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"Conserving our Resources for Future Generations"



LINCOLN COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2020 to JUNE 30, 2021

LOCALLY-LED CONSERVATION

Lincoln County Conservation District (LCCD) continues to work for conservation and proper management of private and federal/state lands in Lincoln County and Nevada. We took another huge step forward by hiring a part time District Manager in April to take over operations and expand of the work of the CD. Three candidates interviewed; we selected Michael Dineley from Panaca because of his previous experience in agriculture and business management knowledge.

We finally received the results of the Resource Needs Assessment (RNA) public survey within Lincoln County and the results were a resounding success. The professional survey organizers said we had an excellent response rate which lends credence to the results; the results emphatically confirmed that the public and the focus groups have a shared list of resource concerns for the CD to use to find ways to work with producers, agencies, groups and our Local Work Group to identify specific actions to address the resource concerns.

The 2019 RNA identified the top three resource concerns in Lincoln County:

1. Plant Condition and Health
2. Livestock Water Availability – Inadequate Distribution
3. Invasive Species Including Plants, Pests, Weeds, and Aquatics

Mike Taylor of University of Nevada Reno Cooperative Extension presented the findings of the "Lincoln County Conservation District Resource Needs Assessment General Population Survey Results" at the January 2020 business meeting. Page 14 of this report states, "*water quantity, water quality, and invasive weeds are the top ranked natural resource concerns in Lincoln*"

County. Air quality, wildfire, access to nature, and wildlife habitat are the remaining resource concerns, in order of descending concern. These results do not suggest that respondents are unconcerned with the previously mentioned issues, but rather, when forced to make a tradeoff between resource issues LCCD respondents prioritize water quantity, water quality, and invasive weeds.” More information follows in the Local Work Group section of this report on page 4.

Like other CDs in Nevada, LCCD is well poised to be a local leader in conservation because we have specific, wide-ranging authorities under Nevada Revised Statutes Chapter 548, and a specific role in a federal planning system, the Local Work Group of the NRCS conservation planning process. In a county with 98% federal ownership and scattered private land parcels, the CD is pivotal to working for proper land management across ownership boundaries. We can meld funding, work across boundaries, and be a safe place for local people to connect with agencies and groups. NRCS and other agencies are looking for local input.

Our style has been and will continue to be to take advantage of opportunities and ideas as they crop up; in this way we are able to adapt to the needs of the community. However, we are now armed with excellent information gained through a recognized process that we can use to systematically address resource concerns in Lincoln County. We believe in partnerships and participate and coordinate accordingly between state, private and federal interests at the local and state level. Lincoln County Conservation District is in the information sharing business.

LCCD LEADS THE LINCOLN COUNTY LOCAL WORK GROUP (LWG)

After the hiatus that was 2020, LCCD led the second Local Work Group meeting on May 18, 2021. The excellent representation included: Maggie Orr, Michael Dineley, Jule Wadsworth, LCCD; Mat Lister, Producer; Bevan Lister, Lincoln County Commissioner, Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Council and Nevada Farm Bureau president; Cameron Boyce, Assistant Caliente BLM Field Office Manager; Ethan Mower, Kershaw-Ryan State Park, Cody Tingey, Eastern Region Manager for State Parks; Eric Horstman, Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition Executive Director; Cory Lytle, LC Planning Dept., Meadow Valley Wildlife Unlimited, Lincoln County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife; Lenard Smith, Former SCS District Conservationist; Christy Scilacci, Cory Lytle, NRCS District Conservationists; John Hiatt, Red Rock Audubon and Whipple Ranch volunteer; Christiana Manville, USFWS Partners program; Cayenne Engel, Nevada Division of Forestry; Lauren Williams, Melany Aten, DCNR Conservation Specialist and Acting CD Program Manager; Jasmine Kleiber, Technical Review Program Lead / Private Lands Lead and Moira Kolada, Eastern Region Habitat Biologist of NDOW.

