that the farm was hoping to receive an easement, but learned that easements are usually granted to private owners and not public owners. Supervisor McAllister reported the Moapa has the only Ag Farm in the state and the only program where students grow a product and market it.

Supervisor Hunt reported that the native seed growing program headed by the RC&D has selected three individuals for the project. The contract for the project is currently being developed. He is also working with Supervisor Currier on a letter to send to the legislatures regarding the RC&D budget cut. He reported that a seminar on native seed will be held in Idaho in March. He asked this item be put on next month's agenda for Board action. Supervisor Hunt also reported that he contacted the state office regarding Sandy Valley, and was told by Bill O'Donnell that Sandy Valley was serviced out of California. There is currently no agreement between NRCS and CDSN in Sandy Valley. Supervisor Hunt suggested that he and Supervisor McAllister attend a town hall meeting in Sandy Valley. Supervisor Currier suggested inviting a representative from Sandy Valley to our meeting. Supervisor Hunt expressed that he would like to get more involved in the rural area. Supervisor Wardlaw suggested that we determine what is needed and what we can help with before inviting the rep to a meeting. Supervisors Van Gorp and McAllister expressed interest in being involved in the Sandy Valley efforts.

Supervisor Hewitt reported that the CCSN annual plant sale will be held on March 25. She is also working on a tissue culture lab for native plants. She reported she will attend the Native Plant Society meeting on Monday. She is also the new horticulture contact for southern Nevada.

Supervisor Wardlaw reported that he conducted Wilisha's annual review. He also reported the County is moving forward with plan updates. The County is moving towards adopting a policy plan with standards.

18. Meeting Schedule (Discussion/Action Item)

No action. The Board will hold this item until the next meeting.

19. Open Discussion and Public Comment (Discussion Only) *

Ron Smolinski stated the new DAQEM/CDSN contract is moving forward.

Jarrod stated that Doug Merkler met with the County planning staff on Tuesday. He gave a presentation on how they can utilize NRCS' soil survey information.

Supervisor Currier stated we are resubmitting to Clark County for our annual request for funding. This year we are asking for \$70,000.

20. Next Meeting Date (Discussion Only)

The next meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2006 at 2:30.

21. Agenda Items (Discussion/Action Item)

- District Staffing
- Conference – Boise, Idaho

- NRCS/CDSN MOU
- Conservation Easement Status
- Meeting Schedule

22. Adjournment (Action Item)

Supervisor Wardlaw made a motion to adjourn. Supervisor Hewitt seconded the motion. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Hunt, Sec./Treasurer

Date