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## Minutes for Combined Meeting of the Pima NRCD and Pima Center for Conservation Education (PCCE), Inc. September 24, 2025

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### Summary of Motions and Tasks

- *Revised SDR contract:* Motion to approve: Supervisor Madigan, Second: Supervisor DuHamel. All in favor; none opposed.
- *Past Minutes:* Motion to approve June and July Minutes: Supervisor Lopez; Second: Supervisor Madigan. All in favor; none opposed.
- *Conservation Projects:*
  - Motion to approve the AVCA Rangeland Resilience Workshop agreement: Supervisor Coping; Second: Supervisor DuHamel. All in favor; none opposed.
  - Motion to approve the Ranch Road Water Harvesting agreement: Supervisor DuHamel; Second - Supervisor Madigan. All in favor; none opposed.
- *Rancher recognition:* Motion to submit an application to AACD to recognize the Kings: Supervisor DuHamel; Second: Supervisor Madigan. All in favor, none opposed
- *Tasks:*
  - SDR Follow-up with Deborah Smith to see if 10/30 would work for Supervisor training.
  - Supervisor Madigan share estimates for developing videos from water harvesting workshop.
  - Supervisor Coping follow-up on King family nomination
  - Supervisor Miller - update group on September UA Natural Resource Users Law and Policy Center meeting

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### Roll call

Supervisors present (all):

- Mary Miller, Chair
- Cindy Coping, Treasurer
- Jonathan DuHamel
- Juan Lopez
- Stacy Madigan

Guests:

- Deborrah Smith, AACD
- Alisha Phipps, NRCS
- Ashley Wright, UA Extension
- Jennifer Krentz, NRCS
- Mynasha Holliday, NRCS
- Bill Dunn, Winkelman NRCD
- Zach MacDonald, AZ Land and Water Trust
- Colleen Whitaker, SDR (minutes)

**Quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 10:05am** by Supervisor Miller

### **1. Supervisor Introductions**

Supervisors introduced themselves, sharing a brief background and their interests in being part of the Pima NRCD.

### **2. Call to the Public**

None

### **3. Agency and Partner Updates**

**NRCS - Jennifer Krentz**

#### Farm Bill Program Updates

- Federal Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) started October 1, 2026.
- Still operating under 2018 Farm Bill

#### NRCS Funding Programs – (FY25 Allocations)

- EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program funding
  - Team 7 had 26 EQIP contracts funded this year
- RCPP-Regional Conservation Partnership Program
  - Team 7 had 6 applications funded for FY 2025 under the Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape Conservation RCPP. Douglas-4; Tucson-2
- CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program
  - Funding preapproval selections were be made July 18<sup>th</sup>
  - Team 7 had 5 CSP contracts preapproved. Douglas-2; Tucson-3

#### Team 7 Staffing Updates

- Acting Team Lead – Jennifer Krentz (NRCS State Program Specialist) is covering the Team Lead position. Started detail August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- Tucson NRCS Office
  - In July several critical vacancies were announced within Team 7. None of the vacancies have been filled at this time.
  - No news about when we will be able to hire employees again.
- NEW
  - ACEP Coordinator- Paul Cattelino
  - Assistant State Conservationist-Field Operations – Rebecca De La Torre. She has taken a reassignment to this position effective 8/10/25.

Outreach

- Outreach is limited, due to staffing
- Any outreach that is part of a state or national agreement will be performed.

NRCS Tucson Field Office Staff

- Jennifer Krentz, Acting – Team Lead (Jennifer.krentz@usda.gov)
- Alisha Phipps, Rangeland Management Specialist – Master Planner (alisha.phipps@usda.gov)
- Mynesha Holliday, Soil Conservationist (mynesha.holliday@usda.gov)

**4. Arizona Association of Conservation Districts and Arizona Natural Resources Board  
Overview - Deborah Smith, AACD**

NRCD and Arizona Natural Resources Board Overview

- The NRCD was organized by the State in the 1940s, with the State Association following in 1944. Every state has these. Most are funded through taxation, but Arizona did not do this.
- Districts develop recommendations for the NRCS - priority areas, resource concerns, conservation practices. These recommendations help target NRCS funding to priorities identified. Districts approach partners and leverage funds to address issues on the ground.
- The Districts were previously administered by the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) with a different enabling act that did not allow them to pursue funding for programs or administrative costs. So Districts have been stuck at historic low-levels of funding. There is not funding to hire full-time staff to take care of everything.
- AACD has continued to ask the State Legislature for increased funding to meet the mandate and responsibilities, including education, conservation-wide planning, convening Local Work Group meetings, and regulatory responsibilities underneath the Farm Bill (this is where the tie with NRCS comes in).
- It wasn't possible to get the funding in the ASLD budget to fund the districts sufficiently, so AACD worked to get them moved under the State Legislature with a dedicated board.

