



Pima Natural Resource Conservation District  
Pima Center for Conservation Education, Inc.

3241 N. Romero Road  
Tucson, AZ 85705



Draft Combined Minutes of the Board of Supervisors of the Pima Natural  
Resource Conservation District (PNRCD/PCCE)

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Meeting Date: Jan. 24, 2023      Meeting Location: Micha's Restaurant, Tucson, AZ

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm.

Supervisors-Clerk: Jim Chilton, Cindy Coping, Andrew McGibbon, Jonathan Duhamel, Liz Tuck (Clerk)

Other Attendees: Tom Reis, NRCS, Sue Chilton, Bob Coping

**Review/Approve Minutes:**

**Motion:** Supervisor McGibbon moved to accept the minutes of November 2  
Supervisor Coping seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

**Review/Approve Invoices (Supervisors & Clerk)**

- Liz Tuck, Clerk (\$181.25) Liz Tuck, PCCE Director (\$412.50)
- **Motion:** Supervisor Coping moved to approve the invoices. Supervisor Duhamel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

**PNRCD & PCCE Financial Report (See Attached Reports):**

FY2022 Income and expense Report as of December 31, 2022:

The checking accounts balances are: PNRCD (\$35,703.87), PCCE (\$28,611.72), and Fidelity Account (\$65,364.12). The PNRCD had net income of \$11,411.56 (Revenue (\$15,497.47) less Expenses (\$4,085.91). The PCCE had net income of 3,056.62 (Revenue \$3,715.12) less Expenses (\$658.50).

**Motion:** Supervisor Duhamel moved to file the financial reports. Supervisor Coping seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

Liz Tuck reported that AACD was sent an invoice for \$4,000.00 several months ago for the Desert Turtle workshop. That funding has not been received.

## **Agency Reports:**

### **NRCS (Tom Reis - See Attached Report):**

Farm Bill Programs: National Water Quality initiative for the Babocomari Creek Watershed received \$950,000. Statewide NRCS has \$8.6 million for the Conservation Stewardship Program. Mr. Reis reported that the funding for fiscal year 2023 is \$1,717,940 for general EQIP.

EQIP: is taking applications year-round. Tucson received 55 applications and they will be processed in the next few months. The next deadline for eligibility is March 31, 2023. Tucson has 28 active EQIP contracts. 8 contracts are within Pima NRCD.

NRCS hired a new engineer, Melanie Stepanovic. There is a critical need to hire 30-40 field specialists statewide over the next 8 weeks.

Events: Society for Rangeland Management Winter Meeting is Feb. 6 and 7, 2023.

2023 Summer Leadership Conference will be July 13 and 14 at Casino del Sol in Tucson.

Soil conservationists are going to farmers markets to try to get more cropland applications. Community gardens may not qualify.

**Call to the Public:** None.

## **Old Business**

**Ed Center:** Liz Tuck reported that the Education Center website is ready for final review. The Board decided they would review the site and report errors and issues to Liz by Monday, Jan. 30, 2023. Once the board has proofed the website, Blossom will optimize it for mobile phones; then it will go live on the Internet. The PNRCD website has also been enhanced so the two sites can work together effectively. For now, when reviewing the websites, use a computer rather than a phone.

## **New Business**

### **RFID tags**

The Federal government wants to tie FSA funding to a required 840 RFID tag on the cattle. 840 tags are tied to the premise ID and has a USDA stamp on the ear tag. The tag says "unlawful to remove". The result of this tag is that anyone can go to a USDA site and find any animal and its location,

The standard tag used now is not tied to personal information

All interstate shipments require ID. Arizona still has brand tracing.

Supervisor McGibbon wants more information. Nobody wants the government tracing personal property.

Nobody wants bureaucrats knowing every little thing about their cow.

In the past the traceability narrative was for disease.

Why do they want to do this? This could be a source of future climate tax revenue, central government control of livestock, and the means to tax cattle owners.

There are lots of branches to this tree.

Chair Chilton proposed that he and Supervisor Coping would research the issue and bring to the board.

### **Spring Preservation Issue**

Sky Island Alliance applied to AZ Water Protection Fund for \$53,356 in matching funds to establish protection for at least 30% of springs on State and private land under ADEQ's Surface Water Protection Program. Chair Chilton stated that he is opposed to giving SIA money and giving them access to private land. Fifteen years ago, USFS wanted to preserve one of Chiltons' springs on USFS land. They demanded it be enclosed from cattle so little animals could get water. However, water-loving plants grew in the area and there is no water left in the spring. Chair Chilton wants to draft a resolution opposing the project.

