

CARSON WATER SUBCONSERVANCY DISTRICT
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
February 26, 2024, 8:30am – 12:30pm
Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present:

David Griffith, Alpine County
Dave Nelson, Douglas County
Ernie Schank, Churchill County
Lisa Schuette, Carson City
Lee Sterrett, Storey County
Mike Workman, Lyon County

Staff Present:

Brenda Hunt, WS Program Manager (*via Zoom*)
Edwin James, General Manager
Catrina Schambra, Secretary to the Board

Others Present:

Kathy Canfield, Storey County
Julie Guerrero, Churchill County
Rebecca Feldermann, River Wranglers
Rob Holley, Dayton Valley Conservation District
Lori Leonard, The Nature Conservancy
Chris Mahannah, Churchill County
Kimra McAfee, Alpine Watershed Group
Ty Minor, Dayton Valley Conservation District
Mike Northan, Storey County Public Works
Christy Sullivan, Lahontan Conservation District
Jason Wierzbicki, Storey County Public Works
Rich Wilkinson, Carson Valley Conservation District

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 am by Committee Member Nelson. The meeting was held in the Conference Room of the Carson Water Subconservancy District, 777 E. William St., #209, Carson City, Nevada with a Zoom option available. Roll call determined a quorum of the committee present.

Item #3 - Public comment: None

Item #4 – For Possible Action: Approval of Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of May 2, 2023

Committee Member Griffith made a motion to approve the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on May 2, 2023. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Schank and unanimously approved by the Finance Committee.

Item #5 - For Discussion Only - Review the Tentative General Fund FY 2024-25 Budget and Hear Presentations for Proposed Projects; Review the Tentative Acquisition/Construction Fund FY 2024-25 Budget; and Review the Tentative Floodplain Management Fund FY 2024-25 Budget

Mr. James noted the committee will need to cut \$100,000 from the proposed budgets to reach the 4% required ending balance. He went over the proposed budgets with the committee describing each category of income and expense.

Presentations of Proposed Projects

Carson River Projects:

Carson Valley Conservation District – Carson River Restoration & Flood Damage Repairs

Rich Wilkinson, Manager/Coordinator

Carson Valley Conservation District (CVCD) will complete flood damage repairs and bioengineering establishment at five different project locations. Proposed actions include bioengineering treatments, sediment removal, bank shaping, rock riprap barbs, and bank protection. CVCD has prioritized flood damage repairs at five project sites on the Carson River. Two sites are located where previously completed projects sustained flood damage and require maintenance; these sites include Flying J Site #2 and Charney Site #4. Three sites are newly identified locations where CVCD has not previously

performed bank stabilization activities. The first of these is Carnes Site #1, where a significant head cut has formed on the west side of the riverbank. Sustained flooding conditions in 2023 caused severe erosion resulting in the loss of 18 feet of riverbank. The second newly identified project location is Carnes Site #2, downstream of the first location. The third newly identified project location is Running River Ranch Site #2. These sites have similarly experienced vertical head cuts and severe erosion. CVCD will hire a construction contractor to source fill materials, perform riverbank reconstruction, haul and place rock riprap, and install stream barbs. CVCD staff will harvest and install willow poles, willow mats, willow bundles, and willow fascines, install COIR fabric, and plant native seed. These methods will minimize soil erosion, trap sedimentation and thus improve water quality, improve wildlife habitat, and alleviate the devastating impacts of flooding for local landowners. **Funding request: \$225,000 (2 Years)**

Dayton Valley Conservation District – DVCD Management / Administration (1)

Rob Holley, District Manager

Since 1996, DVCD has quietly performed projects that have protected vital riparian areas, agricultural lands, public open spaces, water quality, and habitat restoration. In order for these efforts to continue for years to come, DVCD is in critical need of a consistent source of dedicated funding. In order to accomplish this, DVCD needs a funding source to cover ordinary and customary daily management, administrative, and operational functions. These are a large portion of the personnel and operational expenses, and necessary for both the function and survival of DVCD. Having a 2-year source of said funds will allow DVCD to:

