



Pima Natural Resource Conservation District  
Pima Center for Conservation Education, Inc.  
3241 N. Romero Road  
Tucson, AZ 85705



Final Minutes of the Board of Supervisors of the Pima Natural Resource Conservation District (PNRCD) & Pima Center for Conservation Education (PCCE)

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Meeting Date: September 28, 2021 Meeting Location: Micha's Restaurant, Tucson, AZ  
Time the meeting was called to order: 1:00 pm

Supervisors-Clerk: Jim Chilton, Cindy Coping, Jonathan DuHamel, Patricia King, Andrew McGibbon, and Chris Postel (Clerk Absent). A quorum was present.

Others: Deborrah Smith (AACD), Jackie Thomas (ASLD), Tom Reis (NRCS). Liz Harris-Tuck (candidate for Clerk/Ed Center contractor) and Bob Schmalzel (guest-biologist). Liz Harris-Tuck agreed to record meeting minutes, with compensation, as a substitute clerk for the meeting.

Review/Approve Minutes: **Motion:** Supervisor DuHamel moved to accept the minutes of July 13. Supervisor McGibbon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. 5-0

Review/Approve Invoices (Supervisors & Clerk – See Attached Invoices)

- Lovitt & Touché Dishonesty Bond (\$359.00). It was mentioned that this bond protects the Board from liability.
- Supervisor Coping (\$152.02 for website backup subscription renewal and travel expenses for AACD).
- Clerk (\$1,620.85).

**Motion:** Supervisor McGibbon moved to approve all of the invoices. Supervisor DuHamel. The motion passed unanimously. 5-0. Supervisor Coping mentioned that she attended the training on conservation needs assessment at the AACD summer conference Litchfield, AZ).

PNRCD & PCCE Financial Report (See Attached Reports):

The checking accounts balances are: PNRCD (\$29,525.25) and PCCE (\$22,346.68). The Fidelity Account balance is \$73,801.90. The PNRCD had net income of \$12,981.45 (Revenue (\$12,981.45) less Expenses (\$0)). The PCCE had net income of \$0 (Revenue (\$0) less Expenses (\$0)). **Motion:** Supervisor King moved to file the financial report. Supervisor DuHamel seconded. The motion carried 5-0. Supervisor Coping stated that the full \$12,980 annual FY 22 State funding for the District was direct-deposited into the State account. A \$1,200 PO from the State accounting office was received but no money has been direct-deposited into the Ed Center's checking account. Jackie Thomas said she would look into it.

Agency Reports:

AACD Update & Conservation Needs Assessment (Contract Kyle Thompson): Deborrah Smith (AACD) described the mapping portal that AACD is developing in conjunction with

NRCS and other agencies. It will help Supervisors see where needs are the greatest and where multiple conservation partners can collaborate to focus grant proposals on a landscape level. Access to the portal is regulated under a signed §1619 nondisclosure agreement (NDA) to protect landowners' private information. The portal will not be available online until trainings have occurred and the §1619 NDA is signed. The objective is to help the Supervisors evaluate where they are now and what concerns need to be addressed. Ms. Smith thanked Supervisor Coping for her earlier comments about the helpfulness of the conservation needs assessment training. Each district is responsible for developing a conservation action plan each year. Federal grant money was distributed to districts that have already completed their conservation needs assessments and already have active conservation action plans. The plans are to be shared on the portal. The first step is to conduct a needs assessment by contacting stakeholders throughout the District and holding a series of Local Work Group meetings (not just one per year but several) to determine specific resource needs to be addressed and priorities. The area plan should include:

1. The resources available
2. Stakeholder concerns
3. How you plan to address concerns
4. Determine who will do what

This is a two-year process. Ms. Smith mentioned that Kyle Thompson is overseeing the conservation needs assessment for Winkelman NRCD (WNRCD). There is potentially \$20,000 available from NRCS for each NRCD's assessment; however, there is not enough money for every district to have access to those funds. She recommended collaborating with WNRCD to save money for AACD. Monies not spent from the \$20,000 would help cover two NRCDs that are presently inactive and have no money. The District can choose either to do its own contracting or have AACD contract with personnel needed for the District. WNRCD has independently contracted with Kyle Thompson for their needs assessment. Kyle could efficiently also oversee the conservation needs assessment for Pima NRCD.

