

SWEETWATER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCCD)
MONTHLY BOARD MEETING
Wednesday July 8, 2020 - 4:00 p.m.
79 Winston Drive, Suite 103, Rock Springs, WY 82901

REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD MEETING

Call to Order

Mary Thoman, Chairman called to order the meeting of the Sweetwater County Conservation District (SWCCD) at 4:00 PM on **July 8, 2020**, at the Sweetwater County Conservation District, 79 Winston Drive, Suite 103, Rock Springs, WY 82901

Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance

Mary Thoman, Chairman conducted a roll call and introductions. The following persons were present and via conference call.

Mary Thoman, Chairman and Rural Supervisor (SWCCD)
Tom Burris, Vice-Chairman and Rural Supervisor (SWCCD)
Jean Dickinson, Rural Supervisor (SWCCD)
Stephanie Anderson, Rural Supervisor (SWCCD)
Karen Pecheny, District Clerk (SWCCD)
Henry Bliss, Associate Supervisor (SWCCD)
Doc Wendling, Sweetwater County Commission (SWC)
Justin Caudill, Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA)

Absent: Joshua Coursey, Supervisor (SWCCD)

Minutes

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Tom Burris, to approve the June 4, 2020 regular minutes as written. Motion carried.

Agenda

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Tom Burris, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

A **motion** was made by Tom Burris, seconded by Jean Dickinson, to approve the Treasurer's Report, and pay the bills in the amount of \$20,685.63. Motion carried.

SWCCD Budget Hearing - July 15

A Budget Hearing will be held on **July 15 at 10:00 a.m.** at the SWCCD Office and a teleconference will be available for calling in. Staff will send out a reminder.

Special Report

Commissioner Doc Wendling

- Reported on county budgets. Going forward the county will start the budget process earlier next year to begin the budget dialogue.
- From the Governor's Office: Implementing a State budget cut, Gordon said state agencies have been asked to identify an "all-in" 20 percent cut to their budget, as well as an additional 10 percent, Wendling reported cuts by the end of July and how the impacts will be to Sweetwater County projected at 105 million.
- Reported on the press conference from Governor Gordon discussing the Occidental Land Purchase that the State Loan and Investment Board (SLIB) recently approved to go out to bid. The land purchase, which would include Occidental Petroleum's lands in Sweetwater, Carbon and Uinta counties, is also an asset purchase. The state could be purchasing mineral rights to trona, natural gas, coal, and other minerals, in addition to the land itself. Gordon said the state will figure out a way to have a state-wide public comment, possibly via Zoom. The WCCA supports the purchase as long as it's fair and valuation stays the same.

Justin Caudill, Wyoming Department of Agriculture

- Reported on the Rangeland Health Assessment Program. (RHAP) The Program is currently on hold.
- Reported on the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI) meeting and gave an update on current projects and funding. One of the projects included a culvert replacement on Sage Creek. The Board would like more information and suggested a possible tour, to learn more about habitats, fisheries, and what allotment it is in. Caudill will get the information back to the Board.
- Reported on the Governor's request of 10% cuts for the Department of Agriculture, the cuts will still need to go through the budget process. Another 10% cut will be coming and the Department is expecting another 10% by the start of next year. Total budget cuts expected to be around 30%. The annual base funding and the water quality program for Conservation Districts so far has not been affected.

Unfinished Business

WDA Interim Report – Killpecker Creek Killpecker Creek Headcuts and Assessment

The report was included in Supervisors packets. The grant total is \$9,398.00 – staff submitted the yearly plan, Interim Report and requested \$5,950.00 (\$3,448.00 remaining in grant funds) the grant expires June 30, 2021.

Long Range Use Plan & Policy (LRUPP)

The Plan expires on 12-30-2020. The Board discussed timelines for activities, meetings and the public comment period. Staff was directed to send the timeline to legal for review.

Annual Awards Program

The Board discussed submitting names for the awards program which included: Kim Brown, Dustin Eaton, Kent Connelly, Cat Urbigkit and Steve Core. Send comments to staff.

New Business

Pre-Decisional – Coalition of Local Governments (CLG) Re:

- Gateway South Industrial Siting 6-15-2020
- Discussion Draft Senate File 159 Rules 6-24-2020
- CLG Letter to PacifiCorp 5-22-2020
- WY CLG Discussion Points Re: Alternative B Travel Management Area 3 EA Comments 6-20-2020

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Tom Burris, to ratify the comments. Motion carried.

Well Water Testing Day

The Board reviewed the information included in their packets. Staff was directed to reach out to the Sweetwater County Environmental Health Department regarding their water testing program and send that information out to remind rural landowners about the service.

Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) Funding Summary

State budget cut allocation to Conservation District Funding. The WACD Board placed a high priority on protecting the base funding allocation to districts. To achieve that, the next 10% is likely to come from remaining water quality grants, lab analysis, and training and equipment funding.

For those districts that have been using the Department of Agriculture lab for sample analysis, that service under these cuts will no longer exist. You will need to budget for sample analysis for the coming fiscal year. The Board did recommend that the water quality grants submitted be fully funded.

WACD Conservation District Director – Retirement

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Tom Burris, to authorize staff to purchase a retirement gift in the amount of \$200.00 from the tree account. Motion carried.

Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI Project)

The Board would like more information on BLM forestry projects. Caudill will follow up on shovel ready projects and the Sage Creek culvert project.

Supervisors Reports

Mary Thoman

- Attended the Coalition of Local Governments (CLG) Meeting and the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI) Meeting. The next CLG Meeting will be July 23 in Kemmerer.
- Reported on Justin Williams, Department of Agriculture, reached out to Thoman and asked if the Board would like to have a tour of the Sweetwater Solar Farm. Mary will follow up on a possible tour.
- Attended the Powder River Basin Council and Occidental Land Transfer webinars.

Jean Dickinson

- Working on comments for the Ashley National Forest.

Staff Reports

Karen Pecheny

- Reported on and submitted the interim report for the WDA Water Quality Grant for Killpecker Creek and submitted a reimbursement request and budget tracking document on the Bitter Creek 205j Grant for the Watershed Based Plan.
- Entered Fiscal Year 2021 Budget into QuickBooks and the State Budget form.
- Spoke with Uinta and Sublette County Conservation Districts on cattle chutes. Uinta does not have a cattle chute. Sublette does and they have an agreement with the Wyoming Livestock Board. They do not charge their producers any fees to use the chute, they require a liability policy before they can check out the chute and they must bring back the chute clean or they will not be able to use it in the future. The Livestock Board pays for maintenance on the chute. Thoman and Burris will follow up on the Sweetwater County Conservation District's lease agreements.

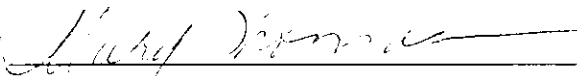
Public Comments

No public comments.

Information and Education

Candidate filings for Conservation Districts/Special Districts are August 5-24.

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, to adjourn the meeting at 5:35 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Thursday August 6, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. at the Sweetwater County Conservation District Office, 79 Winston Drive, Suite 103, Rock Springs, WY.

/s/  Chairman

/s/  Secretary

//Submitted by Karen Pecheny/