- The State Board area for Pima NRCD is Area 2. The representative appointed by the Senate is Bill Dunn (Winkelman NRCD).
- Elected Supervisors can apply to be on the board - these terms are for three years.
- The State Board is working to get funds for the Districts:
  - The goal is to get the \$40k that is part of statute - this will be a long haul.
  - The Board manages two funds - District administration funds and a Conservation Project Fund.
  - The Conservation Project Fund is where the legislature can allot money for things they want done. For example, one district is working with Gail Griffin to get funds for repair work on retention dams. This is the kind of thing Pima NRCD could think about. Other districts are already working on this.
- With the new board there will be changes to district administration:
  - They are working to get .gov email addresses for Supervisors (may take up to a year). Each district will get one for administration for now.
  - Everything will move to Google Enterprise Suite - docs, agendas, google meets. The State uses Google. Districts will be required to use this for security purposes. They will have to use Google Meets - not Zoom, Teams or anything else.
    - Google docs will be reviewed by the administrative board and then shipped to the State archives at some point.
  - Updated financial reporting template - will work with Cindy on this.
  - Reporting - annual reports have varied over time. Now the board is working with the Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting on how to do this. There will be estimates every year, and then a report at the end of the year.
    - Ex: a statutory requirement is to hold minimum quarterly meetings. The objective will state we will hold "x meetings" and then annual report will say how many.
    - Outcomes of Local Work Group meetings will be part of annual report requirement.
    - There will be a template for the strategic plan.

#### AACD Overview

- The Arizona Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) is a corporation owned by the districts. Currently there 38 in the state, most are Tribal.
- At the end of next year there will be 40 active conservation districts.
- AACD bylaws require one conference and one meeting each year.
- Services for districts - coming on line January 1st:
  - Act as fiscal agents for districts that need it.
  - Carry federal auditing, maintain records and do reporting.
  - Carry liability insurance.
  - There are program managers in the north and south. The south manager is Amber Morin, who will be full-time starting Jan 1. She was previously in charge of Ft. Huachuca Sentinel Landscape.

- Amber will have an assistant who will be made available as a clerk for those districts that wish to utilize this free of charge (agendas, minutes, end of year reporting, coordination with any district staff managing grants)
- Deb apologized for somewhat neglecting the Pima NRCD over the years. In the past, most of the focus of the Pima NRCD was on policy, and not much support was desired. She wants to work more with PNRCD on things like trainings.
- She knows that Southwest Decision Resources has been supporting the PNRCD this year - they are a great organization; great partners. This support is appreciated. Basic administration chores are what AACD is for. But PNRCD can definitely hire SDR for other roles as well; it would be great for them to continue in this role if the district desires it.
- Deb thinks that doing a Supervisor training again soon for PNRCD would be a good idea since there are so many new members. This should be just for the Supervisors, not a public meeting. A Local Work Group training was done this April.
- Ideally PNRCD will work toward convening a Local Work Group meeting in the spring, with NRCS.
- Deb encouraged the PNRCD to develop a strong cooperator list. In the future, the Governor's Office may request to see cooperator lists, because they think the funding for administration should be based on area, or partners, or number of projects; not blanket funding, as some districts do almost nothing.

#### Discussion/questions

- Supervisor Coping has recently developed a cooperator application. With all the changes at the state level, will there be some kind of template for that, or should we just continue with what we have?
  - There will be changes. For now, use what you've got.
  - Cindy's form is good, but we will have to move to Google Forms in future.
  - Some districts charge for being a cooperator. Legally we can't require people to pay, but can ask them to make a donation. NRCDs are allowed by statute to accept donations.
- Bill Dunn shared that it is amazing what a great job Deb has done. Where we are now from where we started is amazing.
- Supervisor Madigan is in favor of doing the Supervisor training.