### **Cell Phone for Pima NRCD**

By law the district is required to have a phone number on its website. Supervisor McGibbon moved that the clerk obtain two or three options for a prepaid phone. Supervisor Duhamel seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Supervisor Reports**

Supervisor Coping reported that the legislature is considering designating 300,000 acres in the Gila Bend area as a conservation area. The bill is sponsored by Raul Grijalva. Chairman Chilton suggested writing a letter opposing the bill.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:10.** Supervisor DuHamel moved to adjourn the meeting. Supervisor McGibbon seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

**Next Meeting Date:** teleconference call prior to the next AACD board meeting.

**Next formal meeting:** May 10, 2022 at Micha's

Draft Minutes: Submitted by Liz Harris-Tuck Pima NRCD Clerk on January 25, 2023,

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Jim Chilton, Chairman, Pima NRCD/PCCE

**Pima NRCD**  
**January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**NRCS Team 7: Tucson Report**

**FARM BILL PROGRAMS:**

Funding received for Fiscal Year 2023:

- 7 Team (Tucson, Douglas and Sells NRCS Field Offices) received \$1,717,940 million for general EQIP. -Additional funding was received for national initiatives: The National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) for the Babocomari Creek Watershed received \$950,000 and the Joint Chiefs Catalina-Rincon received \$159,316.
- Statewide NRCS has \$8.4 million for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

**EQIP-General (Environmental Quality Incentive Program) & CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program)**

- Taking applications year-round. The application deadline for this year's funding was December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- The Tucson Field Office received 55 applications and will be working over the next couple months to process them. (108 Total applications for Team 7 Sells – 13, Douglas – 40)
- **The next deadline is March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023 for Eligibility. All producer' that have applied for EQIP need to make sure their paperwork is up-to-date with FSA and work with their NRCS conservation planner on any other paperwork that might be necessary.**

**Tucson Field Office Workload – Active contracts**

- EQIP = 28 contracts
  - Totaling \$1.9 million in funding allocations
    - 15 contracts within Winkelman NRCD
    - 8 contracts within Pima NRCD
    - 4 contracts within Santa Cruz NRCD
    - 1 contract within Eloy NRCD (managing for Casa Grande NRCS office)
- CSP = 7 contracts
  - Totaling \$1.1 million in funding allocations
    - 3 contracts within Winkelman NRCD
    - 1 contract within Pima NRCD
    - 3 contracts within Santa Cruz NRCD

**Total Workload for Team 7 (Douglas, Tucson & Sells Field Offices)**

- 2022
  - EQIP 37 contracts, \$2,787,494
  - CSP 10 contracts \$1,586,992

Current workload (all years)

- 127 active contracts across all programs
  - 109 EQIP, 15 CSP, 3 RCPP
- \$12,001,000 obligated
- \$2,154,616 paid

**TEAM 7 STAFF:**

- New Civil Engineer hired for Team 7 (Tucson, Douglas, Sells), Melanie Stepanovic. Melanie will be working with Trevor Towers to assist Team 7 with engineering needs. Melanie previously worked for the Bureau of Reclamation for 2 years in Yuma.
- Autumn Horvat – RMS Douglas resigned 9/17/2022

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- Arizona Section of the Society for Range Management Winter Meeting (AZSRM)
  - February 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> at the Maricopa Ag Center, room block at Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino
  - <https://azrangelands.org/winter-meeting-2023>
- 2023 Summer Leadership Conference (formerly known as the Women In Ag Conf.)
  - July 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> at Casino del Sol in Tucson

**Staff Highlights:**



Brett Myers is participating in Project CENTRL this year as a member of Class 31. "Project CENTRL is a twelve-month, competitively selected and tuition-free leadership development program for 16 individuals connected to rural Arizona. Over the course of 9 seminars across Arizona, Washington, DC and Sonora, Mexico we build personal leadership skills, educate on the issues facing rural Arizona and connect leaders and experts." Brett recently returned from the class' trip to Ciudad Obregon, Sonora Mexico. The class visited multiple agricultural operations in the area.



Yissel Martinez has been working on outreach efforts by visiting farmers markets and other community events to talk to producers and share information. Recently she attended the Desert Meadow Park Plant Sale (see photos above).

Tom Reis, Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist – Team Lead

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**Submitted By:**

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Team 7 (Tucson, Douglas, Sells)

USDA - NRCS

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