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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**

# MAY 7, 2025

**MEMBERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT GUESTS**

Bob Nichols Katie Kruthaupt, NMDA

Rick Baish Sid Gordon, OCCEA

Jeff Rabon Lisa Phillips, BLM

Eddie Vigil **STAFF** Mark Cadwallader, NDNFFA

James Evrage Vicky Milne James Cadwallader, NDNFFA

Clifton Varbel

Colt Howland **NRCS STAFF**

**CALLED TO ORDER**

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the April regular and special meetings were reviewed, James Evrage motioned to approve the minutes, Rick Baish seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

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

**NEW BUSINESS**

North Ditch North Fork Fresnal Acequia – James and Mark Cadwallader discussed the need for assistance with a water conservation project. The total cost is approximately $25,000 based on current prices. This project will help them prepare for bigger projects in the future. James Evrage motioned to approve the first phase of the project in the amount of $10,000, Rick Baish seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**CORRESPONDEN****CE**

The Department of Finance and Administration approved the third quarter budget report.

NMACD is planning the region meetings. It is anticipated that the region VI meeting will be held in June. Colt is working with Debbie on the timeline and will keep us updated.

The Dam Safety Bureau has scheduled the dam inspections for May 30th at 8:00 at Graveyard Canyon Dam.

**REPORTS**

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

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Kristi provided the report. Team 9 has 15 EQIP applications in the preapproved status. There are two in Alamogordo, 12 in Las Cruces and one in T or C. CSP has 4 preapproved applications: three in T or C and one in Las Cruces. There have been some staffing changes due to recent retirements/resignations. Krisit will be the acting South Area Conservationist; Amalia Montoya is Acting South Area Resource Conservationist and Nicole Chavez is Acting District Conservationist for Team 9.

Otero County Cooperative Extension – Sid provided a report. The NM Society for Range Management hosted their spring meeting and tour in Ruidoso. Colt Howland received the Rangeland Innovator of the Year award.

Bureau of Land Management – Lisa Phillips 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.

SWCD – Vicky received word that the commercial applicator for the musk thistle project last year is interested in doing the spray this year. Vicky contacted the Otero County Clerk and provided the election information. The final funding requests for the NMDA/SWCC projects have been submitted. The spring newsletter needs articles.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Drone mapping – The drone operator has requested approval from Holloman to start mapping.

The second phase of the Pinon Jay survey is ongoing.

The NMDA Noxious Weed Management Grant to continue the drone mapping was submitted.

## NEW BUSINESS

Sacramento Mountains Invasive Plant Project – We have two commercial applicators to consider. Only one of the applicators has the proper certifications for agricultural lands. Colt Howland motioned to approve White Mountain Brush Control for the project, Jeff Rabon seconded, the motion passed unanimously. Vicky will send out the landowner signup forms.

5 Star Ranch finished their small conservation project. Jeff Rabon motioned to reimburse them 75% of the cost for a total of $4,501.74, James Evrage seconded the motion passed unanimously.

Curtis Canyon Dam Early Warning System – Bob Nichols, Colt Howland and Vicky attended the Otero County Commission meeting in April to present the funding proposal. The commission agreed to use their emergency management funds to cover the cost. Colt Howland, Jeff Rabon and Vicky reviewed the bids on May 5th. The preferred system is the one from Canada. It has a couple of features that the others do not. These features will make it easier to test the system properly before monsoon season begins. Rick Baish motioned to approve the purchase from Bentek Systems, Jeff Rabon seconded, the motion passed unanimously. Vicky will get the system ordered.

The collaboration meeting with Otero County and the Army Corp of Engineers has been rescheduled to June 9th @ 10:30 am.

We received one bid for the 2024/2025 tier 5 Agreed Upon Procedures (audit). Dan Austin, CPA has agreed to a one-year contract for $4,868.44. Jeff Rabon motioned to approve the bid and for Vicky to submit the necessary paperwork to the Office of the State Auditor, James Evrage seconded the motion passed unanimously.

The action plan for the next fiscal year was presented for discussion. Rick would like to include emerging technologies like biochar included in the plan for potential grant funding. Jame Evrage motioned to approve the plan with those changes, Colt Howland approved, motion passed unanimously.

With no further business to discuss, James Evrage motioned to adjourn, Jeff Rabon seconded, motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

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Bob Nichols, Chairman Jeff Rabon, Secretary/ Treasurer