

**HIGH DESERT CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING: APRIL MINUTES**

 **April 12th, 2022 4:00-6:00 pm**

 ***ZOOM MEETING:*** <https://zoom.us/j/7856459574>

*Planting Seeds of Inspiration to Promote Conscious Stewardship of our Natural Resources*

**CALL TO ORDER -David Temple, President, called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.**

Virtually **Present** by Zoom: David Temple, Suzanne Aikin, Adam Kackstetter, Joe Lanier, Susan Thomas, Neva Connolly, Joel Lee, Rocky Rockwell; Guest: Eric Whyte, Emily Lockard

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS:**  Eric Whyte is a Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Member and has spent 31 years with the Ute Farm and Ranch Enterprise. Emily Lockard is with Montezuma CSU Extension, and has been working with the Mancos and High Desert Conservation District staff on a variety of projects.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** *Suzanne Aikin made a motion to accept the April agenda with revisions; seconded by Joe Lainer.* ***Motion Passed***

**APPROVAL OF MARCH MINUTES:** *Suzanne Aikin made a motion to accept the minutes as amended; seconded by Susan Thomas.* ***Motion Passed***

**FINANCIALS:** Suzanne Aikin updated the Board regarding the HDCD finances. Suzanne recommends to continue to hold off on CD investments, and stated that the finances are down due to DeWitt purchase and staff salary, but is expected to begin to even out with weed barrier and seedling sales.

**REPORTS**

* **President** – no update
* **Vice President** – Joe Lanier confirmed Ray Archuleta’s workshop date.
* **Acting Interim Treasurer** – Suzanne Aikin (see Financials above).
* **Secretary**– Adam Kackstetter mentioned he would like to see full representation on the supervisor’s board, and reminded board members of the commitment to attend Mancos Conservation District’s board meetings.
* **Members at large-** Susan Thomas gave an update on advertising for the Ray Archuleta event.

**STAFF REPORTS**

* **NRCS –** Joel Lee mentioned that contracts are down due to staff and supply shortages. He hopes to be able to hire more staff this fall.
* **Executive Director-** Gretchen Rank–staff report attached.
* **District Manager:**  Neva Connolly–staff report attached
* **Conservation Technician**: Rocky Rockwell–staff report attached.

**NEW BUSINESS**

* **CSCB 2023 Matching Grants Application:** The Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) has opened their matching grant program for 2023. The grants are up to $25,000 and are a 1:1 match, with applications due in July. The HDCD Board discussed various ideas, including conservation rental tools, managing noxious weeds in riparian habitats, and replanting funds after Russian olive removal.
* **CACD Dues:**  The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) has invoiced the HDCD for 2022 dues. *Susanne Aikin made a motion to pay the $1200.00 CACD dues; seconded by Adam Kackstetter. Motion passed.*
* **Upcoming Workshops:** Neva Connolly briefly mentioned some of the workshops she’s been working on with the MCD and CSU Extension. A fire mitigation workshop was held on April 7th in Mancos, and Neva used the workshop to promote the upcoming Master Land Steward program.
* **Camp Rocky Sponsorship:** The CACD holds a natural resource focused summer camp in Divide, Colorado for kids 13-19. *Suzanne Aikin made a motion to sponsor one camper’s tuition at $350 to attend Camp Rocky; seconded by Adam Kackstetter. Motion passed.*
* **Drought Spending Project Funding:** All conservation districts were given $15,000 for drought relief spending in 2021. The HDCD Board discussed spending ideas, including soil moisture probes, bringing River Watch to Dolores and/or McElmo, cost-share with landowners for various projects, and potential prairie dog control (though not all board members supported funding prairie dog control). Joel Lee had several suggestions, including updating irrigation diversions, measuring devices for flow, wind breaks, upgrading old head gates, and other water conservation ideas. Rocky Rockwell suggested funding native seed from Southwest Seed and cover crops for dust/erosion control. David Temple suggested funding mulch and wood chips to contribute to erosion control and keeping soil moisture in the soil…and many of the ideas will work as a demonstration project as well.
* **CACD Demonstration Project Funding:**  The CACD has released a new program to fund demonstration projects for up to $10,000. Suzanne Aikin and Neva Connolly gave an update on the MCD board discussion the previous night, and several demonstration ideas were discussed, including using the seed drill, how to slaughter, planting winds breaks, etc. The MCD Board passed a motion to apply for the full $10,000 in funding, with a 50/50 split for each district (dependent on HDCD Board agreement and approval).  *Suzanne Aikin made a motion to support the Mancos Conservation District’s application to apply for a $10,000 CACD demonstration project grant, with a 50/50 split for each district ($5,000 for each district); seconded by Adam Kackstetter. Motion passed.*
* **Neva Connolly 6-month Review:** District Manager Neva Connolly is up for her 6-month review in May. David Temple volunteered to be a part of the review (April 27th) for the HDCD Board.
* **STAR Plus Program Expansion Letter of Support:** The Colorado Department of Agriculture has asked all conservation districts currently participating in the STAR Plus program for a letter of support to expand the program. Program expansion would include providing additional technical support for producers, quantifying carbon and water benefits of participating in the program, developing and marketing the STAR rating as a “market signal,” and evaluating and validating carbon and soil-water research in the arid west. *Adam Kackstetter made a motion for the HDCD to sign a letter of support; seconded by Suzanne Aikin. Motion passed.*
* **Quarterly In-person Meetings:** The HDCD Board discussed meeting in-person soon, but schedules did not align for May. The board will continue to meet via Zoom, and will discuss an in-person meeting at their May meeting.
* **Landowner in McElmo:** Neva Connolly briefly mentioned that she had met with a new landowner in McElmo Canyon who was interested in stream and native habitat restoration, and was willing to use her property as a project site.

**OLD BUSINESS**

* **Board Supervisor Vacancy Advertisement:** not discussed.
* **HDCD CD Fund Investment:** Suzanne Aikin briefly discussed during her board update.
* **Soil Health Program Update:** Neva Connolly mentioned the soil health program is progressing and that she has three more soil health visits later in the week.
* **Master Land Steward Program Update:** Neva Connolly stated that she has been working on the program, and will be touting the program at various workshops. She would like to work with interested board members to keep the program and timeline moving forward.

* **2022 Nozzle Exchange Program:** Tabled
* **Montezuma County Commissioners Meeting:** No update.
* **HDCD Hats and Shirts:** Neva Connolly wanted to check in with the Board regarding the price of hats…she will order 10 hats each of trucker and traditional ball cap styles.
* **Soil Health Workshop:**  Joe Lanier mentioned that Ray Archuleta has confirmed the date, and Neva Connolly has set up a registration site.
* **Annual Meeting:**  No update.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

* The board members had a brief discussion regarding dissatisfaction with the long length of the board meetings, and suggested that the agendas are too long.
* **Board Member mileage and time tracking**--Board members submitted their March mileage and time reports.
* **Bills**

**ADJOURN – David Temple adjourned the meeting at 6:22 pm.**

| **NEXT WORKGROUP MEETING: Location: TBA** |  | **NEXT MEETING: May 10th, 2022** **by Zoom 4:00-6:00** |
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 **The Public was invited to attend this meeting.**