

MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MOJAVE DESERT RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

March 6, 2019

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Mojave Desert Resource Conservation District was held on Wednesday afternoon, March 6, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. at the Victorville Service Center at 15415 W. Sand St., Victorville, CA 92392.

Directors in attendance were:

Chuck Bell  
Bobby Boytor  
Eldert Van Dam  
Paul Johnson

Directors absent/excused:

Neville Slade

Others in attendance were:

Dana Raponi, District Manager  
Ellen Johnson, Associate Director  
Curtis Tarver, NRCS, Assistant State Conservationist  
Tony Walters, Conservation Specialist - IWM  
Meredith Hergenrader

Item 1. Call to order, pledge of allegiance: The regular meeting was called to order by Chuck Bell at 1:03 p.m. Minutes were recorded by Dana Raponi. Flag salute was led by Meredith Hergenrader.

Item 2. Self-Introduction of Guests(s): Everyone introduced themselves to Curtis Tarver, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist.

Item 3. Approval of Agenda: **Bobby Boytor moved to approve the agenda. Seconded. Passed.**

Item 4. Consent Calendar:

Approval of Minutes: February 2019  
Approval of Financial Report: February 2019  
Approval of Bills: March 2019

Dana Raponi, RCD District Manager, distributed the February Bank Statement to the board for review. Raponi stated the invoice from our contractor, NorTerra, for the mastication and debris clearing in the Mojave Narrows Regional Park, had been received and paid. Raponi stated the final biologist reports had been received for the Oro Grande wash and Victor/Phelan mitigations, and had been paid. Raponi summarized the funding with the Victor/Phelan mitigation and possible refund. **Paul Johnson moved to approve the consent calendar. Seconded. Passed.**

Item 5. District Conservationist's Monthly Report: Curtis Tarver, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist, introduced himself and summarized his background with the NRCS during his 30 year career. Tarver stated a Conservation Planner GS 7/9 position will be added to the Victorville field Office and is expected to be advertised the first of April. Tarver summarized the existing RCD/NRCS agreements and the possible future of additional funding for these two agreements once

the Farm Bill is finalized. Tarver summarized the process of the NRCS programs moving forward based on the new Farm Bill and the amount of funding needing to be obligated. Discussion followed on the pending contracts from last year and the process needed to obligate and fund them with the new Farm Bill.

Item 6. District Manager's Report: Dana Raponi, RCD district manager, discussed the invoices being sent for reimbursements, for both the mitigations and the bio fund mastication.

Item 7. ReLeaf Project: Cheryl Nagy's report was in the director books for review. Raponi reviewed the ReLeaf program for Tarver and stated Nagy is a grant funded part time employee. Raponi stated Nagy is inquiring with Edison on their grant program for this cycle and CalFire on any possible funding from them.

Item 8. Irrigation Water Management: Tony Walters, Irrigation Water Management Specialist, stated he has been focusing on community outreach and education. Walters stated he had attended a work shop at the Victor Valley Museum where most all of the informational material had been exhausted. Walters summarized the focus of a Baja Sub Advisory Committee meeting in Newberry Springs he had attended. Walters referred to a flyer advertising a Water Education Day in Joshua Tree he will be attending as well. Walters stated Nick Schneider at MWA, has asked that he would distribute AWAC materials at his IWM event tables, as well as RCD and NRCS informational materials. Walters stated he will be presenting two workshops for the city of Victorville. One workshop will be in March and another one for Spanish speaking attendees in April. Both workshops will be on Water Irrigation and Conservation. Walters discussed the NRI training in Arizona Luis Cortes and he had attended. Walters stated Victor Valley College students from four classes will be at Las Flores Ranch on March 19 to go over the range management, irrigation and GIS opportunities at the ranch, in connection with the Las Flores Ranch Management Project. Waters reported the NRI program this year should be about 60 points to map and collect data for.

Item 9. Mojave Weed Management Area: Raponi stated CDFA has acquired 2 million to spend on invasive plant control projects, and has released RFP's for projects through weed management areas. Raponi stated she has sent out information to the Mojave Weed Management Area group but has not received any responses. The application release and deadline dates leave a very quick turn around time, so the projects need to be 'shovel ready'. Bell suggested applying for funding for Tamarisk removal/retreatment in the Barstow Area and contacting BLM for projects with Sahara Mustard. After discussion Raponi will do some more research on the funding.

