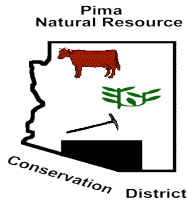


Draft Combined Minutes of the Board of Supervisors of



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



Meeting Date: Jan. 16, 2024 Meeting Location: Micha's Restaurant, Tucson, AZ

The meeting was called to order at 1:15 pm.

Supervisors/Clerk: Jim Chilton, Cindy Coping, Pat King, Andrew McGibbon, Jonathan DuHamel, Liz Tuck (Clerk)

Other Attendees: Alisha Phipps, Mynasha Holliday, and Heather Spieth: NRCS, Sue Chilton, Joe King

**Review/Approve Minutes:**

**Motion:** Supervisor McGibbon moved to accept the minutes of Oct. 17, 2023. Supervisor Coping seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

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

- Liz Tuck, Clerk (\$250.00)
- **Motion:** Supervisor King moved to approve the invoice. Supervisor DuHamel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

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

**Motion:** Supervisor McGibbon moved to reject the financial reports as presented. Supervisor Coping seconded. The motion passed unanimously 5-0. The clerk will email corrected financial reports to all supervisors.

**Agency Reports:**

**NRCS – Alisha Phipps**

Ms. Phipps distributed and explained a detailed written NRCS Team 7 report, which is incorporated into these minutes. Chairman Chilton asked how Pima NRCD could help. Ms Phipps stated that they are working with 5 ranchers now to update information about ownership, production, etc.

It would be helpful if the Board would advise cooperators that they should update their information with NRCS. It was suggested and Ms Phipps agreed, to put cooperator applications in the welcome packet from NRCS.

**Call to the Public:** No one responded.

## Old Business

- **Discuss new funding for Altar Valley.**  
Chairman Chilton stated that the District's immediate need is for on the ground projects such as one rock dams. Supervisor King stated that she would contact Sarah King to discuss possible projects and workshops.
- **Discuss mesquite removal.** Chairman Chilton raised the question with Alisha Phipps as to whether a cost/benefit study of mesquite removal could be conducted. He suggested that UofAZ, NRCS, Altar Valley Conservation Alliance and Pima NRCD could collaborate. Supervisor McGibbon said he would talk to his contact at UofAZ. Ms. Phipps said she would look into it.
- **Discuss date for an annual meeting with Altar Valley.** Supervisors were in favor but did not set a date.
- **Update on yellow-billed cuckoo lawsuit.**  
Discussion centered on whether the District could join an amicus brief concerning the lawsuit. AACD Executive Director Deborrah Smith had said State money could not be used; it was decided that it could be difficult for the board to show that funds had not come from the State. US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Forest Service are required to release the administrative record by February 2. The Board declined to join the amicus brief. Court hearings concerning the lawsuit will likely begin in April or May.

## New Business

- **Discuss Native Seeds Project.** The Diversity and Inclusion Department of NRCS had contacted the Pima NRCD about signing up Native Seeds Search as a cooperator. The Board instructed the Clerk to send a cooperator agreement to Native Seeds Search.
- **NRCS Farmers' Guide to Farm Bill.** Chairman Chilton handed copies of the Guide to board members. It contains an extensive list of programs included in the current Farm Bill. The Clerk was asked to include the list in the next quarterly newsletter. The new Farm Bill is being written; it may be a year before it is passed.
- **Pat King's retirement from the Board.** Pat has been a member of Pima NRCD board for several decades and has offered her resignation. Chairman Chilton objected. Supervisor King stated she would be able to stay on the board but for personal reasons she is unable to continue to fulfill the duties of the treasurer. Supervisor Coping offered to take on the duties of the treasurer. Supervisor DuHamel moved to decline Supervisor King's resignation. Supervisor McGibbon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.
- **Discuss prospective board members.** This was not discussed because Pat King will remain on the Board.