From the Minutes: CD Vice-Chair Maggie Orr described the purpose and function of CDs, gave an update on what LCCD has been working on, and introduced the new District Manager, Michael Dineley. Partner report highlights included Cameron Boyce reporting, *“BLM removed 2000 wild horses in three round-ups in Eagle and Silver King Herd Management Areas but they are in litigation with The American Wild Horse Campaign over the Caliente Complex. The health of the horses has been so bad they have had to euthanize a lot of them.”* Bevan Lister

discussed Farm Bureau's concerns about a lack of data in relation to our various agricultural activities in the state of Nevada and how they affect carbon balance and the regulatory nightmare Sage grouse litigation is causing. Jasmine Kleiber said, "We need a pathway forward to work with agencies and partners. Working on both private and public land is a challenge and has been hard but it is improving." County Cory Lytle stated Lincoln County is working on updating the County's Master Plan and he is currently speaking with local contractors about the Mathews Drop Structure.

Cody Tingey reported that Covid significantly increased visitation to state parks and there are more mountain bikers in the area; people are coming from all over the US. They were able to repair the emergency spillway at Echo Canyon State Park. Christiana Manville announced the Partners Program is giving \$25,000 for the Mathews Drop Structure project and she has seen problems with getting funding to Cooperative Weed Management Areas. USFWS is looking at options for Pahrnagat Round Tail chub since the refugium failed at Key Pittman so the fish are only found on the Whipple Ranch. John Hiatt has been working on Russian olive removal there and stated that if we don't get control of the Russian olive, we will lose agriculture in the Pahrnagat Valley as we know it.

Cayenne Engel announced NDF has hired a new fuels coordinator for the area and there is quite a bit of funding available this year since no money went out last year due to covid. Maggie asked if there was support for the CD getting a grant for arborist work to fix town trees, remove hazard trees and the group also suggested including removal of invasive species such as Russian olive. Eric Horstman is interested in creating partnerships and announced the Bio-blitz at the Basin and Range National Monument in June.

John Hiatt said the CD should focus on education because if we do not take care of the invasive weeds then we will lose our agriculture. Offers of education materials came from ENLC, NRCS and the CD Program and the idea that we need to go to people and not expect them to come to us; we should think outside the box for where to do that such as health fairs.

Maggie Orr said the CD wants to work on making producers aware of soil health benefits and using NRCS EQIP funding on federal lands for pinyon-juniper encroachment removal and water projects. The LWG decided to make the report to the NRCS State Conservationist for consideration by the State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) be the greatest resource needs in Lincoln County. The group decided to retain the top three resource concerns that were identified by the 2019 LWG group and also incorporate the fourth and fifth identified by the RNA. Therefore, the top resource concerns identified which the LWG wants submitted to the STAC are as follows:

- 1. Water Availability for Livestock and Wildlife*
- 2. Invasive Species (to include PJ)*
- 3. Plant Condition and Health*
- 4. Human Concerns*
- 5. Habitat degradation and loss / Organic Matter Depletion (to include wild horses)"*

The beauty of the Local Work Group (LWG) process as outlined in the Farm Bill is it is a locally led group of elected officials, the LCCD Supervisors, leading a group of producers, agencies and resource-involved entities, to work across ownership boundaries, via the CD, to get to the bottom of solving resource concerns on an on-going basis. It is a way to:

- Pool funding
- Coordinate for more effective project work in a given area
- Develop relationships that carry over into other work being done
- Make recommendations to the NRCS State Conservationist for how best to allocate NRCS dollars in Lincoln County on both private and public lands
- Create a place for agencies and producers to share ideas and come together
- Consider and apply solutions locally, not from above

The public survey report's Executive Summary on page 1 gives further information that will help guide the work of the LWG in the future:

"The survey instrument was implemented in Lincoln County in June-July 2019. Our study sample consists of 163 Lincoln County residents who completed the online survey. These 163 respondents are representative of Lincoln County's demographics based on observable characteristics reported in the U.S. Census.