- Successfully complete ongoing/planned projects which enhance and support riparian function, water quality, flood plain restoration/protection, public education/engagement, and noxious weed control
- Avoid continued spending of project-related funding on management/administrative costs
- Successfully conduct the necessary efforts to establish public support for and designated funding for the ongoing and successful implementation of broad-reaching conservation efforts within the watershed of the Middle Carson River
- Establish a program at DVCD that is widely identified and supported within the community.

Funding request: \$50,000/yr. (2 Years)

Dayton Valley Conservation District – DVCD Weed & Restoration Crew (2)

Rob Holley, District Manager

With assistance from the Nevada Dept. of Agriculture/USFS, Dayton Valley Conservation District is preparing to embark on a multiple year noxious weed management and treatment project that will encompass not only the riparian corridor and adjacent floodplains, but also several primary drainages that feed the middle Carson River in Lyon County. These areas include the Moundhouse Industrial Complex, Daney Canyon, Six Mile Canyon in Lyon County, Gold Canyon in Lyon County, lower Eldorado Canyon, and the riparian corridor and adjacent floodplains of the Carson River between from Dayton Valley to and including the Fort Churchill area. In the late Spring of 2024, DVCD will be hiring a Conservation Technician, and at least one 9-month seasonal employee in order to address noxious weed control, revegetation, and habitat restoration within the aforementioned areas. Additionally Noxious Weed funding from CWSD will be applied to this project, with emphasis given not only to appropriate weed treatments, but coordinated restoration of treated and surrounding areas. The CWSD funds will offset some personnel costs related to the Conservation Tech, and will also address equipment maintenance/repair, supply and seed acquisition, and public information/education materials designed to inform area residents through USPS mail programs, social media posts, and public forums. Specifically, the requested \$30,000 (to be requested next fiscal year, as well) will be applied primarily toward the hiring of at least one member of staff to assist the Conservation Tech during the spring, summer and fall months. Efficient and effective weed treatments require precise and rapid applications

that are better accomplished with multiple personnel. Some funds, as required, may be applied to acquisition/maintenance/repair of related equipment and supplies. **Funding request: \$30,000**

Lahontan Conservation District –Clearing & Snagging Carson River

Christy Sullivan, District Clerk

The project is an ongoing effort to create a river channel that is clear of obstructions/abstraction and provides a free flow at natural choke points. For example, Highway 50, Highway 95, and Bafford Bridges have historically been clogged by debris during high water flooding events. Obstructions in these locations causes back up and overflow that moves into residential housing areas in both the county and City of Fallon. Locations where sediment-caused islands changed the flow, eroded banks, or blocked flows under the bridge. Removal of sediment will provide debris/obstructions to flow downstream more freely. This project will prevent and minimize property loss and other damage during flood conditions. Riverbank stabilization after sediment removal will minimize erosion, improve water quality and re-establish native vegetation. Maintaining a clear channel will enable the citizens to utilize the river for recreation. Maintaining an adequate velocity of the river flow prevents stagnant pools from developing where mosquitoes can propagate and create health issues for residents along the course of the Carson River. **Funding request: \$32,700**