In response to a question, Jackie Thomas said that State funds may also be used to help pay a contractor to do the assessment. After the discussion, **Motion:** Supervisor Coping moved to request AACD that contract with Kyle Thompson to conduct the needs assessment for PNRCD. Supervisor McGibbon seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval. 5-0. Deborah Smith stated that AACD can contract Mr. Thompson and track his wages. Ms. Smith said she will answer any questions about the assessment. PNRCD needs to complete a Business Update and send it to her. Also, she mentioned that Congressman Grijalva has a proposal to ban on all surface mining and that WNRCD is opposed to his proposal.

NRCS (Tom Reis – See Attached Report): Per Mr. Reis, the NRCS report was included in the meeting packet. He stated that NRCS has reorganized. Alvaro Campos left the agency for another employment opportunity, and several new people were hired. The new staff is listed in the report, which is attached to these minutes. Mr. Reis stated that new funding is available through NRCS for range monitoring, and encouraged everyone to let him know of any range monitoring needs. Due to Covid-19, the office is open by appointment only.

#### AZ State Land Department

Jackie Thomas reminded Supervisors that elections will be held next May. Preparations will need to begin in January and February. Supervisor McGibbon stated that the State Land Survey is now online. Supervisor Chilton stated that in the past, knowledgeable State Land Range Conservationist working with ranchers could do archeological studies. Now, the state

requires someone with a PhD or other highly credentialed people in archeology. He stated that seems unreasonable. Jackie stated that Gila Bend NRCD has filed a formal objection to this new requirement.

Call to the Public: Bob Schmalzel stated that endangered plants have an impact on range management. At the next meeting, he would like to make a presentation about this topic. He expressed concerns about the way recovery plans are written, such as plans that fail to identify the point of recovery or the limitations on achieving recovery. He expressed concerns about the data (or lack thereof) reviewed in listing species including *Pectis imberbis*. He expressed concerns regarding his perceived decline of the Allen's (antelope) jackrabbit, which he said is "married" to the endangered Pima pineapple cactus. He mentioned type 2 hemorrhagic fever as one of several contributors possibly contributing to the jackrabbit's decline. He requested anyone finding an antelope jackrabbit roadkill to make a note on it.

### **Old Business**

Altar Valley Conservation Alliance Proposal (See Attached – Supervisor King): AVCA is proposing to hold 3 educational workshops, called the Rangeland Resilience Workshop Series. The workshops were described in their proposal and requested a \$3,000 for sponsorship from PNRCD. In response to a question, Jackie Thomas stated that education funds could be used. **Motion:** Supervisor Coping moved that PNRCD enter into a MOA with AVCA, using the AACD's contract template, to develop the 3 workshops with an authorization for \$3,000. Supervisor King abstained from voting. Supervisor Coping seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0, with one abstained.

NRCS MOA Completed: Per Supervisor Chilton, the MOA should be sent to the Board. Ms. Smith stated that Kyle Thompson and Bill Dunn have a history of developing MOA's.

Sonoran Desert Tortoise Workshop Report: The August 31 workshop was conducted in Amado (Longhorn Saloon Restaurant). 30 people attended and was a success. The Rancher attendees signed an agreement to implement the Sonoran Desert Tortoise Best Management Practices. AACD will send the list of ranchers who signed the agreement to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Pima County Flood Control District Brawley Wash Watershed Plan Environmental Assessment (Tom Reis): NRCS is working with Pima County Flood Control District and a consulting engineering firm, Stantec, to put together data. The assessment is completed for the Altar Valley. The focus has shifted north to focus on Avra Valley up to Picture Rocks. Per Supervisor King, the Altar Valley is one of the few undeveloped areas in southern Arizona. She stated that a lot of storm water goes into washes; so, that its value as a resource is lost. She suggests there should be a greater effort to use floodplains to keep water on the floodplains at higher levels and out of washes; so, it could be a better resource for vegetation, soil and water retention, and groundwater replenishment. This is the perfect time to talk about flood control. The contact at Pima County Flood Control District is Evan Canfield. The Board wants Evan Canfield to come to the next meeting. Tom Reis will contact Mr. Canfield to ask that he give a presentation to the board. Properly working floodplains allow water to spread laterally which takes some of the force out of the flooding water.