This document presents the results from the general population survey. The general population survey was designed so that the questions and modules correspond to the resource concerns on the Resource Concerns Checklist planning tool. This correspondence allows the survey results to be used in conjunction with the NRCS Resource Concerns Checklist planning tool in landscape level conservation planning in Lincoln County.

The results show that water quantity, water quality, and invasive weeds are the areas of greatest concern for residents of Lincoln County.

- *Water quantity is the top natural resource concern for respondents in Lincoln County, with 71% of respondents listing it as a top three concern and 23% ranking it as their top concern.*

Respondent's water quality concerns are driven by worries about the security of future water supplies and drought, as well as by concerns about future out of basin water transfers.

- *Water quality was also a top natural resource concern for respondents in Lincoln County, with 50% of respondents listing it as top three concern. Respondent's water quality concerns are driven by the quality of water in natural water bodies like lakes and rivers.*

- *Invasive weeds are another major resource concerns in Lincoln County, with 91% of respondents identifying invasive weeds as a concern (the highest of any category) and 23% identifying invasive weeds as their top concern (tied with water quantity). Concern about invasive weeds was shared equally by agricultural producers and non-agricultural producers.*

• *Ecological degradation from feral horses and resulting damages to livestock and wildlife were also a major concern, with 77% of respondents, identifying feral horses as a concern.*

Agricultural producers represent an important constituency for LCCD. Resource issues of top concern for agricultural producers in Lincoln County were:

- *Poor distribution of water on public lands.*
- *Poor quality of forage on public lands.*
- *Impacts from feral horses.*
- *Soil and property damage from flooding.*

The findings in this report support the findings in the RNA technical assessment for LCCD, which were: major concern about habitat degradation and poor forage due to invasive weeds, and poor distribution of water on public lands leading to limited availability of water for livestock (Orr 2019). The general population survey indicates that concerns about water scarcity water quality in natural bodies of water are resource concerns of comparable importance to invasive weeds to the residents of Lincoln County.”

ONGOING PARTNERING / COLLABORATION

The following entities participate regularly at our meetings:

- University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE)
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- US Fish and Wildlife Service, USFWS (both Partners in Conservation Program and Pahrangat NWR)
- Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, (DCNR) Conservation Staff Specialist and CD Program Manager
- State Conservation Commission / NV Association of Conservation Districts (NvACD)
- Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF)
- Tri-County Weed Control (Tri-County)
- Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW)

Our intent, beyond accomplishing our own goals and projects, is to create the opportunity where these entities will hear / recognize a need of another that they can assist / act upon. We hold regular meetings every other month and special ones if needed for any decisions required for our projects. LCCD remains in good standing with all State Conservation Commission requirements. The Local Work Group extends our previous efforts.

LCCD continues to grow as a voice in Lincoln County, the state of Nevada and the West. A Supervisor made a presentation to the Lincoln County Commissioners in December to give them the annual update of CD activities. She had three “asks” for the Commissioners: approve funding for the Mathews Drop Structure maintenance, participate in the LWG meetings, allocate funding for the Conservation District. The Commission has shown a lot of interest in the work of the CD; at their April Budget Hearings they committed funding to the Mathews Drop Structure

and on May 10 approved \$12,000 for the CD to support our position and work; a first ever, or at least not within the memory of anyone involved today.

At the September 2020 meeting, BLM Assistant Field Manager Cameron Boyce introduced the new Wilson Creek and Geyser Allotments Range Con and said the LC Commissioners want a third party to oversee implementation of the Wilson Creek decision to keep BLM on top of things. This is something perhaps the LWG could give input to; involvement in the management of the Wilson Creek Allotment could open the door to more cooperation on projects within the allotment. There has been no further word on this from BLM.