Churchill County - Lahontan Valley Water Level Measurement Program

Chris Mahannah, PE

This ongoing project has regional benefits since most of the surface supply for the Newlands project and hence recharge come from the Carson River which are augmented by the Truckee River. The Churchill County Water Resource Plan Update has identified the local intermediate aquifer as the near term quasi-municipal supply and the length of time it can sustain development is contingent upon recharge from the surface water system and downward gradients from the Shallow aquifer to the Intermediate aquifer in the western portion of the basin. Due to the relative slow movement of groundwater, impacts to the Intermediate aquifer due to reductions in recharge from the Shallow aquifer were thought to take years or decades to fully manifest, however recovery of water levels in 2016 - 2017 seem to contradict this. Ongoing monitoring is critical to further understand the rate of decline in water levels during drought years and subsequent recovery during wetter years. Furthermore, the State Engineer relies on water level data when making many water resource and water rights decisions. At such a time that the intermediate aquifer can no longer support the demand, other resources will need to be developed which are identified in Chapter 12 of the Updated Water Resource Plan. Some of these alternatives such as the Wildgoose Farm or Dixie Valley importation may be regional in nature and others involve conjunctive use and artificial recharge of surface waters. This program will provide an early warning as to when some of these other regional type alternatives will need to be pursued.

Funding request: \$48,000 (3 Years - FY25 \$16,000; FY26 \$16,000; FY27 \$16,000)

River Wranglers- Conserve the Carson River Workdays

Rebecca Feldermann, Executive Director

River Wranglers continues to host Conserve the Carson River Workdays (CCRWD) throughout the Carson River watershed. Over the past two years we have diversified our program to include various field days aligned with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) with different grades, field days with the Washoe Tribe, and field days with Home School groups to increase our reach throughout the watershed. Our workday model primarily remains the same but due to newer guidelines, restrictions, financial concerns in the different districts, and rapid teacher turnover, we have been required to occasionally adjust in order to continue this vital program. For CCRWDs, as allowed, we continue to go into high school Future Farmers of America (FFA) and science classrooms to teach high school students the necessary information and skills so that they in turn can tutor elementary students at the river in a

combined workday. The high school students are trained in activities that teach children about our watershed, the importance of clean water, the water cycle, and non-point source pollution. At the river, they become “mentors” to the younger students, spending the day with them, leading them through the activities. For the past two years, this has been our model for students in Churchill County, as the teachers are incredibly supportive and receptive. If high school students are unable to participate, we still provide an enriching workday with the assistance of professional volunteers from our partners including CWSD, NDEP, CCP&ROS, NDOW, UNR, TNC, RCI, as well as trained community volunteers. In addition to the educational stations, we partner with conservation districts to include river work projects that the students complete together. After workdays, elementary students are visited by River Wranglers staff to do a “wrap-up,” which reinforces the messages they learned at the river. We once again discuss non-point source pollution, the geography and features of the watershed with the utilization of the Carson River watershed map, and the importance of the river and watershed to their own lives, while also reinforcing the concept of stewardship. We do a pre- and post-test with all involved students to track their increase in knowledge about the watershed and non-point source pollution to gauge the effectiveness of our programs. **Funding request: \$30,000**

Alpine County Watershed Group- Upper Carson River Watershed Programs

Kimra McAfee, Executive Director

Alpine Watershed Group (AWG) seeks funding for the fiscal year 2024-25 from the Carson Water Subconservancy District for the coordination of its Upper Carson River watershed programs. AWG’s mission is to protect, conserve, and restore the watersheds of Alpine County by promoting sustainable community and science-based collaborative solutions. For 23 years, AWG has organized volunteers and inspired widespread participation to address water quality monitoring and restoration needs in Alpine County. To further the stewardship of our county’s natural resources, our organization has developed diverse partnerships around watershed issues. As the nonprofit environmental organization for the Carson River headwaters our positive impacts extend downstream, where the Carson River flows into Northern Nevada. Through this project, AWG staff will: 1) involve local citizens in watershed stewardship; 2) plan and implement priority watershed monitoring and restoration activities; 3) recruit diverse stakeholders and strengthen community partnerships; and 4) support local watershed education and community outreach. **Funding request: \$30,000**

New Projects:

Storey County 6 Mile Canyon Culverts Project

Jason Wierzbicki, Public Works Director

Storey County is requesting financial assistance with the replacement of existing culverts along Six Mile Canyon Road. Six Mile Canyon is the main drainage from Virginia City downstream to the Dayton Valley area and eventually the Carson River. The canyon is steep and narrow and contains a roadway (Six Mile Canyon Road) that is critical infrastructure to connect the Mark Twain neighborhood of Storey County to Virginia City. Dayton Valley residents also utilize this roadway for a faster route to the Reno area. When storm events occur, the flooding of the canyon causes erosion and overtopping of the existing culverts, leaving heavy debris on the roadway and causing undercutting of banks and the roadway itself. This then causes the roadway to be closed for repairs, which then impacts emergency response and school transportation issues along with eliminating the route to Reno from the Dayton Valley area. Our proposed project is to install headwalls on the newly replaced "minepond" culvert, along with replacing two other high priority culvert sites, with headwalls for both. The "minepond" culvert because of its failure was the highest priority. Two other culverts identified as Culvert ID-7 and Culvert ID-9 are the next highest priority. Storey County is requesting financial assistance with the completion of the headwalls for the "minepond" culvert and the replacement of Culvert ID-7 and Culvert ID-9 with headwalls for both new culverts. Storey County plans to install the improvements in late summer/early fall of 2024. **Funding request: \$36,500**

The Nature Conservancy – Riparian Tree Planting, Enhanced Wetlands, Rotational Grazing

Lori Leonard, , General Manager

The Nature Conservancy’s 805-acre River Fork Ranch Preserve includes a 2-mile stretch of the West Fork of the Carson River, both branches of the Brockliss Slough, and several irrigation ditches that run through the Preserve. The Preserve is managed as a wildlife preserve and working cattle operation. According to the Carson River Adaptive Stewardship Plan (CRASP), "channelization and levee construction in the Carson Valley "...has resulted in channel instability and an increase in sediment loading to the river". It also notes that agriculture inputs can add sediment, nitrogen, total phosphorus, pesticides, and bacteria in this stretch of the Carson Valley (CWSD, 2017). We are looking for effective cost-effective methods to improve water quality with riparian tree planting, enhanced wetlands to filter irrigation water before it returns to the West Fork of the Carson River, and rotational grazing. This project would be expanding on TNC’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) cost-share grant, which is funding exclusion fencing along rivers and irrigation ditches, and watering facilities. Both are “Recommended Management Measures” for this Critical Area, mentioned in the CRASP (2017). The fence was installed Fall 2023, and the stock watering facilities will be complete by the Spring of 2024. EQIP funding will also support streambank stabilization around return flow pipes along the W. Fork of the Carson River, which will be completed within the next 1-2 years. TNC is also seeking funding through the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection (NDEP) 319(h) grant to support this project.

Practice 1: Cottonwood Planting in Five-foot Trenches Cottonwood trees will be harvested in January or February from The Nature Conservancy’s McCarran Ranch Preserve, where cottonwood trees have successfully grown from seed to heights of six-ten feet. The roots are wrapped in burlap and soaked to keep the roots damp. Trees are then transplanted into trenches dug ~3-5 feet with a backhoe in riparian areas. This places the roots at or near the water table, giving them the greatest potential for success during the dry summer months.

Practice 2: Enhanced Wetlands to filter irrigation water returning to Carson River Wetland enhancement is the rehabilitation of a degraded wetland, and/or the modification of an existing wetland to favor specific wetland functions. For this project, we would like to create a depression (enhanced wetland) to filter pasture irrigation water before it returns to the West Fork of the Carson River. Wetland enhancements would include (1)Hydrologic enhancement (depth duration and season of inundation, and/or duration and season of soil saturation); and (2)Vegetative enhancement (seeding or planting of desired species to filter sediment and non-point source pollution).

