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Bob Nichols, Chairman Eddie Vigil, Member

Rick Baish, Vice Chairman James Evrage, Member

Jeff Rabon, Secretary/Treasurer Colt Howland, Member

Clifton Varbel, Member

**OTERO SWCD MINUTES**

# JULY 9, 2025

**MEMBERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT GUESTS**

Bob Nichols James Evrage Katie Kruthaupt, NMDA

Rick Baish Laura Doth, RC&D

Colt Howland Justin Padilla, BLM

Eddie Vigil **STAFF** Mark Cadwallader, NDNFFA

Jeff Rabon Vicky Milne Trystan Harpold, EMNRD

Clifton Varbel

**NRCS STAFF**

Nicole Chavez

**CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

Rick Baish completed the oath of office.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was reviewed. Colt Howland motioned to approve the agenda, Rick Baish seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the June regular and special meeting were reviewed, Rick Baish motioned to approve the minutes, Colt Howland seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

## FINANCIAL REPORTS

The monthly financial report was presented, Rick Baish motioned to approve the report as presented, and pay the bills listed, Colt Howland seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The DFA reports for the fourth quarter of 2024/2025, final adjusted 2024/2025 and final budget for 2025/2026 were presented for approval. Rick Baish motioned to approve the reports and to sign the corresponding resolutions, Jeff Rabon seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

**CORRESPONDEN****CE**

The SWCC approved our appointed supervisor requests.

The NMDA District Opportunity Application was not funded. Trystan would like a copy of the comments.

Southern NM Economic Development Department sent a request for review/comment on the 2025 Community Development Block Grant Application for the Village of Cloudcroft to replace water/sewer lines. Colt Howland motioned to comment no significant impact, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

The Healthy Soil Program Application for Courtney McCary Squyres was approved. Courtney has signed the MOA. Colt Howland motioned to approve Bob Nichols signing on behalf of the district, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

The NMDA Weeds Program application was funded at a reduced level. The MOA was due by June 30th. It was signed and returned.

NM Environment Department has added Otero SWCD to the interested party list for the Riata Organic Soils Permit.

**REPORTS**

NM Department of Agriculture – Katie provided information on upcoming deadlines, meetings, and grant opportunities.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Nicole presented her report. Team 9 has 16 EQIP applications in the preapproved status. There are two in Alamogordo, 12 in Las Cruces and two in T or C. CSP has 4 preapproved applications: three in T or C and one in Las Cruces.

South Central Mountain RC&D – Laura provided a report. The NM State Land Office project in Timberon will be starting as soon as we have a new purchase order. The NMAC grants for Timberon Phase II and Outreach project have been approved. The CWPP contract is in the process of being signed. The Otero Working Group will meet on July 17th in Cloudcroft.

NM State Forestry – Trystan provided an update on the Two Goats project. The remaining acres have been obligated. They are also working on several projects with USFS.

Bureau of Land Management – Justin Padilla provided an update. BLM is still working on adding funding to our master agreement. The task agreements for brush and weed management projects have been submitted. The juniper work on Odie Prather’s allotment should start in August.

SWCD – Vicky has provided the musk thistle sign-up forms to the contractor. The 2026 Noxious Weed Calendar is being drafted. The summer newsletter needs articles.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Drone mapping – Adam will be at the August meeting to give us an update.

A conference call is scheduled after the meeting to finalize the early warning system.

North Ditch North Fork Fresnal Acequia Project – Mark Cadwallader provided an update. They completed the first phase of the work.

The Otero County Flood Risk Reduction Prioritization Meeting was held on June 9th. Rick Baish attended. Several people spoke about flooding problems. Rick gave an update on the watershed dams. Tom Porter spoke about the roads. The Army Corp of Engineers will be compiling the input for the next meeting. Rick Baish thought the City of Alamogordo should be involved.

The Region VI meeting was held on June 11th in Artesia. Colt Howland and Eddie Vigil were present. Jackie Powell was elected Vice-Chair. NM Senator Jim Townsend attended and was briefed on the flow of funds from the legislature to the individual districts. NMACD training coordinator Jennifer Hopper is working on a conservation planner course for district employees, supervisors and NMACD staff. There was also discussion on ethics training for supervisors.

## NEW BUSINESS

We have three requests for small conservation projects. Potter’s Ranch needs to replace the irrigation pipeline to their greenhouse. 5 Star Ranch needs to replace fences. Ed Norman needs to replace the irrigation pipeline to his orchard. All of the projects are dependent on the funding agreement with Otero County. Once we have received the contract, we can proceed with funding the projects.

The point system worksheet has been completed and provided to SWCC.

NMDA is working on the special allocation of funding from the legislature. The guidelines should be out next week. Each district will have $160,000 to use within the next two years for increasing district capacity and/or small projects.

Otero County Planning has requested our review of the Star Summit Subdivision. Eddie Vigil reviewed the terrain management plan and recommended approval. Eddie Vigil motioned to approve the plan and submit the formal approval to Otero County, Jeff Rabon seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

There was discussion of adding a weather station adjacent to Curtis Canyon Dam. It could provide real time weather information available to the public. Bob Nichols agreed to ask Joyce Komraus if we could place it on her property and use her internet. Once we hear back from her Vicky will see if we can add the unit to the NMSU ZiaMet or the National Weather Service.

With no further business to discuss, Rick Baish motioned to adjourn, Colt Howland seconded, motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:53 am.

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Bob Nichols, Chairman Jeff Rabon, Secretary/ Treasurer