LCCD also wrote letters to support USFWS requests for SNPLMA Round 18 funding in September. The first was for the Pahrnatag National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Upper Lake Dam rehabilitation to improve dam integrity and the water delivery system from the lake to a new pipeline protecting US Highway 93 and existing refuge infrastructure. It will also ensure wetland management activities continue to be supported throughout the refuge to provide habitat for migrating water birds and public recreation.

The second letter supported the Pahrnatag NWR Native Fishes Refugium project to enhance a pond at Cottonwood Spring to create a safe refuge for endangered Pahrnatag roundtail chub on federal land. This fish currently occurs only on private land in Pahrnatag Valley. The CD stated our concern that the regulatory burden associated with endangered species are impactful to private landowners and we believe federal and state agencies should prioritize management of these species on public lands so we welcomed opportunities for the chub to be better managed on Pahrnatag NWR itself.

LCCD responded to a Western Water Quantity Listening Session requested by the national office of NRCS. We explained how we had conducted our RNA and the results, identifying livestock and wildlife water availability as the second highest priority, which was moved to first place by the Local Work Group because you can't improve Plant Condition and Health without good water distribution.

We concluded, *"In Lincoln County, there has been a concerted effort between the landowner/permittee, NRCS District Conservationist, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Range Conservationist to coordinate NRCS funding and BLM approved NEPA to fund water projects, mostly pipelines and storage. This seems to be the only way to get these projects accomplished on BLM-managed lands due to various constraints. The problem is getting water quantity to the place it is needed for best management.*

LCCD requests that NRCS continue to seek Congressional approval to provide EQIP dollars to public land projects and allow and encourage their staff to work with their BLM counterparts. This will further the significant need to increase water distribution to provide for improved management opportunities on all lands."

We also provided input to the Nevada Legislature Assembly Committee on Natural Resources to support the passage of Assembly Joint Resolution 2, stating, "*Lincoln County Conservation District is actively involved in resolving natural resource concerns in Lincoln County, working with Lincoln County Commissioners and other partners.*"

We support the passage of AJR 2 that "Recognizes that forest health and water quality are inextricably linked."

We also request that you accept the amendment made by Eureka County to include Conservation Districts and to include rangelands and soil health in the language as all are necessary to consider in Nevada."

LCCD Supervisors participated at and/or contributed to many meetings and works-in-progress; some in person and many via zoom or phone due to COVID-19:

- NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee, by invitation
- NvACD virtual Annual Meeting
- NvACD Strategic Plan formulation meetings
- National Association of Conservation Districts virtual Annual Meeting
- Nevada Section Society for Range Management's Summer Tour on "Breaking the Cheatgrass Fire Cycle held at sites around Beowawe, NV
- Pahrangat Valley Local Work Group addressing the Central Valley Drain
- Southern Nevada and Pahrangat Valley Cooperative Weed Management Areas
- Nevada Collaborative Conservation Network (NvCCN)
- Lincoln County Commission
- N-4 Grazing Board written update provided

DISTRICT MANAGER POSITION

One of the major goals for the hire of a District Manager position was to increase the presence of the CD in the community and provide education to adults and students. We liked the candidate we hired for his willingness to learn to increase his knowledge and then share that with others.

LCCD applied for a Technical Assistance Grant from the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) for \$30,000. These grants are part of their effort to help USDA NRCS get more program dollars on the ground. For our purposes it would enable us to increase the part time hours of our staff position and give him increased knowledge and exposure in the community as well as help to spread more NRCS program funds in Lincoln County. The Nevada conservation leaders specified in the grant process – NRCS, DCNR CD Program and NvACD, ranked LCCD's application #1 for Nevada.

The application narrative to describe full accomplishment stated:

The full accomplishment will be an employee effectively trained in NRCS and FSA application paperwork to be able to shepherd the packet through the process to free the District Conservationist to do planning and contracting. We also seek to train our new District Manager in the concepts of soil health and other conservation practices to make him able to conduct outreach to inspire more contracts.