Item 10. Old Business:

- a. RC&D Program Update: Nothing new at this time.
- b. Conservation Easements/Mitigation: Raponi stated the Oro Grande Wash and the Recurrent Energy (Victor-Phelan) mitigations are both complete and can be removed from the mitigations. Raponi reported we are waiting for an HMMP from Frontier Homes on a mitigation and another mitigation for a Solar project in the Victorville area.
  1. Recurrent Energy (Victor-Phelan)
  2. Oro Grande Wash (MWA)
  3. Sun Power
  4. Barstow Sanitary Landfill
- c. Mojave Water Agency FY 2017-2018 Weed Removal Program: Bell stated we will not know the status of the tamarisk until spring.
- d. Sand Blow/Fugitive Dust/Erosion Control: Bell discussed renewing the project of clearing the Hilardes field and planting grain to retard sand blow across Harvard road.

- e. Dairy Issues: Eldert Van Dam stated Lahontan Water Board had a meeting in Perris concerning new funds and new fees. Van Dam summarized the environmental certification leading to discounted fees and the new rules for future fees. Discussion followed. Bell stated the order for the Confined Animal Facilities has been delayed as they are now including all Confined Animal Facilities including horses, goats, cows etc. Discussion followed on nitrate sources and possible alternatives to dissipate the nitrates. Tarver asked if any of the dairies were utilizing NRCS program funds. Discussion followed.
- f. Update on Camp Cady: Raponi stated the battery for the Hobo Weather station has been replaced. Data has been retrieved back to October 2018.
- g. Raven Issue: Nothing new at this time.
- h. Grant Funding Opportunities:
  - 1. 2019 Specialty Block Grant: Nothing new at this time.
- i. Tamarisk Bio Control: Paul Johnson asked about the reemergence of the tamarisk beetle for the coming year. Discussion followed on where signs of the tamarisk beetle have been in past years.
- j. Regulations for Standards for Different Levels' of Mulch/Compost: Nothing new at this time.
- k. Federal Review of DRECP – RCD Involvement: Nothing new at this time.
- l. Comments on the WMRNP Plan Amendment: Nothing new at this time.
- m. Ramp Down in Baja to 35% - Possible RCD Assistance with Relation to the Old Baja Plan: Ellen Johnson stated the water ramp down is now at 30% and expected to go to 25%. Ellen Johnson distributed handouts to the board concerning possible projects developed for the Baja Areawide Sustainability Plan through NRCS and the RCD. Ellen Johnson stated projects needed to be sponsored to be considered for the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan. Ellen Johnson inquired if any of the projects listed on the handouts were in the RCD purview. Discussion followed on the Kane wash basin, Kewit pits, shovel readiness of projects and water rights.
- n. Industrial Hemp: Paul Johnson stated he had heard San Bernardino County doesn't want to permit the Industrial Hemp because they don't have the capability of distinguishing the industrial hemp from the THC. Bell stated Bobbie Wilhite, San Bernardino County Agricultural Commissioner, wants to wait for the State of California to come up with regulations. So far the State has regulations on permit fees. The County is waiting for the state regulations to be adopted before they develop San Bernardino county regulations. Discussion followed.
- o. Attempt to Exempt Well/Pump Rigs via Legislation: Bell stated he and a local well driller attended a meeting with Assemblyman Obernolte concerning well rigs and pump rigs being exempt from diesel engine upgrade via legislation. Bell stated they think the well and pump rigs are exempt from tier four. Discussion followed on how recent the regulations are that state "well and pump rigs are exempt", and the possibility of going through Obernolte's office to enact legislation to exempt the well and pump rigs if the regulations are too old.
- p. Mojave Narrows Fire Protection & Restoration Plan: Raponi stated Fish and Wildlife didn't want to do any more mastication in the riverbed until they could do a management plan. Bell stated Rick Piercy needed to gather a smaller group to determine the next steps for the Mojave Narrows Fire Protection and Restoration Plan.
- q. RCD Investment Policy: Raponi distributed example Investment policies to the board to review. Bell stated he preferred the example of the Investment Policy from Inland Empire RCD of the examples given to the board. Raponi distributed the rate for Certificates of Deposit at Desert Community Bank. Discussion followed on various investment vehicles allowed to be used for investment and where they can be obtained. **Paul Johnson moved to adopt Inland Empire RCD's Investment of district funds policy. Seconded. Passed.** Discussion followed.
- r. RCD/NRCS Workgroup Meeting: Raponi reported Holly Shiralipour wanted to hold three workgroup meetings. Raponi stated Shiralipour wanted to have one in the Needles area, one

