



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
Pima Natural Resource Conservation District
and Pima Center for Conservation Education

Meeting Date: August 21, 2023 Meeting Location: public teleconference
Time the meeting was called to order: 1:00 pm

I. **Attendees:**

Cindy Coping, Pat King, Jonathan DuHamel, Andrew McGibbon and Liz Tuck, clerk. A quorum was present.

II. **Discuss/Approve Supervisor Coping's comments re: Revision of regulations fail ESA Section 4(d) rule test.**

The rule states, "Taking a precautionary approach to applying protections would proactively address potentially unknown threats." In her comments, Supervisor Coping states and provides evidence that precautionary approaches without sufficient data could do more harm than good.

Motion: Supervisor McGibbon moved to accept the comments as written. Supervisor DuHamel seconded the motion. **Motion passed:4-0**

Supervisor Coping also wrote comments on two additional regulations, Endangered and Threatened Species and Designating Critical Habitat by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Included in her comments, Supervisor Coping stated, "The Service intends to remove standards of certainty from what it still purports to be "the best available science." This blanket removal of standards will trend decisions more toward personal biases, speculation, and surmise. It will undermine scientific objectivity.

Motion: Supervisor King moved to accept the additional comments. Jonathan DuHamel seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0.

Supervisor King asked Supervisor Coping to send all the comments to Arizona legislators on the Natural Resources Committee and other politicians involved in conservation issues. Supervisor Coping agreed to do so.

III. **Discuss/Approve payment of \$3,000.00 for Supervisor Coping's comments regarding BLM's new policies.** Supervisors McGibbon and King commented that the comments were very well written and deserve the amount suggested.

Motion: Supervisor King moved to pay Supervisor Coping \$3,000 for the comments she would be submitting. Supervisor DuHamel seconded. Three supervisors voted in favor of the motion. Supervisor Coping recused. The motion passed 3-0.

IV. **Discuss /approve SACPA's plan regarding CBD litigation on Coronado Forest.**

In 2015, the Forest Service authorized livestock grazing based on a FWS Biological Opinion that grazing has no significant negative impact on the Yellow-billed cuckoo. The Cen-

ter for Biological Diversity and the Maricopa Audubon Society sued the Secretary of Interior and Agriculture, the USDA Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service seeking an injunction against existing authorized grazing and an injunction against renewal of grazing authorizations anywhere on the 177 grazing allotments in the Coronado National Forest that might be considered, not critical, but “occupied” habitat of the Yellow-billed cuckoo. The plaintiffs allege a failure of the 2015 Biological Opinion to consider the cumulative impacts of climate change combined with cattle grazing on the Yellow-billed cuckoo. The lawsuit also seeks prohibition of cattle grazing from all riparian or xeroriparian stream segments that could possibly ever be occupied by the Sonora chub, even though most of those stream segments are dry most of the year. Mr. McGibbon stated that this regulation could shut down grazing for almost 1/3 of the cattle ranches in Arizona. The SACPA’s plan suggests hiring attorney Norman James, a top critical habitat specialist, to seek intervenor status in the lawsuit. The initial attorney fees are estimated around \$25,000.00 just to achieve intervenor status. Mr. McGibbon stated this would only get grazing permittees intervenor status; more funds would surely be needed once intervenor status is achieved. But initially, the Districts could contact Cooperators with affected grazing allotments and ask for \$2,000 - \$3,000 donations towards the attorney fees. Supervisors should also ask for support from the Farm Bureau. The clerk offered to send a letter to the cooperators when appropriate.

The matter was tabled until more information could be gathered. It is likely the Pima NRCD will need a separate meeting in the next month to discuss.

V. **Discuss/approve gathering information regarding a possible workshop on Azelis’ mesquite herbicide.**

The PCCE Director, Liz Tuck, discussed the possibility of facilitating a workshop on removing mesquite. At the AACD conference she spoke to the Sales Manager for Azelis, who said the company could conduct a workshop for the District. Supervisors suggested that the workshop include both herbicidal and mechanical solutions. They asked the Director to contact the Winkelman, Hereford (John Ladd) and Santa Cruz Districts to see if they would want to participate.

VI. **Discuss/approve invoice and timesheet for Liz Tuck.**

The invoice for services for PimaNRCD was \$800.00. Invoice for PCCE was 675.00

Motion: Supervisor King moved to pay these expenses, Supervisor McGibbon seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

VII. **Call to the Public** No responses.

VIII. **Supervisor Comments** None

Meeting adjourned at 1:46 pm. Supervisor DuHamel moved to adjourn the meeting. Supervisor Coping seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Draft Minutes: Submitted by Liz Tuck, Pima NRCD Clerk on August 23, 2023

Signed _____
Jim Chilton, Chair, Pima NRCD/PCCE Date