We are particularly interested to provide a connection between the producer, NRCS and BLM to increase expenditure of EQIP funds on federal lands for water developments and pinyon-juniper removal – the priority resource concerns identified by our 2019 Resource Needs Assessment.

LCCD has worked hard for many years to get to our current position of strong working relationships with state and federal partners; NRCS has a small staff and Lincoln County is 10,637 square miles where customers live and work throughout; a CD employee can be a local contact because no NRCS staff are based inside Lincoln County. They can answer calls, take applications in the office, talk about programs and assist the District Conservationist with field work, all with increasing ability as experience is gained.

We hired our first ever District Manager in April 2021; he is part time, paid with accumulated CD funds. We want to extend the hours for our employee to develop conservation action plans from the RNA to focus NRCS programs to the identified resource concerns, and allow us to pursue additional long-term funding to continue our work.

The District Manager will require training in NRCS and FSA procedures and an understanding of natural resource processes such as soil health and riparian function. He will need travel to accomplish this, to network, and to reach the far-flung customers in Lincoln County.

Prior to hiring the District Manager, the CD invested significant engagement time with the POOL/PACT Human Resources connection for Lincoln County, Neal Freitas, and took P/P management training to understand correct hiring and supervision procedures and develop a policy manual. Supervisors also conferred with Lincoln County to understand their protocols and set up all the required payments for a position.

The new District Manager received substantial on-the-job training from Board Supervisors and took over coordination of the Camp Valley Project, tracking expenditures and interacting with the partners. (See page 12) He participated in virtual trainings on soil health, meadow rehabilitation and other topics and developed many creative ideas to share his new knowledge.

The CD withdrew the NACD grant application on June 29 stating, “*Thank you for your support of our grant application. This letter serves to withdraw the Lincoln County Conservation District’s 2021 NACD Technical Assistance Grant request for \$30,000. Last week...our newly hired District Manager was offered a full-time job at the bank in Caliente which he rightly decided to accept. Therefore, our Board does not feel it appropriate to accept grant funding for a vacant position.*”

Lincoln County Conservation District (LCCD) very much appreciates the Nevada conservation leaders' recognition of our desire to move LCCD forward by awarding us the #1 priority ranking for NACD grants to Nevada in 2021. Please know LCCD fully intends to readvertise our District Manager position and apply for an NACD grant in 2022. We sincerely hope we can be given the same consideration and support we received in 2021."

The Board will decide what action to take next at their September meeting as to the future of the position.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Lincoln County CD continued a seminar series titled "Conservation District Workshop." The intent is to provide an ongoing series of informative presentations on a variety of topics of interest to people in Lincoln County with an emphasis toward agriculture and natural resources.

The CD held their Annual Meeting and election in November at the Caliente Fire Station. After the usual amazing steak dinner and update on CD activities, the election was held and Tony Carlile of IFA in Cedar City introduced. IFA sponsored the meal and brought Shane Getz and Megan Getz from Range Changer in Tremonton, Utah to speak on seed mixes and various rangeland grasses and shrubs that can be planted to enhance ranch operations by reducing feed costs and risk of wildfire and increase carrying capacity on native dry rangelands. They spoke at length about a new-to-the-US plant which they feel has much potential that they have been working with USDA ARS to develop – Arid Smooth Brome from Kyrgyzstan which isn't as rhizomatous as regular Smooth Brome so it doesn't crowd out other plants, is extremely drought tolerant and highly palatable. There was much interest from the attendees.

LCCD sponsored a student to attend Nevada Youth Range Camp and an LCCD supervisor and volunteer ran the kitchen and medical units at the Camp in June. We supplied add-on money for Lincoln County kids showing animals at the Cedar City Livestock Show as we believe the program teaches the American dream of how to work and see results; sometimes you profit and sometimes you don't. We also offer our building meeting space to local groups such as 4-H, Lincoln Communities Action Team and many others such as CAMBA, Caliente Area Mountain Bike Association, RSVP, Homecoming, a book club, and provide the location for educational classes and meetings via video conferencing for no charge.

