



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

**Board of Supervisors Regular Monthly Meeting
April 26, 2022
Conducted in-person and remotely via Microsoft Teams**

Board of Supervisors attending: Chairman Abel Camarena, Vice Chair Teresa Smith de Cherif, Treasurer Joseph Moya, Richard Bonine,* Sue Small, Gail Goodman, and Duana Draszkievicz. Others attending included Director Andrew Hautzinger, Conservation Program Manager Johnny Chavez, Friends of Whitfield Vice President Linda Frazer and member Ron Goens. New Mexico Department of Agriculture Technical Specialist Katie Mechenbier also attended. [*Supervisor Bonine joined the meeting at 4:13 p.m., as he was delayed by work obligations.]

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Camarena called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

1) **VERIFY QUORUM, CONDUCT PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND AGENDA REVIEW:**

Chairman Camarena verified that six Supervisors were present, constituting a quorum. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Supervisor Draszkievicz. The meeting agenda was reviewed. Vice Chair Smith de Cherif moved to approve the agenda, as revised (allowing the Treasurer's report to be given after public comments); Supervisor Draszkievicz seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Smith de Cherif-Yes; Moya-Yes; Small-Yes; Goodman-Yes; Draszkievicz-Yes; Camarena-Yes. Motion carried unanimously.

2) **APPROVAL OF MARCH 22, 2022 MINUTES:** Treasurer Moya moved to approve the March 22, 2022 meeting minutes, as submitted; Vice Chair Smith de Cherif seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Smith de Cherif-Yes; Moya-Yes; Small-Yes; Goodman-Yes; Draszkievicz-Yes; Camarena-Yes. Motion carried unanimously.

3) **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None received.

4) **TREASURER'S REPORT (Budget and Accounting):** Treasurer Moya indicated that journal entries 3 and 4 would be provided to the Board within the week. Vice Chair Smith de Cherif moved that the expenditures report for March 2022 be approved; Supervisor Small seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Smith de Cherif-Yes; Moya-Yes; Bonine-Yes; Small-Yes; Goodman-Abstain; Draszkievicz-Yes; Camarena-Yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Director Hautzinger asked that the Approval of the Annual Mil Levy Rate Authorization and FY 23 Third Quarter Report be tabled until the May Board meeting. Director Hautzinger indicated

that the Third Quarter Report would be submitted on time, by April 30, 2022.

- 5) DISTRICT STAFF MONTHLY REPORT: Director Hautzinger presented highlights of the monthly Staff reports. The full reports are available on the District's website and will be attached to these monthly meeting minutes.
- 6) APRIL 22-23 EARTH DAY CELEBRATION/SCIENCE FIESTA AT WWCA: Director Hautzinger reported that attendance was down this year, as he predicted, given the Big Hole fire (see Whitfield Committee Update, below) and 70 miles/hour winds. On April 22nd, Rebecca "Beck" Touchin traveled from the Pueblo of Laguna to give the acknowledgement of the Land, following welcoming remarks from Chair Camarena, Vice Chair Smith de Cherif, and Director Hautzinger. Blessings for the event and for the recovering conservation area were provided by Reverend Joanne Burns. On April 23rd, Director Hautzinger's Earth Day interview by Kai Porter of KOB Channel 4 aired on the 6:00 p.m. News. Twelve partners with information booths were present at the Celebration/Fiesta.
- 7) WHITFIELD COMMITTEE UPDATE: The Whitfield Committee convened on April 14th, following the Big Hole Fire on April 11th that destroyed 75% of Whitfield and 80% of the Stacy Unit.

Director Hautzinger and Conservation Manager Chavez provided eye-witness reports. Director Hautzinger gave a video presentation of before and after photos and drone footage of Whitfield. The initial assessment by Mark Kaib, a retired fire ecologist with US Fish and Wildlife Service, indicated the fire was "low to medium in severity, with hot spots around the big trees," many of which are our oldest and grandest trees that are not expected to survive. District staff and leadership are meeting with experts to understand the damage, including what may live or die; what the recovery path ahead may look like (climate-adapted plantings that promote biodiversity); what a multifaceted and multilateral approach to bosque management could be.

Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program (BEMP) staff toured Whitfield with Director Hautzinger and Chair Camarena on April 15th, sharing insights about 36 BEMP sites, several of which have experienced fire. BEMP citizen scientists have observed that non-native vegetation can be reduced after fire by early watering and keeping all traffic on ground that burned to a minimum.

Vice Chair Smith de Cherif and Director Hautzinger were interviewed by Spencer Schacht on April 18th, with the feature airing on KOB 4 News at 6:00 p.m. On April 20th, Natural Resource Conservation Service Albuquerque office staff Athena Cholas and Santiago Misquez joined the Los Lunas NRCS staff April Luna and Isaac Martinez at Whitfield, and retired NRCS District Conservationist Cliff Sanchez for a tour with Director Hautzinger and Vice Chair Smith de Cherif. During their 3-hour visit, the NRCS staff provided initial guidance and pledged to work to provide some restoration funding.

Director Hautzinger's interview by Julia Dendinger of the *Valencia County News Bulletin* appeared on the front page of the April 21st edition. [Vice Chair Smith de Cherif wrote the District's monthly column for the *Valencia*

County News Bulletin, “Whitfield Will Rise Again,” which was published on April 21st.

Hautzinger recommended that Whitfield visitation be limited to the lower conservation area, only allowing the public to self-tour around the northeast forest and around the pond. Supervisor Bonine moved to accept the closure and restricted visitation map, as presented by Director Hautzinger; Supervisor Small seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Smith de Cherif-Yes; Moya-Yes; Bonine-Yes; Small-Yes; Goodman-Yes; Draszkievicz-Yes; Camarena-Yes. Motion carried unanimously.

- 8) ALDO LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD: Director Hautzinger briefed the Board on the opportunity to nominate a local agriculture producer for this award. Supervisor Bonine suggested that a member of the Laguna Pueblo who has done outstanding work there could be nominated. Vice Chair Smith de Cherif offered to assist Supervisor Bonine and Director Hautzinger with this prospective nomination.
- 9) UPDATES/PARTNER REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/OTHER: NMDA specialist Mechenbier highlighted several items in her monthly report. April Luna of NRCS’s Los Lunas office indicated she plans to participate in future Board meetings virtually. MRGCD’s Gabby Coughlin did not attend, but provided the board her monthly update. Linda Frazer reported that the Friends of Whitfield raised over \$4,000 by their Silent Auction, which closed on Earth Day, April 23rd.

ADJOURNMENT: Supervisor Bonine moved to adjourn the meeting; supervisor Draszkievicz seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Smith de Cherif-Yes; Moya-Yes; Bonine-Yes; Small-Yes; Goodman-Yes; Draszkievicz-Yes; Camarena-Yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Signatures:

Abel Camarena, Chair _____ **Date** _____

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