



Pima Natural Resource Conservation District
Pima Center for Conservation Education, Inc.
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DRAFT Minutes of Tuesday, January 21, 2025
Combined Meeting of the Boards of
Pima NRCD and Pima Center for Conservation Education, Inc (PCCE)

January 21, 2025

Location: USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center, 3241 N Romero Rd, Tucson

Meeting was called to order at 1:05 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance recited.

Supervisors present

Mary Miller, Supervisor and Secretary
Jonathan DuHamel, Supervisor
Cindy Coping, Supervisor and Treasurer
Sue Chilton, Supervisor, Vice Chair

Supervisor absent: Andrew McGibbon, Supervisor and Chair

A quorum of each board was present.

Guests

Tom Reis, NRCS Resource Conservationist
Mynasha Holliday, NRCS Soil Conservationist
Doug Lowell, Palo Alto Ranch Owner

Agency Reports

Tom Reis, USDA-NRCS, submitted a written report for Arizona Team 7. The report is attached to these minutes.

Supervisor Reports: None presented

Financial Report

Treasurer Copping reported on the financial status of the two organizations. See attached summary.

Unspent Pima NRCDFY '25 budget \$20,752.72

Unspent Pima Center for Conservation Education, Inc. FY '25 budget: \$10,116.04

Motion by Supervisor Copping, to change target investment allocation strategy to match AZ State Treasurer Kimberly Yee's portfolio for the Arizona Endowment Trust Fund, 2nd by Supervisor Chilton, motion carries unanimously.

Update on Workshop Project in Partnership with AVCA

At last meeting, the board approved up to \$7500 of Education Center funds to host 4 educational workshops. AVCA needs to provide a draft Project Agreement to attach to the existing PCCE/AVCA MOU for approval. When signed by both parties, the Ed Center can release those funds. Supervisors asked that AVCA assure that a broad array of funding sources be included in the fundraising opportunities session, and that the invasive species session provide new information. The following information was provided by Elena Dosamantes, AVCA Program Coordinator:

- *The workshops will be part of the 2025 Rangeland Resilience Workshop Series*
- *There will be four separate workshops, each will be on the first Monday of the month:*
 - *Monday, March 3: Invasive Species Prevention and Management*
 - *Monday, April 7: Wildfire Prevention and Preparedness*
 - *Monday, May 5: Keeping Up With Technology*
 - *Monday, June 2: Finding Funding and Resources*
- *AVCA created "planning teams" composed of experts and practitioners in each of the fields of interest. Teams are composed of professors, extension specialists, government agency*
- *First round of planning meetings have been held with most teams. We have decided:*
 - *Important topics that we need to cover*
 - *Workshop dates*
 - *Length of workshops (all will be full day, except for the last one which will be half day)*
 - *Some speakers have been decided on, invited, and confirmed*
 - *Wildfire Prevention and Preparedness speakers have yet to be decided on and confirmed*
- *Second round of planning meetings coming up. We will:*
 - *Confirm location; will probably be University of Arizona Campus Farm classrooms*
 - *Finalize agendas*
- *After second meeting I will:*
 - *Create flyers/invitations*

Progress updates for Rancho Seco Project

Juan Lopez, Rancho Seco project is pending.

Approve Invoices

1. Supervisor Coping motion to approve invoices for NACD for dues \$775.00, 2nd by Supervisor DuHamel, motion carried. The dues will be paid from the District account.

2. Supervisor Coping motion to approve invoices presented by Supervisor Coping for reimbursement for Mint Mobile telephone service, office supplies, and Arizona Corporation Commission filing fee (subtotal \$200.33) and invoice for time 48.3 hours at \$25.00/hour (subtotal \$1208.33) for a combined total of \$1408.66. Second by Supervisor Chilton, motion carries.

Approve minutes of October 24, 2024 meeting. Supervisor Coping motion to approve minutes, 2nd by Supervisor DuHamel, motion carries.

Clerk Recruitment Notice

Supervisor Miller and Supervisor Coping will coordinate to describe tasks. The idea of contracting with Southwest Decision Resources was introduced by Supervisor Miller. Supervisor Miller and Supervisor Coping will continue to work on this task.

Proposals for new projects

Mr. Lowell reported on Palo Alto Ranch erosion mitigation work, which is ongoing in partnership with the non-profit Altar Valley Conservation Alliance (AVCA). In FY '24, the PCCE funded a public workshop for scientists to gain a better understanding the erosion issues on the Palo Alto Ranch in order to better address those issues in the future. Mr. Lowell introduced the concept of initiating a pilot mesquite eradication project on Palo Alto, and using the mesquite to plug arroyos.

Supervisor Coping motion to budget up to \$10,000 for a mesquite eradication project on private land on the Palo Alto Ranch, contingent upon Mr. Lowell producing a signed cooperator agreement and a written proposal (that includes photos, headcut locations/gully dimensions, project costs, and schedule). Second by Supervisor DuHamel, Motion carried 4-0.

Proposed listing of the Monarch Butterfly as a threatened species

Supervisor Coping observes that the proposal states the butterfly's dependence on milkweed but lacks specificity about type of nectar producing plants the species requires. A local researcher, Joe Billings, has studied the monarchs and identified six specific nectar plants that they feed on. Mary Darling, a local biologist, has provided information from Monarch butterfly research Joe Billings published from October 2022 that provides this specific information.

Supervisor Chilton commented that for a comment submission on a proposed regulation to give the submitter legal standing, substantive information must be provided to the regulating agency, in this case, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The board requests that Mary Darling contact Joe Billings as a possible contractor to submit comments on the proposed species listing on behalf of the District and Ed Center. Comments are due March 12, 2025. If Pima NRCDC requests that comments be prepared, the payment could utilize up to \$2,500 of Education Center funding, with other partners to be recruited if necessary. Supervisor Chilton will follow up with Mary Darling. Additionally, Supervisor Chilton and Supervisor Copping will reach out to other organizations to determine their interest in partnering on paying for, and being represented by, the comments.

Password Management

When clerks leave the District, sometimes account login credentials (are lost. e.g., for email, website management, telephone, State Lands Portal, etc.) Supervisor Copping entered all of the District's account login credentials into the free version of Bitwarden™, a password management program. Supervisor Copping motioned that the board approve paying the \$40 annual cost for the "Families" premium version of the password protection account. This version allows up to six users, so that all 5 supervisors and a clerk could access any account as needed. One user (called the "owner") would manage the allowed users and each person's degree of allowed access. The account allows each user login access while maintaining strong passwords and full 2-factor authentication capability. 2nd by Supervisor Chilton, motion carries.

Summary of action items:

- Supervisor Miller~ Request that AVCA draft a Project Agreement to attach to our PCCE/AVCA Memorandum of Understanding,
 - planning \$7,500.00 for the previously approved series of four workshops;
 - and request that AVCA assure that the funding source workshop covers a wide array of funding sources, including State and private funding resources;
 - and that AVCA provide more detail about the invasive species workshop to assure that new information will be provided.
- Supervisor Chilton ~ Reach out Mary Darling to explore feasibility and cost of contracting with Joe Billings to prepare comments on the Monarch butterfly listing
- The Board invited Doug Lowell to submit a signed Pima NRCDC cooperator agreement and a proposal for Palo Alto Ranch mesquite clearing pilot project along the Brawley Wash. The Board may hold a public teleconference before the next in-person meeting to discuss this matter further and possibly release funding for this project.

Call to public

No response

Next in-person meeting date April 22, 2025.

Adjourned at 3:09 pm