The CD continued to maintain and improve the building and grounds so as to provide for the conference room space and offices for NRCS, UNCE, Workforce and the Farmer's Market. LCCD approved continuing a community demonstration garden in the space by our office and pays the power bill for the refrigerator used by the Farmer's Market which is located next to our building and utilizes our parking lot. We purchase from local stores and hire local contractors to support our rural community. We hired a local contractor to remove hazardous limbs from a tree in our parking lot area.

As part of our intent to increase awareness of the CD in Lincoln County, we are now included in the Public Meetings listing in the local newspaper, the *Lincoln County Record*.

GREATER SAGE-GROUSE WILSON CREEK PROJECTS

LCCD takes an active part in the Nevada effort to protect and manage Greater Sage-grouse; we have applied for and completed a State Conservation Commission Sage Grouse Habitat Grant each year they have been available since its inception in 2014. We are a member of the Lincoln County Sage-grouse Local Area Work Group. The CD is in frequent communication with the BLM about how we can integrate effective projects in the area of Table Mountain, the prime sage grouse habitat in Lincoln County.



At the 2019 Wilson Creek tour, LCCD accepted the responsibility to be the entity that manages a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Sagebrush Landscapes Conservation Programs 2019 grant to be used on mesic areas/wetland restoration along Wilson Creek. Work has been progressing and approximately 150 Beaver Dam Analogs have been constructed in 2020 and 2021. A majority of that time, NDF inmates have not been available due to Covid-19 restrictions and outbreaks. One to two NDF crew bosses have been constructing dams in absence of inmate

crews. The project is ahead of schedule as we initially projected to build 100 BDA's. Crew bosses have been repairing any BDA's that fall apart or blow out due to occasional high-water levels. The next step will be to cut and plant willow and sedge plugs from Spring Valley State Park and plant them in the areas behind the BDAs to get the trapped sediment anchored.

In early June 2021 the Wilson Creek Fire burned 1,608 acres in the headwaters of Wilson Creek. The CD contacted the Caliente Field Manager before the fire was declared contained with the following concern:

"Today we spoke about Lincoln County Conservation District's (LCCD) concerns about the current Wilson Creek Fire. The fire is located in the headwaters of Wilson Creek; LCCD has ongoing Greater sage-grouse habitat improvement projects on the private property along Wilson Creek below the fire. We have been working there for five years building Beaver Dam Analogs (BDA), masticating PJ and rabbitbrush, doing weed control, and seeding in the mastication areas, all trying to improve the corridor between the leks in the valley and the prime Lincoln County sage grouse habitat on Table Mountain and Mt. Wilson.

We have used both Nevada State Conservation Commission sage grouse grants and are currently implementing a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant for \$82,000 to install 100 Beaver Dam Analogs along all the private property holdings from the Nevada Ranches north to the Fry Ranch properties. Our concern is should a thunderstorm event happen during the coming year over the fire area it could send enough sediment down the drainage to overwhelm the BDAs and cause further downcutting of the wash, eliminating the work we have been pursuing to trap sediment and raise the water table to move the area back toward the meadow it used to be before the channel deepened.

Interestingly, we are also currently involved in a major project combining landowner, US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners program, Nevada Division of Forestry, Nevada Department of Wildlife and CD funds to implement similar meadow rehabilitation work in Camp Valley, near the headwaters of Meadow Valley Wash some six miles east of Wilson Creek. Meadow Valley Wash in this location in Camp Valley cut deeply down, 20+ feet in some places, in the late 1990's after a severe thunderstorm over the Table Mountain Fire sent massive amounts of sediment down the Wash which eroded the meadows and created the deep channel which we are beginning to repair with grade control filter structures, rabbitbrush removal and seeding and weed control.