#### 5. **District Operations and Administration** - *Chair Miller*

##### Approval of revised SDR contract

- When PNRCD hired Southwest Decision Resources (SDR) it was initially to serve as the clerk, primarily because of their talents in other more programmatic areas. Now, after some conversations with Deb, we are aware of the opportunity to use the state crew as our clerk, and that issues of compensation are slightly problematic.
- We have a revised SOW for the group today for approval. This re-characterizes SDR as more of an interim clerical role, and emphasizes their program and strategic planning support role. The finances are largely the same, and the total expenditure is the same.
- This revision better reflects where we are heading with our relationship with the state.

- Questions/discussion
  - Supervisor Lopez asked for the changes between the two to be summarized.
    - Supervisor Miller noted that the clerical role is characterized as interim, with the idea that when the state personnel is available, we will transition. In terms of program work this emphasizes SDR helping us with planning and working towards LWG meetings, gathering cooperators, and providing general support for getting our relatively new board on it's feet.
    - Supervisor Madigan shared it is a good contract. The help that is being offered is what we need now. In favor of approval.
- **Motion to approve the revised SDR contract: Supervisor Madigan, Second: Supervisor DuHamel. All in favor; none opposed.**

#### Approval of past minutes (June 17 and July 16)

- No updates or corrections were offered.
- **Motion to approve June and July Minutes: Juan; Second: Stacy. All in favor; none opposed.**

#### Board roles

- Current vacant seats: Secretary and Vice Chair.
- Supervisor Miller asked if any Supervisors are interested in taking on any of these roles.
  - Vice-chair primary responsibilities: Lead meetings if Chair is not present.
  - Secretary responsibilities: Ensure there are good minutes (clerk takes the minutes); extra effort to make sure we are keeping track of things.
- Supervisor Miller pointed out that we need update things with the Corporation Commission and we need these seats filled.
- Supervisor Lopez is unable to serve in either role currently. He is totally maxed out and worried he would drop the ball, at least for another year.
- Supervisor Madigan asked what would happen if we are unable to fill the seats. Supervisor Dunn (Winkelman) said there's not really much anyone can do about it if we are unable to fill the seats.
- Supervisor Madigan felt the Secretary role is too much; she feel spread too thin as it is. She may be able to commit to Vice Chair but wants to take some time and consider it more. Can't commit right now.

#### **6. Financial report - Treasurer Coping**

- Supervisor Coping reported that she sold all shares in both accounts of the bond market exchange traded fund, because investing in a bond market fund you invest in the market itself, which goes up and down and the value of the principal is not guaranteed. Felt it was better to take the state funds and 40% cash allocation and invest that for security and preservation of principal.
- The funds are now in a money market account, earning 3.89% on a 7-day yield.
- She has found that some past accounting practices were not correct. At the end of each year

we were transferring state funds that hadn't been spent into the district account. It turns out this is not legal, but we have been doing it for at least 20 years. She tried to fix this going back in time, but different bookkeepers have different practices so it isn't possible to work through this for all historic years.

- Supervisor Coping will re-allocate the district account because now there is less cash. Will likely sell some ETFs to keep the cash balance ration identified with ETF (60/40).

#### Financial Summary Report July - August 2025 for PNRCD

- The beginning budget for FY26 was ~\$11k; this was revised down from \$13k. It seems like this is all we can count on. Currently have committed \$6375 more to SDR for the remaining of this fiscal year. \$4,644 remains to cover everything else in the budget for this year.

#### PCCE budget

- Beginning balance was 0 in state account and \$28k in district account
- No expenses in July or August.
- Have committed funds (\$3750 for two fall workshops), but not yet invoiced for AVCA; remaining budget is \$2500 from state and \$2251 from district, after paying for the workshops.

#### PNRCD Budget

- We need to revise this due to the fact that there is likely less funding coming in.
- Supervisor Miller proposed that since we don't actually know what is coming from the state, we could wait until we know until we formally amend the budget. Others agreed.
- Supervisor Coping noted that at the end of the year these should all be reviewed and then approved. We should consider setting up an audit committee to review these things. No two previous bookkeepers did things the same. Cindy has struggled to understand some of their past financial reports. She recommends that we audit at the end of the year. Previously there has been a lot of resistance to this suggestion, but Supervisors will be held accountable, individually, for these things being right.
- Supervisor Madigan agreed with the proposal to do a deep dive review of these at the end of the year. It takes time, but if you put your name on something you want to make sure it is right.
- The fiscal year ends June 30th. This review would happen in early summer next year.

