



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  
and Pima Center for Conservation Education, Inc. (PNRCD/PCCE)

Meeting Date: June 1, 2023                      Meeting Location: 3241 N. Romero Road  
The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm.

**Supervisors-Clerk:** Jim Chilton, Cindy Copping, Andrew McGibbon, Jonathan Duhamel, Pat King and Liz Tuck (Clerk)

**Other Attendees:** Tom Reis, NRCS District Conservationist; Robert Schmalzel, ecologist; Sarah King, Altar Valley Conservation Alliance; John King, Anvil Ranch; Melanie Stepanovic, NRCS Engineer; Jim Littlejohn, Quail Forever; Gerry Berthelette, Arizona Game and Fish Department

**Local Workgroup Meeting**

Agency Reports

**NRCS, Tom Reis – See attached report**

Due to short staffing, NRCS is partnering with other organizations to get the work done. Funds will not have to be returned if a project is not completed due to low employee level. CSP, (Conservation Stewardship Program) 42 applications selected for funding of \$3,461,967.  
EQIP: 28 contracts totaling \$1.9 Million in funding allocations. Eight contracts were awarded in the Pima District. NRCS is not involved in solar installation projects other than replacing gas generators on small water pumps with solar.

**Game and Fish, Gerry Berthelette.** NRCS range conservationists Heather and Alisha are great to work with. AZGFD can provide additional funds if other agencies do not fully fund a project. They also can help by working with landowners to plan a project. Their connection with wildlife is to ensure projects do not interfere, or they restore habitat. They also work with other agencies to conduct required cultural assessments for projects.

**Presentation by Altar Valley Conservation Alliance (AVCA), Sarah King.**

AVCA was established in 1995; its focus has been on wildlife habitat and reducing wildfires. Although they have conducted many projects in Altar Wash, there is still a lot of erosion. Several years ago, they completed a watershed plan and they still refer to it when planning new projects. A few years ago, Pima NRCD approved contributing \$3,000 for workshops. AVCA is

planning a series of three workshops on soil health. Is Pima NRCD still interested in funding them? They have hired a contractor to record oral histories of ranching in their area. In the fall of 2024 plan on holding a series of 3 workshops on Rangeland Management focused on soils.

**Discussion of MOU:** Pima NRCD requires an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) when working with other organizations. Supervisor McGibbon moved to accept the revised MOU with ALTAR Valley Conservation Alliance. Supervisor Coping seconded the motion. The motion passed **5-0**.

**Motion:** Supervisor Coping moved that Pima NRCD would prepare a contract with AVCA to conduct 3 educational workshops on soil science to be held approximately every four months, starting this fall. The \$3,000 donation will come from PCCE funds. It was recommended that Sarah talk to Bob Schmalzel about including geomorphology in one of the soils workshops. Supervisor McGibbon seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0**.

**Discussion:** Pima NRCD is very interested in funding on-the-ground projects that are in AVCA's Watershed Plan. Sarah King will bring several project ideas to the Pima District for consideration. PNRCD declined to fund the History Project because that is not within PNRCD's legislative mandate.

**Discussion:** Gerry Berthelette offered to draw up an MOU between AZ Game and Fish and PNRCD. He will bring it to the next regular meeting.

### **Call to the Public**

Jim Littlejohn Discussed Southern Arizona Quail Forever. They have 200 members, mostly snowbirds. The members build one rock dams and swales to restore quail habitat. They plant grasses and other native vegetation for quail. They volunteer to build these types of projects on private land. Landowners are often concerned that they would have to open their property for quail hunters. That is not their intention at all – there are no strings attached and they do not ask to hunt on private property. They are only interested in maintaining habitat for quail.

**Motion:** At 2:31pm, Supervisor King moved to adjourn the Local Workgroup Meeting. Supervisor McGibbon seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

**Chair Chilton** convened the Pima NRCD regular meeting at 2:32pm.

### **Old Business**

**Review/Approve Minutes:** Issue tabled.

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

FY2022 Income and Expense Report as of April 30, 2023:

The checking accounts balances are: PNRCD (\$34,800.55), PCCE (\$28, 130.05), and Fidelity Account (\$70,096.51). The PNRCD had net income of \$10,508.24 (Revenue (\$20,614.46) less Expenses (\$10,106.22). The PCCE had net income of \$2,574.95 (Revenue \$6236.38) less Expenses (\$3,661.43).

**Motion:** Supervisor McGibbon moved to receive the financial reports. Supervisor DuHamel seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

## **Review/Approve Invoices – See Attached Invoices)**

- Cindy Coping, (\$22.82) for domain names for the two websites. [pimanrcd.org](http://pimanrcd.org) was renewed at the regular price (\$15.16) and azranchingfarming.org was purchased as a new domain name for the PCCE at a promotional price (\$7.66)
- Liz Harris Tuck, (\$253.49 PCCE, \$272.46 Pima NRCD)
- Lovitt & Touche (\$359.00) for Fidelity Bond

**Motion:** Supervisor King moved to approve the invoices submitted by the clerk. Supervisor DuHamel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

**Motion:** Supervisor McGibbon moved to reimburse Supervisor Coping \$22.82 for the domain names. Supervisor Duhamel seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

**Motion:** Supervisor McGibbon moved to have the Treasurer pay the Fidelity Bond. Supervisor Coping seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

**Discussion of website:** Chair Chilton said he is delighted with the website. Others agreed. PCCE Director Liz Tuck recognized the contributions and support Supervisor Coping has given to her during the project. Ms. Tuck asked supervisors to log onto the site.

**Discussion of spring preservation issue:** PNRCD has written a resolution and sent it to AACD. The resolution objects to a proposal sent to the U.S. Forest Service by an NGO, recommending that 30% of springs be fenced to preserve wildlife habitat (and keep cattle away). Chair Chilton has fenced springs on his property and found this is not a viable solution. Instead, new trees grow in the fenced area, absorb all the water, and then the springs disappear altogether.

**Discussion of US Supreme Court Decision:** Chair Chilton explained that under the Biden administration EPA expanded the definition of US waters to include streams flowing into rivers. In the past, only navigable waters were considered. The Supreme Court recently heard the case against the EPA and voted 9-0 that wetlands that are not connected to navigable waters are not included in the definition of navigable waters. Now the state of Arizona and its cities and counties have jurisdiction over this issue. It is not clear how this will affect Arizona.

## **New Business**

**Discussion/Action on Bureau of Land Management’s proposed regulation “Conservation and Landscape Health.”** Supervisor Coping explained this regulation seeks to create a new, livestock-free “use” of land called “and prioritize it on at least the same level as mining, grazing, recreation and other “major uses” recognized in the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The BLM is therefore attempting, without Constitutional or Congressional authorization, to revise the Congress’s limited definition of “major uses” of public land as codified in FLPMA. Public comments are due by June 20<sup>th</sup>. Supervisor Coping will write a comment on behalf of PNRCD, to be discussed and approved at the next meeting.

## **Supervisor Reports**

No reports.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:20.** Supervisor DuHamel moved to adjourn the meeting. Supervisor Coping seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

**Next Meeting Date: Telephone meeting June 19, 2023, time to be determined.**

**Agenda:** Discuss the Annual State funding requests and Plans of Work for FY 2025.

Minutes: Submitted by Liz Harris-Tuck Pima NRCD Clerk on June 4, 2023.

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

Jim Chilton, Chairman, Pima NRCD/PCCE