in the Victorville area and one in the San Bernardino Mountains in conjunction with the Redlands field office. Raponi stated Shiralipour wanted to have a speaker on Hemp to attend the meetings.

- s. Assistance to MDLT for Weed Removal/Restoration at its Palisades Ranch: Bell stated to leave this item on the agenda, however, the kind of assistance we can provide will probably be Tamarisk and Arundo removal.

Item 11. New Business:

- a. Board Approval of Associate Members Pat Flannigan and Meredith Hergenrader: **Paul Johnson moved to approve Pat Flannigan and Meredith Hergenrader as associate board members to the Mojave Desert RCD. Seconded. Passed.**
- b. 700 Forms: Raponi stated the Annual Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700) are due by April 2, 2019, and distributed the 2019 forms to the board members. Discussion followed.
- c. Composting Operations to Deal with Manures: Nothing new at this time.
- d. Projects for 2019/2020 MWA Workplan: Raponi stated in conversation with Alisa Elmsworth, Fish and Wildlife didn't want to allot any more funds for mastication, however if there was another project with the tamarisk treatment in the Exhibit H area she could possibly fund it in 2019/2020. Raponi stated she had talked to Jackie Lindgren and phase III of the Tamarisk and Arundo Eradication project could be retreated. Discussion followed on when to begin negotiation's for the MWA Workplan 2019-2020.
- e. Range Camp 2019 – June 16-21, 2019: Raponi stated Range Camp 2019 is coming up for June 16-21, 2019 at Half Moon Bay. Raponi stated the applications needed to be received by April 26, 2019. Raponi stated last year we had sent the announcement out to the board members and they had distributed them. Raponi stated the sponsorship for range camp this year was to be in honor of Tom Irwin.
- f. District Hire of Pilot Rock for Trail Clearing in the Mojave Narrows Park: Raponi stated due to the recent rains and dam runoff, the water in the riverbed had been from side to side through the Mojave Narrows Regional Park, and had ruined the trails. Lindgren and Raponi had suggested hiring Pilot Rock Conservation Camp to come in for a few days and clear trails. In contacting the County for permission, San Bernardino County had agreed to pay Pilot Rock to clear trails.
- g. District Payment of Overage From Mojave Narrows Debris Cleanup: Discussion followed on the possibility of the Bio Fund paying for the overage of 3,067.00 over the 70,000.00 allotted for the mastication in the Mojave Narrows Regional Park.
- h. Mitigation and Monitoring Plan – Stone Briar II: Raponi stated this was a new mitigation through Frontier Communities, with Shay Lowry, Jericho Systems, as the monitoring biologist. This mitigation would be a five year plan. Because of the duration of this mitigation plan, the question arises about the District taking on a five year plan with existing staff. Discussion followed on future district commitments, how much more tamarisk is needing to be treated, future projects and the hiring of new staff and/or contractor. Raponi inquired about the cost estimate calculated now for the Stone Briar II mitigation and if it would still be valid in a few years. Discussion followed on outside funding sources, our existing contractor and the possibilities of hiring a new contractor in the future. After discussion on the location of the mitigation and how much tamarisk retreatment will be needed in the future **Paul Johnson moved to approve this project contingent on the terms of time duration being acceptable to the managing staff, Jackie Lindgren, Dana Raponi and Chuck Bell. Seconded. Passed.**

Item 13. Correspondence (Discussion items only) No Correspondence discussed.

Item 14. Closed Session (Litigation and Personnel): No Closed Session was held.

Item 15. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 3:20

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Dana Raponi, District Manager