

New Mexico SWCS Annual Winter Meeting Minutes

November 1, 2006

The New Mexico Chapter of the Soil & Water Conservation Society met at the Pacific Grill in Truth or Consequences, NM on November 1, 2006, 12 noon to 1:30 p.m. Members present included: Steve Kadas (Pres.), Linda Scheffe (Treas.), Jean Foster (Sec.), Paul Vanio (Reg.1 rep), Cliff Sanchez (Reg. 2 rep), Pete Stewart (Reg. 3 rep), Juan Gauna (Reg. 4 rep) , Ken Leiting, Dennis Alexander, Ana Gomez, Shawn Hardeman, Susan Rich.

Welcome and Introductions

With a quorum present Steve called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon. Attendees introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes of Summer Meeting and Teleconference notes

The minutes of the July 10, 2006 meeting and the August 17, 2006 notes were reviewed and approved upon motion by Cliff Sanchez, seconded by Pete Stewart.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Linda Scheffe gave the treasurer's report, showing a current balance of \$14,954.47. Discussion ensued about funding the John Werner Scholarship, Steve suggested starting a separate account for this with \$5,500 (recommended at spring business meeting), all approved. Steve also suggested setting a percentage of monies earned from activities to be set aside for the scholarship, no action taken at this time. Using CDs versus a savings account for our funds was discussed, Steve asked Linda to investigate this option. Ana pointed out that the Valencia SWCD board is considering money market funds for the higher interest gained. According to our by-laws we can have only three people sign checks, Juan Gauna moved to add Steve Kadas and Jean Foster to the checking account signatory list while removing Wayne Robbie (not an officer at present), seconded by Cliff Sanchez, motion passed. Steve, Linda and Jean will need to go to the bank together to make it so.

Membership Committee Report

Ken Leiting reported an increase in our membership of 25%. We have nine new student members and four new regular members. National SWCS has taken notice of our increase in membership and plans to mention this in the next SWCS Chapter notes. Free memberships were cited as an influential incentive and discussion ensued about continuing this benefit. Ken promoted the idea of payroll deductions, which amount to about \$3.00 a paycheck, and handed out forms for signing up as well as membership brochures. Pete Stewart moved that we increase available funds for free new memberships to \$1,000.00, seconded by Paul Vanio, motion passed.

Scholarship Committee Report

Pete reported on the process which has resulted in the John Werner Scholarship award to Sabina Velasco, a NMSU student, currently on an exchange program in Arcata, CA. Jean drafted a letter which Steve will sign and send to Sabina with a check for \$1,000.00. Eastern NM University and Highlands University were proposed as the next possible recipient schools, with the Region 5 Rep., Rex Kirksey, taking the lead on contacting a professor at one of these schools. Steve asked Pete if he would remain as chairperson of the scholarship committee and he agreed.

Website Report

Appreciation was extended to Paul Vanio for his work on the website. Steve said this raises our chapter to a new level, Pete suggested adding scholarship information and Juan suggested adding a link for comments to our webmaster, Paul.

Elections

Election results were announced: President - Steve Kadas, President Elect - vacant, Treasurer - Linda Scheffe, Secretary - Jean Foster, Region 3 Rep. - Juan Gauna, Region 4 Rep. - Pete Stewart. All positions were uncontested. Approximately 30% of the membership returned ballots. The immediate need for a President Elect was discussed, with Steve providing a description of the position and encouraging all present to think of possible victims.

Discussion of Student Activities

The need to recognize and engage new members (especially students) was discussed. Steve will draft a letter to new student members welcoming them and inviting their participation and feedback. Shawn said that students are interested in learning experiences with a tie-in to watersheds. Half day workshops and shorter/smaller events with good training sessions were proposed as alternatives to two or three day conferences. Shawn mentioned the water resources program at University of New Mexico and inquired about a SWCS representative coming to the two hour class to speak about the SWCS. All agreed that developing a student chapter does not work without an on-campus representative. Susan informed the group of a new statewide program housed at Highlands University as a possible source of training; the NM Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute with Dr. Ken Smith as director and Mr. Jose C De Baca as interim director.

Workshops & Activities

Ideas mentioned for our next workshop included but were not limited to: Market based initiatives, Carbon credit training (Carl Lucero interested), Irrigation day workshop & monitoring well training (with Valencia SWCD), Terrain management planning, Tree planting in Feb. for a wetland restoration job. Creating an annual event with other societies in the fall of each year addressing a variety of concerns was discussed. Possible partner societies mentioned - Society for Range Management, American Fisheries, Society of American Foresters, Riparian Council, more.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m. with no further business.