### **New Business**

Envirothon Funding Request (Supervisor Coping): Per Supervisor Coping, this is a high-school event regarding environmental projects that the PNRCD has supported annually for decades with a \$500/year contribution. Jackie Thomas stated that the Agua Fria NRCD

manages Envirothon and that she has participated in Envirothon as a judge. She stated that Education Center funding can be used for a donation. **Motion:** Supervisor King moved to fund \$500 to Envirothon. The motion was seconded by Supervisor DuHamel. The motion passed unanimously. 5-0.

Scholarship Strategy: Jackie Thomas cautioned to be careful about scholarships. The money can't go directly to the student; it must go to an institution such as a college or bookstore. The discussion was tabled.

Jaguar Critical Habitat Finding Update (Supervisor Coping): Per Supervisor Coping, in December 2020, Rosemont petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to revise the jaguar critical habitat designation by removing areas including the northern Santa Rita range. The Service published a proposed rule on September 6, announcing the Service's 90-day petition finding. The proposed rule states that the petitioned action is not warranted. Meanwhile, a judge found against Rosemont's lawsuit to overturn all or part of the critical habitat designation. The negative 90-day petition finding cannot be challenged by a citizen lawsuit, as that provision in Section 4(b)(3)(c)(ii) of the Endangered Species Act applies only to petitioned species listings and delistings and does not include petitions to revise critical habitat. Moreover, according to critical habitat expert Norm James, Esq., the proposed rule does not open a new 6-year statute of limitations for legal challenges to the critical habitat designation.

Executive Session: The Board went into Executive Session at 2:34 pm to discuss a candidate contractor for clerk/Ed center director. Exiting at 2:37 pm, The Board resumed the regular meeting (2:38 pm).

#### Discuss Clerk Position & Contract & Ed Center Director Position

A brief discussion was held. Deborah Smith described and suggested the District use the AACD contract template. The AACD template prevents typical contracting errors that several of the NRCD's have made. **Motion:** Supervisor McGibbon moved to contract with Liz Harris-Tuck for the Clerk-Ed Center Director position; and to pay her retroactively from the time she left her house on September 28, 2021 to attend the Pima NRCD meeting; and with compensation starting at \$20/hour going to \$25/hour after 3 months; and to write the contract using the AACD contracting template. Supervisor King seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. 5-0. Chris Postel has agreed to assist in the transition.

#### Supervisor & Clerk Reports:

Supervisor McGibbon: He discussed the open pit copper mine, formerly called the Rosemont mine, that is planned on private property north of the Santa Rita Ranch. The mining property is now owned by another company. It has the third largest copper deposit in the USA.

Supervisor Coping: She asked what methods people present at the meeting are using to clean out their metal livestock water troughs. Everyone who responded said they empty the drinker and shovel out the sludge. Supervisor Coping is interested in removing sludge from metal livestock drinkers without first removing all the water, because the sludge settles to the bottom overnight with clear water above it in the morning. The Chairman offered to lend her a sludge pump, but wasn't sure how well that would work. Supervisor Coping stated she has constructed a manual sludge pump designed for livestock drinkers, but the prototype could use a few design improvements.

Supervisor Chilton: He said the Supervisors need to figure out a way to do more projects. Perhaps, the new Ed Center director could give them ideas.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:55 pm.** Supervisor DuHamel moved to adjourn the meeting. Supervisor Coping seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Next Meeting Date: A date was not determined.

Final Minutes: Submitted by Liz Harris-Tuck and Chris Postel, Pima NRCD Clerk on November 3, 2021

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Chilton, Chair, Pima NRCD/PCCE                      Novemer 3, 2021