## **7. Conservation Projects**

Altar Valley Conservation Alliance (No AVCA staff were available; Supervisor Miller shared the reports)

- The Pima NRC and PCCE have agreements with AVCA. When there is a project, a supplement to this agreement is done to describe the project in detail. The financial expenditure has already been approved; today the actual project agreement is being approved. There are two of these today.
- 1) Rangeland Resilience Workshops: \$3,750. One workshop is on GIS and Remote Sensing. The second is about photo monitoring (virtual meeting and field event).

- **Motion to approve the Rangeland Resilience Workshop agreement: Supervisor Coping; Second: Supervisor DuHamel**
- 2) Ranch Road Water Harvesting Workshop
  - This working will also result in on the ground installation of water harvesting structures; conservation work combined with education. It is a collaborative project, with resources being provided by AVCA and other partners for things like machinery.
  - 4-day workshop and completion report.
  - \$10,000 expense (previously approved).
  - Sep 2025 - March 2026

Questions/discussion

- Supervisor Lopez asked if participants would get access to ArcGIS, which is expensive.
  - They won't get access to the tools; it is more of an educational opportunity than hands on. The idea is that it will increase their understanding of what can be done, and how to work with partners. The question of how you access these things is not easy.
  - If there are specific questions these can be taken back to AVCA and ask that they speak to them.
- The target audience is broadly ranchers and rangeland managers. Supervisor Madigan added that AVCA has been reaching out to border patrol and Pima County on the roadwork workshop
- Supervisor Coping asked if there was a plan to take videos of the road workshop to create an online resource, since the participation in person is limited.
  - At this point there isn't a plan to do this, but if funding was acquired this could be explored. Supervisor Coping noted that is some budget remaining in the 2026 education budget. A ball park estimate would be helpful.
  - Supervisor Madigan has a connection with video company that she has worked with in other projects. She can find out what this might cost.
  - Supervisor Dunn (Winkelman) noted that Winkelman could be a partner to start developing a library of these types of things. Perhaps AACD could house the videos/resources.
  - It would be great to do a whole series throughout different districts, so you have workshops for different terrain and different areas of the state.
- **Motion to approve the Ranch Road Water Harvesting agreement: Supervisor DuHamel; Second - Supervisor Madigan. All in favor; none opposed.**
- **Next steps:** Supervisor Madigan share some figures for video creation budget. Further exploration of the video component, and amendment to the AVCA agreement in the future if needed.

**8. Fall Coordination with AACD and next PNRCD Board Meeting**

- Supervisors Madigan, Miller, Coping and Lopez all agreed it would be good to do more training and discussion with Deb sometime in the fall.
- Postpone the Oct 30th Local Work Group meeting. Consider using this time for training with

AACD instead.

- Could use the morning time (9-1) for training, and keep 1-3 for the board meeting
- Jennifer Krentz noted that she will be in a state leadership meeting then, but supports her staff coming to the training. Alisha is available.
- **Next steps:** Follow-up with Deb to see if 10/30 would work for training.

**9. Rancher recognition - Supervisor Coping**

- Last year at AACD there was a lifetime achievement recognition. Supervisor Coping thinks the King family needs to be recognized. John King was on the board when Cindy started, and stayed as long as he physically could; then Pat did so as well.
- They both helped found the AVCA, which is very successful. John's family has been involved in the NRCDs from the 1940;s. His father or grandfather was the first Pima NRCD Supervisor.
- Want to submit an application to recognize the Kings, and their family who carry on the legacy, at the next AACD. If AACD doesn't provide a shingle for their ranch, we should.
- **Motion to submit an application to AACD to recognize the Kings: Supervisor DuHamel; Second: Supervisor Madigan. All in favor, none opposed**

**Wrap up and next steps**

- 10/30 is tentative for training and next board meeting, based on Deb's availability
- Future agenda items - revisit budget, training, follow-up on tortoise.
  - Tortoise update from Bill Dunn:
    - Bill spoke with Norm James. There are a couple months to do something if we want to intervene or make comments. Norm suggested we get ahold of Patrick who is with one of the homebuilder groups (they intervened in another case so they have standing). Patrick hadn't heard about it, so Bill shared the documents.
  - UA NRULPC meeting is on Friday. Mary will share the information with Bill.

**Motion to adjourn: Supervisor DuHamel; Second: Supervisor Madigan. All in favor; none opposed.**

**Meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm**

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Approval of these minutes by vote of the Board of Supervisors: October 30, 2025

[Aye:5, Nay:0]

Supervisor Miller, Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature