

SSSWEETWATER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCCD)
MONTHLY BOARD MEETING
Thursday April, 1, 2021- 4:00 p.m.
79 Winston Drive, Suite 103, Rock Springs, WY 82901

REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD MEETING

Call to Order

Tom Burris, Chairman called to order the meeting of the Sweetwater County Conservation District (SWCCD) at 4:00 PM on **April, 1, 2021**, at the Sweetwater County Conservation District, 79 Winston Drive, Suite 103, Rock Springs, WY 82901

Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance

Tom Burris, Chairman conducted a roll call and introductions. The following persons were present.

Tom Burris, Chairman and Rural Supervisor (SWCCD)
Jean Dickinson, Treasurer and Urban Supervisor. (SWCCD)
Joshua Coursey, Vice-Chairman and At-Large Supervisor (SWCCD)
Karen Pecheny, District Clerk (SWCCD)
Dwight Bliss, Associate Supervisor (SWCCD)
Justin Caudill, Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA)
Mary Thoman, SWC Commission (SWC)
Roy Lloyd, SWC Commission (SWC)
Rick Breiniger, Associate Supervisor (SWCCD)
Larry Folks, public

Absent: Stephanie Anderson, Rural Supervisor, (SWCCD)

Minutes

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Joshua Coursey, to approve the March 4, 2021 regular minutes as written. Motion carried.

Agenda

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

Treasurer's Report

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Joshua Coursey, to approve the Treasurer's Report, and pay the bills in the amount of \$18,917.01. Motion carried.

Sweetwater County Budget FY 2022

The budget is due to the County on Friday, April 23, by noon. After discussion and review.

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Joshua Coursey, to authorize sending the FY 2022 draft budget to the county by the April 23, deadline. Motion carried.

The SWCCD Budget Hearing will be held on Wednesday, July 14, at 10:00 a.m. Staff will send out a reminder.

Special Reports

Roy Lloyd

- Lloyd shared that the Sweetwater County Commission are working on a resolution that supports Governor Gordon's work on lawsuits against the Biden administration energy policies. Lloyd would like to support the coal export lawsuit in Wyoming and Montana against Oregon and Washington. Lloyd believes the county should take a stronger stance on these issues, as it affects the decreased revenue in county budgets going forward.

Mary Thoman

- Attended and reported on the Energy Strong Conference in Vernal Utah. The group includes county commissions and conservation districts from Utah, Colorado and Wyoming. They are working together to develop strategy items to combat the current administrations executive orders and moratoriums on the oil and gas industry and pipelines. Thoman sent a note to Wyoming Senator Cynthia Lummis asking how counties could help with these issues.
- Thoman explained that on March 16 a letter was sent from three local congressional members to Biden complaining about the 30x30 land grab, which locks up 30% of our land. *"The 30 x 30 program is a plan advanced by radical environmental activists to permanently protect 30% of America's land and oceans by 2030. The program was adopted by the Biden Administration through Executive Order 14008, "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad" signed January 27, 2021. [Guide to Fight 30 x 30 v2 \(americanstewards.us\)](https://www.americanstewards.us).*
- Shared a Chamber of Commerce meeting held the first Wednesday of every month at the Old Chicago in Rock Springs. 7:30 a.m. (federal and state agency updates)
- Spoke on Sweetwater County's Land Use Plan & Policy. Thoman would like to see the plan updated.

Justin Caudill

- Reported on the Wyoming Board of Agriculture Meeting to be held on April 12. Fourteen water quality applications were recommended for approval.
- Caudill is on the State Technical Advisory Committee. (STAC) The committee is reviewing changes to the NRCS handbook.
- Caudill will have more information to report at the May SWCCD Board meeting regarding projects for matching funds from the SWCCD budget.

Jeff Lewis (written report)

Farm Bill Activities

For 2021, between Lyman and Rock springs field offices, we have 15 applications, all but two are irrigation related. Right now, 5 have been pre-approved for funding. We received approximately \$1.3 million for Division funds and 1 have asked for and additional \$150k to fully fund the salinity applications on the Henrys Forks. Including salinity funds, the total goes to \$1.7 million. Again, for the State, Division III (Lincoln, Sweetwater, Sublette, Teton, and Uinta) received the biggest allocation. Division VI was second with \$910K. (Converse, Natrona, Niobrara)

Project Activities

Helped Hillary Walrath with the RCCP proposal for replacing 39 rock diversions (pushup dams) on the Henrys Fork. Still waiting to hear if it was accepted/approved.

No meetings attended since we got shut down a year ago other than internal meeting via the internet.

Meetings Coming Up

Need to schedule a Local Work Group (LWG) meeting in the near future. Because of the current situation, I think we keep it as simple as possible and simply review why we have local work group meetings and then decide if our top three priorities are the same or to possibly make changes. It shouldn't have to last more than 45 minutes.

Staff Coordination

Courtney Thomas was hired to replace Adam Clark. Courtney worked for us in the past but quit to raise her two daughters and now has come back to NRCS. Courtney has a degree in range from UW. I'm glad to have her onboard as I knew her when she was stationed in Greybull.