Practice 3: Rotational Grazing TNC would like to experiment with rotational grazing in some pastures. According to the USDA U.S. Department of Agriculture, rotational grazing has many potential environmental and economic advantages. **Funding request: \$64,178**

CWSD Projects:

CWSD – Watershed Campaign Outreach – TV & Radio (1)

Brenda Hunt, Watershed Program Manager

Using our existing assets, CWSD will collaborate with a contractor to continue our traditional media press releases, PSAs, audio ads for TV & Radio, and possibly newspapers. The project is consistent with the goals of the CRASP, specifically the Watershed-Literacy Action Plan and meets Section B Criteria 1 & 6 and enhances the likelihood of Criteria 2-5. One Truckee River has requested \$15,000 from the Western Regional Water Commission to promote Make Your Yard A Sponge. This request would continue to fund other the 5/30-sec PSAs on TV & Radio. **Funding request: \$20,000**

CWSD – Watershed Clerk Position (2)

Brenda Hunt, Watershed Program Manager

Due to the loss of NDEP/USEPA grant funding & the Watershed Specialist's retirement, we find ourselves

with limited funding to meet our obligations to support integrated watershed planning and CRC coordination. This funding request would support hiring a Watershed Clerk to assist CRASP implementation through social and traditional media efforts, outreach events, website updates, grant procurement, CRC Coordination, field work, and project implementation. This position meets Sect. B criteria 1, 5 and 6 & will lead to enhancements for criteria 2-4 WQ improvements, protection of our stream banks, and reduction of flooding via outreach efforts. No other funds have been identified at this time. CWSD proposes to hire the Watershed Clerk in lieu of obtaining AmeriCorps and replacing Watershed Program Specialist due to loss of grant from NDEP/USEPA.

Funding request: \$56,500 (October 2024-June 2025; Future Years \$75,000/yr.)

Item #6 - For Possible Action – Make Recommendations for the Tentative General Fund, Acquisition/Construction Fund, and Floodplain Management Fund FY 2024-25 Budgets

During a working lunch, Mr. James reviewed the General, Acquisition/Construction and Floodplain Management Funds with the committee. Assuming that CWSD will transfer \$100,000 to the Flood Account and \$75,000 to the Acquisition/Construction Account the committee still needs to cut \$100,000 from the General Fund to have a balanced budget. Based on further discussion, the committee proposed the following adjustments to reach that goal:

- Fund TNC Riparian Tree Planting, Enhanced Wetlands, Rotational Grazing at \$30,000/yr. x2 years
- Fund CWSD Watershed Campaign Outreach \$20,000 from Outside Professional Services Account
- Alpine County \$75,000 funding request dropped (Not presented to Finance Committee)
- Fund CVCD Carson River Restoration & Flood Damage Repairs at \$112,500/yr. x2 years
- DVCD Management/Administration funding approval contingent on CWSD meeting with DVCD Board and conditions/milestones being met due to past contract projects not being completed

Committee Member Schank made a motion that the Finance Committee recommend that the Tentative Budgets for the Fiscal Year 2024-25 General Fund be approved as adjusted above. Committee Member Griffith seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by the Finance Committee.

Discussion of certain line item expense account names be changed to make it easier to identify their purpose resulted in consensus to rename the following: General Fund Expense Account #8008-00 will be changed from “Preliminary Planning” to “Contingency Funds”; Floodplain Management Fund Account #7203-03 will be changed from “Floodplain Planning” to “Floodplain Contingency Funds”; and Acquisition/Constructions Fund Expense Account #8015-04 will be changed from “Construction Projects” to “Acquisition/Construction Contingency Funds.”

Director Schank made a motion that the Finance Committee recommend that the Tentative Budgets for the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Floodplain Management and Acquisition/Construction Funds be approved as presented. Committee Member Griffith seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by the Finance Committee.

Committee Member Schank made a motion that the Finance Committee recommend any Ad Valorem Taxes received over and above the amount budgeted be put into the Acquisition/Construction Fund moving forward. Committee Member Schuette seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by the Finance Committee.

Item #7 - Public comment: None

The meeting adjourned at 12:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Catrina Schambra
Secretary to the Board