



Providing resource conservation for a quality environment demonstrated through active leadership and partnership

**Board of Supervisor Regular Monthly Meeting
August 21, 2021
Conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams**

Board of Supervisors attending: Chair Abel Camarena, Vice Chair Teresa Smith de Cherif, Treasurer Joseph Moya, Richard Bonine, Sue Small, Gail Goodman, and Duana Draskiewicz. District Staff attending: Business Manager Amanda Carrasco, Conservation Manager Johnny Chavez, and District Director Andrew Hautzinger. Other attendees: Friends of Whitfield board member Linda Fraser, NMDA's SWCD Specialist Katie Mechenbier, and NRCS Team 2 District Conservationist Martin Meairs.

Call to order: Chair Abel Camarena verified quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

- 1) **Agenda Review and Approval:** Camarena requested Smith de Cherif update the Board on the new Department of Health COVID-19 guidelines. Hautzinger requested item 11 regarding the contract for a State-approved auditor be tabled until the September Board meeting. Smith de Cherif moved to accept the agenda, as amended; Bonine seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Smith de Cherif-yes; Small-yes; Moya-yes, Bonine-yes; Goodman-yes; Draskiewicz-yes; Camarena-yes. The motion carried unanimously.
- 2) **July Minutes:** Smith de Cherif moved to accept the July 17, 2021 meeting minutes; Bonine seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Cherif-yes; Moya-yes; Bonine-yes; Small-yes; Goodman-yes; Draskiewicz-yes; Camarena-yes. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3) **Public Comments:** No public comments were received.
- 4) **Staff Monthly Reports:** District Director Hautzinger presented a summary of the monthly reports from staff. The full reports are available on our website.

A highlight to the month was the July 22nd visit by the staff of NM Senator Martin Heinrich to the Whitfield Complex and to the El Cerro Mission Community Garden. The Senator's Field Rep. Elsa Menendez and State Director Edward Tabet-Cubero alignment between District activities and the Senator's environmental priorities.

Andrew and Johnny attended the August monthly Board meeting of the Friends of Whitfield. The Friends are scheduling their Annual Meeting to coincide with the Whitfield Birthday Party, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, December 4th.

Andrew attended the August monthly board meeting of the MRGCD where the causes of and options for response for the catastrophic Belen floods were discussed.

Applications for the Environmental Assistant position (which has been funded 100% by the Friends of Whitfield) closed on August 6. We received 28 applications, 2 candidates were interviewed, and the Education and Personnel Committees reviewed the staff's hiring recommendations.

Education Allison Martin's report noted that our Summer Environmental Outreach Education had 407 student contacts, with visits to multiple sites, including the Rio Abajo unit of our Whitfield Conservation Complex. The Sandia Mountain Natural History Center (SMNHC) received a \$15,000 Facebook grant to bring fifth graders to Whitfield during January and February of 2022. In association with Nature Niños of New Mexico (a program connected with the New Mexico Wildlife Federation), we will help offer homeschooled students outdoor learning opportunities.

- 5) **Dan Goodman Scholarship Presentation of Awards:** The 35th Annual Dan Goodman Award for Soil & Water and Environmental Improvement recognized three youth within our District who showed interest and academic achievement in agriculture and natural resource conservation. The District will mail the awards of \$700 to Tekota Lumpkin and \$150 each to Jace Martinez and Tyler Martinez, as none of the awardees were able to attend the Board meeting.

- 6) **NMACD 2021 Awards:** Andrew requested that VSWCD make nominations for FY22 NMACD awards. For the Friends of Conservation award, he recommended Amelia Vogel and Jason Schilberg of Rocket Punch Farms, and for the Land Stewardship award, he recommended Kirsten and Nathan Couevas of Sublime Pastures farm. Smith de Cherif moved to accept the nominations; Small seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Smith de Cherif-yes; Small- yes; Moya- yes; Bonine-yes; Goodman-yes; Draszkievicz-yes; Camarena-yes. The motion carried unanimously.