Non-Program Activities

The COVID crisis has made working with producers somewhat difficult because of all the rules we have to go by. We do most of our work either by emails or by phone calls. For a short period of time, we were all back in the office, but when COVID cases started climbing, we went back to one person being at the office and the rest teleworking. For those of us teleworking, printing documents and internet speed were huge issues. We had to go to the office when no one else was there to print out the paperwork and the VPN we

have to use to access our servers went to Beltsville, Maryland. It takes about 30 minutes or more for our GIS program to bring up a map because of the connection.

On March 17th, the first tri-State leadership program class graduated. This included NRCS personnel from Wyoming, Idaho and Washington state. There were approximately 18 students. The group I was in, presented the importance of having a screening tool to manage our workload.

On April 22, 2020, was my 30th year for working for SCS/NRCS. I have worked in one county in Montana, three counties in North Dakota, and three counties in Wyoming.

I have been a SCT (soil conservation technician), a CET (civil engineering technician), and currently, a DC (district conservationist)

Tiffany Hayes, the Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations (my boss) has taken a job with the BLM in Lander. She will start her new job in the next 30 to 60 days. We will have an Acting AC from Idaho fill in for her once she leaves. Nate Matlack, the DC in Pocatello, ID will be acting for 120 days.

Associate Supervisors

Rick Breininger

- Reported that ham radio is having their annual field day June 26-27 for the FFA at the Intergalactic Space Port (south of Green River).

SWCCD Office Update and Discussion - Dwight Bliss

- Received an estimate from IT to do the office move. (\$1,300.)
- Reported the county delivered the surplus office furniture to the new office space.

Unfinished Business

Bitter Killpecker Creek Watershed Advisory Group (BKWAG) Meeting

The BKWAG meeting will be held on April 27. Staff contacted the White Mountain Library and sent the agenda and notice for the meeting out to the group.

WACD Legislative Update #8, #9

Information was included in Supervisor packets.

Community Enhancement Grants

The District did not receive any grant applications.
After discussion.

A **motion** was made by Joshua Coursey, seconded by Jean Dickinson, to extend the community enhance grant deadline through the end of April. Motion carried.

Conflict of Interest Discussion

After discussion, the Board will wait and revisit the agenda item again in a couple of months.

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Joshua Coursey, to table the conflict-of-interest discussion until after state legislature ends, and after the Governor signs off on the bill. Justin Caudill, WDA, will provide the Board an update at that time. Motion carried.

New Business

WDA Lab Funds and Base Funding Information

Each District will receive \$4,551.00 for the 2-year Biennium for water quality and lab work. The SWCCD lab funds assist Sublette County Conservation District with their surface water quality sampling on the Big & Little Sandy.

All Districts met the base criteria deadlines and will receive a voucher for the annual \$8,824.00 in May, 2021.

Conservation District Risk Management/Bonding Forms

The Board discussed and signed the Bonding and the Risk Management Forms. The forms are required by the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, as part of their financial policy requirements and oversight.

Supervisors Reports

Tom Burris

- Reported on selecting office furniture from the county's surplus office equipment.
- Attended the Coalition of Local Governments (CLG) meeting in Kemmerer.

Jean Dickinson

- Attended the CLG meeting in March in Kemmerer.
- Attended the Energy Strong Conference in Vernal. Dickinson will forward more information from the conference to staff to send out to the other Board and Associate Members.

Joshua Coursey

- Watching closely on the legislative session, specifically HB 122 (conservation stamp fee increase) that passed and is awaiting Governor Gordon's signature. The increase will be for big game license/fishing conservation stamps that went from

\$12 to \$21 dollars. The revenue will generate 1.5 million dollars with 15% allocated to wildlife crossings and license plates.

- Reported that he will be moving to Lincoln County in the coming months and will need to resign from the Board.
- Reported on a Wyoming Wildlife & Roadways Summit that will be held on April 27-28. Coursey will send the information and link to the office.

Staff Reports

Karen Pecheny

- Attended the Coalition of Local Governments (CLG) meeting in March. The next meeting will be on April, 22, in Kemmerer
- Worked on the WDA water quality grant for the 2021-22 Biennium. (\$20k)
- Worked on the county budget for FY 2022.
- The tree delivery day will be held on Wednesday April 28, at the Sweetwater Events Complex - 1:00 pm. Staff will send a reminder to Supervisor Burris.
- Staff will help distribute trees at the Ray Lovato Recycling Center on May 1, from 9am -1pm. The Annual Trees for Recycling Day Event.
- The Conservation District Employee Training is in Sheridan April 13-16. Staff will look into taking an online course.

Information and Education

WDA Information on Marino/Moss balls was included in Supervisor packets.

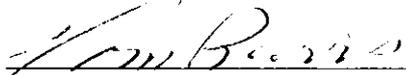
Executive Session

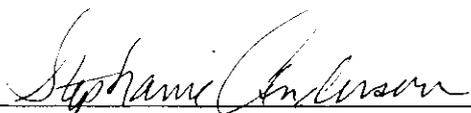
The Board made the decision not to go into executive session.

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Joshua Coursey, to select and appoint Larry Folks to fill the unexpired SWCCD rural supervisor (vacated by Mary Thoman) through 2022 to the Wyoming Board of Agriculture for confirmation. Motion carried.

Staff will send in the required paperwork.

A **motion** was made by Tom Burris, to adjourn the meeting at 5:55 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 6, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. SWCCD Office, 79 Winston Drive, Suite 103, Rock Springs, WY.

/s/  _____ Chairman

/s/  _____ Secretary

//Submitted by Karen Pecheny/