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- **Discuss Natural Asset Companies (NAC).** Supervisor Coping suggested a collaboration with American Stewards of Liberty so that Pima NRCD could be included in their comments on the Securities and Exchange Commission's proposed creation of Natural Asset Companies. The Board chose not to take action on Supervisor Coping's suggestion. The NAC rule would allow corporations that can be owned by foreign governments to take control of public and private lands for the express purpose of permanently extinguishing production of energy, minerals, food and fiber. These corporations would not use Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures, but would adopt a new, untested type of environmentalist "ecosystem services" accounting system designed and promoted by the United Nations in order to sell "carbon credits" and other vague, non-tangible products. The value of "carbon credits" sold would be a form of mitigation for resource production, and would necessarily drive up prices of all tangible products by restricting necessary resource supplies. Mrs. Chilton stated that the NAC's would do the exact opposite of conservation. They would promote abandonment of land management and hands-on conservation, which exactly opposite to the mission of the Pima NRCD. The Board asked Supervisor Coping to submit comments on the NAC on behalf of Pima NRCD and to present the board with an invoice for the comments at the next meeting.
- **Report: Altar Valley workshop.** Supervisor Coping had attended the second in a series of three all-day field workshops produced by Altar Valley Conservation Alliance. The Pima NRCD provided funding for the three workshops. Attendees visited three areas where mesquites had been removed by one or more of three methods: grubbing, fire, and herbicide. For mesquite under 2" in diameter, herbicide is the least expensive and most practicable remedy. The attendants visited two treated sites directly across the Sasabe highway from each other. One site had been cleared mechanically. The other site directly across the road had not been cleared mechanically. Both were burned by prescribed fire on the same day. Both sites were covered with tall grass. The previously cleared site was restored to a grassland. The previously uncleared still dotted with big mesquites larger than 2" diameter, with a carpet of tall grass under and between the trees. The smaller mesquites and other brush had burned off, but the largest mesquites appeared unharmed. Prescribed fires are becoming less frequently utilized as new residential developments expand from the metropolitan area. Liability is becoming more of a deterrent to using prescribed fires. All types of treatment require follow-up treatments because the seed base is still active in the soil. The participants also visited a site where a hot, uncontrolled wildfire had burned and scorched the soil. The vegetation has not recovered yet, and there was a debate as to whether the soil had been damaged. Many of the soil scientists present believed the soil microbes had survived and that the vegetation would eventually recover. The fast-moving fire had been stopped in the washes by big mesquites that would not burn. As a result of observing that, the Arizona

Department of Forestry and Fire Management is changing its strategy to leave large mesquites in the washes for wildfire control instead of clearing fire breaks.

Mesquite removal cost averages about \$500 per acre. Tamarisk removal in areas such as the Lower San Pedro River cost about \$5000 per acre, due to their density.

- **Discuss updating the Pima NRCD cooperator contact information.**  
Supervisor Coping has been updating contact information of cooperators and potential cooperators by comparing the Pima NRCD list with more recent information she has from other organizations. She will turn the updated list over to the Clerk when finished. The Clerk will contact cooperators by email or phone to confirm their contact information is up to date. The quarterly newsletter will be printed and mailed to all cooperators. The newsletter will include a paragraph suggesting that people contact Pima NRCD with questions and to identify their key resource concerns. Chair Chilton will write an introductory letter discussing the mission and purpose of the organization and how it can help producers. The newsletter will be sent at the end of February. The newsletter will include a cooperator agreement. Cooperators will be requested to renew their agreements as a way of updating cooperator status and contact information.
- **Discuss Quarterly Newsletter.** The Clerk will publish and mail a newsletter to cooperators in February to include the following:
  - -An article from Chairman Chilton
  - -Photos and a short article about the brush and soil management workshops
  - - A cooperator agreement
  - -A request for cooperators to return their renewed cooperator agreements and also tell Pima NRCD what their key resource concerns are that the Pima NRCD might help them address.
  - An election notice
  - -The USDA Farmers' Guide to Farm Bill Programs
  - -An announcement for the upcoming SRM meeting
- **Discuss the Dept of Labor (DOL) regulation to outlaw contract labor nationwide.** It means everyone would have to be an employee – contract labor would be prohibited nationwide. California has passed such a statute.
- **Elections.** Liz Harris distributed a one-page handout, the “2024 Elections Checklist,” which is incorporated into these minutes. Jim Chilton’s Supervisor seat is up for election this year. An announcement must be posted on the website and in a local newspaper before February 4. Supervisor Coping reminded the board that *The Green Valley News* is the paper where the District has published election announcements in the past, and the price was reasonable. The Clerk handed out the 2024 NRCD Elections checklist.

## **Supervisor Reports**

Supervisor Coping reported that target shooters have recently shot and killed

saguaros and unknowingly defaced petroglyphs near her ranch with falling birdshot and other ammunition that had been fired into the air. Supervisor King stated she has seen similar damage to petroglyphs in her area. The AZ Department of Forestry and Fire Management has posted on its website that target shooting is illegal on all Arizona State Lands. This rule is unenforceable because there is no mention in the Arizona Revised Statutes of any law that applies to the use of firearms outside municipal boundaries. Also, although there had been a heated controversy years ago regarding a planned prohibition of target shooting in the Ironwood Forest National Monument, the prohibition was never published in the Federal Register. Chairman Chilton asked Supervisor Copping to draft a resolution for the next meeting of the Board to submit to AACD to address target shooting.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:10.** Supervisor DuHamel moved to adjourn the meeting. Supervisor McGibbon seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**Next Meeting Date: April 16, 2024**

Draft Minutes: Submitted by Liz Tuck, Pima NRCD Clerk on January 18, 2024

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Chilton, Chairman, Pima NRCD/PCCE