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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**

# DECEMBER 4, 2024

**MEMBERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT GUESTS**

Bob Nichols Katie Kruthaupt, NMDA

Rick Baish Sid Gordon, OCCEA

Jeff Rabon Merceidez Fabok, NRCS

Eddie Vigil **STAFF** Ron Maes, USFS

James Evrage Vicky Milne Justin Padilla, BLM

Clifton Varbel Trystan Harpold, NMSF

Colt Howland **NRCS STAFF** Cody Howard, BLM

Kristi Wright Mark Pentecost, USFS

Mark Cadwallader

**CALLED TO ORDER**

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was reviewed. Rick Baish motioned to approve the agenda, James Evrage seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the November regular meeting were reviewed, Rick Baish motioned to approve the minutes, Colt Howland seconded, motion passed unanimously.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

The financial report was reviewed, James Evrage motioned to approve the monthly report as presented, and pay the bills listed, Colt Howland seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**CORRESPONDEN****CE**

The auditor has completed the agreed upon procedures report, the exit conference was held on November 20th and the document has been submitted to the Office of the State Auditor.

**REPORTS**

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

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Kristi read the report. The EQIP application deadline was November 8th. The ranking deadline is February 28th. EQIP IRA has an application deadline of February 7, 2025. CSP classic and CSP IRA application deadline is February 7th with a ranking deadline of February 28th. An offer has been made for the lead planner position in Alamogordo.

Otero County Cooperative Extension – Sid provided a report. There will be an advisory committee meeting this month. Sid is working on a pesticide applicator CEU workshop for next spring (late March or early April).

NM State Forestry – Trystan Harpold provided an update on the progress of the hazardous fuels projects. Trystan has drafted a Wildland Urban Interface project for the Timberon/Bug Scuffle/Sunspot area. The application is due December 17th. A special meeting will be required to approve sponsoring the project. Vicky will get a notice out.

US Forest Service – Ronnie Maes provided an update. He has been assisting the contractor for the dam rehabilitation planning with access to the sites. The South Sacramento Restoration Project has an estimated decision date of February 2025, the Non-Native Invasive Plant Project has an estimated decision date of June 2025. The Cloudcroft WUI implementation is planned for FY26. Ronnie also advised us that he will be leaving in January. Mark Pentecost will be acting until the position is filled.

Bureau of Land Management – Justin Padilla provided an update. There is funding to purchase satellite monitoring systems for BLM lands. If the SWCD decided to go forward with the project a new task agreement can be done. Colt Howland discussed the main drawback to the system is the annual subscription. The first year is free, but each monitor would have its own subscription after that. Cody Howard gave an update on the Pinon Jay study. The final report has been submitted by the contractor. It shows there are two active colonies and two inactive colonies. Any new projects would have to take the information into account and adjust the strategy to complete the work.

SWCD – The noxious weed calendars are being delivered. The winter newsletter needs articles.

**OLD BUSINESS**

We were unable to coordinate the drone mapping with Holloman AFB last month. Colt did not get a response from HAFB for approval to fly.

## NEW BUSINESS

The IRS mileage and per diem rates for 2025 were reviewed. James Evrage motioned to approve using the rate of 67 cents per mile for business miles driven, Colt Howland seconded, motion passed unanimously.

The professional services agreement with Mark Cadwallader expires December 31st. James Evrage motioned to extend the agreement for another year, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting date falls on a federal holiday. Vicky reviewed the dates for the rest of the year and presented them to the board for approval. Rick Baish motioned to approve the dates, Colt Howland seconded, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting dates are January 8th, February 5th, March 12th, April 2nd, May 7th, June 4th, July 9th, August 6th, September 3rd, October 8th, November 12th, and December 3rd. The dates will also be posted on the website.

The contractor for the Dam Rehabilitation Plans has started work. Bob Nichols has been working with the landowners and assisting with a location for the January public meeting. Merceidez Fabok spoke about the program. The estimated contract completion is March of 2027. She will be providing more information during our luncheon. A copy of the monthly meeting report from the contractor was reviewed.

Capital Outlay - A work plan needs to be drafted so the USFS will be able to give us the go ahead to contract the work. There was discussion on follow-up work from the Curtis Fire. The pit tanks and debris catchments need to be cleaned out and/or replaced. We will need to see if this work can be done without the requirement of NEPA. If it requires NEPA there won’t be time to contract the work for next spring.

With no further business to discuss, James Evrage motioned to adjourn, Colt Howland seconded, motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:10 am.

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Bob Nichols, Chairman Jeff Rabon, Secretary/ Treasurer