Our request to you is for the BLM to make sure to do adequate to above adequate level rehab work on the Wilson Creek fire before the crews are released. We suggest felling trees horizontally across the slopes, rehabbing any dozer line done, placing cut trees in the drainage, anything that works with the location to slow the flow of water across the surface and protect the drainage below where so much work has been done and seek to prevent a repeat of what happened after the Table Mountain Fire in Meadow Valley Wash.

The BLM Field Manager referred our request to the Ely BLM Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Program Manager, Chris McVicars who looked at the work we have done on the private land and reported that BLM is “*working on an Emergency Stabilization Plan that includes treatments such as contour felling, beaver dam analogs, in-channel felling, etc. Our treatment efforts would focus on mitigating negative effects to downstream values at risk... We plan to implement various soil stabilization treatments in drainages and slopes toward the bottom of the fire. However, our funding for the planned work will not be allocated until FY22, which starts October 1. Once we have the funding, we can develop a schedule to complete the work. I expect to have a crew working sometime this fall. Thank You for working with us on this!*”

MEADOW VALLEY WASH PROJECTS

The CD gratefully acknowledges the County and US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners program for recognizing the importance of repair / maintenance to the Mathews Drop Structure that the CD has been advocating for and coordinating to accomplish since 2011.

The USFWS Partners Program offered their full allowance for this fiscal year and Lincoln County recommitted funding. A work plan was developed by Lincoln County and the project of a low technology repair of the Civilian Conservation Corps built grade control structure between Panaca and Caliente will be a go in fall of



2021 once the archeological review and contract bidding is complete!

The Mathews Drop Structure protects the Panaca meadows and a working landscape where wildlife and livestock / farming coexist. It is an important stop for migratory birds and contains the only known location of the federally threatened Ute ladies'-tresses orchid (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) in Nevada. It also prevents Panaca Valley sediment from moving downstream into the City of Caliente where it could affect flooding issues there. Meadow Valley Wash continues south through Rainbow Canyon which provides breeding habitat for the federally endangered southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) and contains the mainline route of the Union Pacific Railroad from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles.

The County proposes to use a simplified combination of the design alternatives from the 2015 study by Sunrise Engineering to leave the existing structure completely intact, as well as accomplish a long-term maintenance upgrade. The existing structure would remain undisturbed and "in-place" with repairs being built over it both on the bottom of the structure and also the upstream side.

Camp Valley is a critical segment of upper Meadow Valley Wash on the other side of Table Mountain from the Wilson Creek projects. The Camp Valley Meadow Rehabilitation Project was brought to the CD by a landowner in early May, 2020. Phase 1 of the project was completed in May 2021 and included the installation of approximately 30 in-stream structures along a one-mile stretch of Camp Valley Creek to raise the water table in the surrounding meadows as well as rabbitbrush removal on some of the uplands.

Six grade control filter structures (GCFS), larger aggregate and earthen structures designed to work as a water filter and elevation drop in the middle of the streambed to allow for the stream level to rise as flows are slowed and deposition occurs, and twenty-five smaller Beaver Dam Analog and Zeedyk-type rock structures designed to trap sediment within the streambed along the channel and increase streambed level as well were constructed.



Other work included mechanical removal of 40 acres of rabbitbrush in the old meadow areas. This has been followed by selective weed and vegetation control using chemical hand sprayers. The CD and partners developed two seed mixes of grasses and forbs, one for disturbance in the riparian area and an upland mix to rehabilitate the areas cleared of rabbitbrush. The CD ordered the mix through NDF and paid for the seed with grant funding. NDOW has offered the use of a dew drop drill seeder; the project manager intends to organize the seeding effort this fall right before snowfall as part of Phase 2.