- 7) **EVUGP Committee Update:** Smith de Cherif presented the EVUGP Committee update. District staff and EVUGP Committee members met with members of the Valencia Community Action Network (VCAN) on July 20th to discuss the road ahead for the gardens. Another meeting was scheduled for late August. Funds for the NM CYFD Next Gen grant for the gardens, which was secured by our partner YDI, have stalled in NM's General Services Department since July 1. Abel, Andrew, and Teresa met with YDI CEO Dr. Diego Gallegos to strengthen our relationship and work to secure the Next Gen funds. Andrew, Johnny, Teresa, and community volunteers have worked to repair the Meadow Lake hoop house structure that was damaged by high winds.

- 8) **BEMP Proposal to VSWCD:** Hautzinger, Smith de Cherif, and Small provided historical information about the Board's alignment with the Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program (BEMP) and the student scientists they train in our District. Small moved to fund BEMP with \$15,000 (as detailed in the FY22 BEMP Proposal); Smith de Cherif seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Smith de Cherif-yes; Small-yes; Moya-yes; Bonine- yes; Goodman-no; Draszkievicz- yes; Camarena-yes. The motion carried by quorum majority.

- 9) **Capital Outlay Process:** Hautzinger recommended the District pursue a FY22 Capital Outlay request for the second building. Smith de Cherif moved to approve the pursuit of a FY22 capital outlay to fund our long-planned administrative office building; Bonine seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Smith de Cherif-yes; Small-yes; Moya- yes; Bonine-yes; Goodman-no; Draszkievicz-yes; Camarena-yes. The motion carried by quorum majority.

- 10) **Discussion of recent floods and reviewing of historical MRGCD video:** Hautzinger thanked MRGCD Board Director Stephanie Russo-Baca for sharing materials presented at their 8-9-2021 board meeting, including a short historical overview video "Modernizing the MRG Valley" and slides that explained on how Belen's July 2021 flood happened and can occur again.

11) **Budgeting & Accounting:**

Month of July 2021 expenditures review and approval: Bonine moved to accept the July 2021 reconciliation summary; Smith de Cherif seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Smith de Cherif-yes; Moya-yes; Bonine-yes; Small-yes; Goodman-yes; Draszkievicz-yes; Camarena-yes. The motion carried unanimously.

DFA Approval of FY21 4th Quarter Report and FY22 Final Proposed Budget: Hautzinger, Carrasco and CPA Fogel will correct a spreadsheet entry and bring the revised report to the next board meeting.

12) **Reports from Cooperating Agencies:** NMDA's Katie Mechenbier announced a new funding program for farmers and ranchers, whereby up to \$5,000 can be awarded to hire and train interns at local farms and ranches.

NRCS District Conservationist Martin Meairs indicated their office was evaluating local applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). He will help us plan for our annual Local Work Group meeting in early October.

MRGCD's CEO Mike Hammon had his letter about monsoon rains and irrigation prospects published in the *Valencia News-Bulletin*.

13) **Executive Session:** For the purpose of Board consideration of hiring an Education Assistant, Smith de Cherif moved to go into executive session; Small seconded. A roll call vote was held: Smith de Cherif-yes; Moya-yes; Bonine-yes; Small-yes; Goodman-yes; Draszkievicz-yes; Camarena-yes. The motion carried unanimously and the board ended the regular meeting to enter into executive session.

14) **Personnel:** Once resuming the regular meeting, Smith De Cherif moved to approve the hiring of Natalie Duncan as our new Education Assistant; Draszkievicz seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Smith de Cherif-yes; Moya-yes; Bonine-yes; Small-yes; Goodman-abstain; Draszkievicz-yes; Camarena-yes. The motion carried by quorum majority.

15) **Adjournment:** Bonine moved to adjourn; Smith de Cherif seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Smith de Cherif-yes; Small-yes; Moya-yes; Bonine-yes; Goodman-yes; Draszkievicz-yes; Camarena-yes. The motion carried unanimously; the meeting adjourned at 12:18 pm.

Signatures:

Abel Camarena, Chair _____ **Date** _____

Andrew Hautzinger, District Director _____ **Date** _____