The need for the project was caused by a series of events that led to the deepening and widening of the stream channel in that location. A large fire in the late 1990's in the Table Mountain area, followed by some severe monsoonal moisture events caused sediment flows that cut the wash depths of 8-15 feet to over 25-30 feet in some areas. The water levels are much lower than just 20-some-odd years prior. The long-term goal is to reverse the downward trend of incision, trap sediment, reestablish desired, functional vegetative communities and improve the variety and quality of the meadow habitats.

Camp Valley is a joint project of the four landowners, USFWS Partners program, \$22,126, Nevada Division of Forestry Landscape Scale Restoration US Forest Service grant, \$25,300, and NDOW Habitat Conservation Fee grant money \$12,000. LCCD melded the federal and state funding, paid all the bills and obtained reimbursement from the agencies. The CD also utilized its POOL/PACT insurance to employ a project manager, five to six temporary jobs and insure the heavy equipment, labor and volunteers. In-kind match came from use of landowner equipment and some volunteer landowner time. The agencies obtained the necessary permits and clearances and coordinated with SHPO.

Part of the scope of the project is to carefully document the techniques that were used and to monitor the results of the work because it was necessary to adapt to conditions on site so some modifications to the original plan were done. To keep from getting the loader stuck and creating a larger disturbance, the elevation of the construction of the GCFS' were raised creating a ponding effect on the stream. Water is filtering through the structures and along each bank and it also flows easily over the tops which have been armored to handle water passage. The ponding has submerged some of the BDAs. Tree and brush removal products were placed in

the wash and in adjacent low drainage washes that had developed over the years as a result of flooding. This will assist with erosion control and establishing the desired vegetation.

The CD and partners began this project with the idea that we will watch what happens over time and work with the stream to achieve the overall goal. This project would not have been possible without all the partners; the CD will continue to provide the means to bring all the pieces together.

PAHRANAGAT VALLEY DRAIN PROJECT

Work was completed on two water control structures near the south end of the Pahrnagat Drain in September and October 2020 as part of the ongoing work to improve water management in Pahrnagat Valley. The project benefits all the landowners and native fish, decreases the sediment entering the Drain and increases water flow to the Pahrnagat National Wildlife Refuge. The CD is a pivotal player in maintaining the momentum of this ongoing project.

During construction of the two water control structures when the Drain was at low flows, water was diverted to the east across a field to bypass the project area. One headgate was installed on the Drain to allow water to enter an irrigation pipe just upstream on the east side to replace an existing structure that was hard to use.



The other headgate was installed at the mouth of the West Ditch which feeds water to two irrigation canals where there was currently no water control structure. Having a headgate on the West Ditch will allow this ditch to be closed when outside of irrigation season, sending more water down the drain to Pahrnagat National Wildlife Refuge.

The work was managed by Steve Meldrum, a volunteer for the Lincoln County Conservation District. Steve hired local workers to help with construction and followed the engineering designs prepared by Natural Channel Design in 2016.

Another volunteer provided heavy equipment and labor.

When a problem arose, that work had to be done before water was put back in the Drain and County restrictions would impede their ability to expend the allocated funding within the necessary timeframe, Steve Meldrum called the CD. The CD was able to take over payment for the project so that the deadline was met, the work accomplished and the contractors paid, and the funding was not lost. This quick intervention by the CD was possible because of relationship

built between the CD and Lincoln County. Lincoln County later reimbursed the CD for the expenditures.

COMMITTEES

The Lincoln County Conservation District organizes its work by five committees: Agriculture, Range, Information and Education, Water Resources, and Environmental. They carry out their work through the Pahrangat Valley and Meadow Valley work groups utilizing the recommendations of the Local Work Group. LCCD will continue to advocate for the local NRCS offices to coordinate with BLM to complete EQIP projects on public and private lands and to foster the relationship between the agencies.

The Caliente Service Area for NRCS was split between the District Conservationists in Ely and Las Vegas. The dividing line is Hwy 375, US 93 and the Union Pacific Railroad, from west to east. Continuing COVID-19 restrictions kept the staff away from Caliente for the most part. The State Conservationist told LCCD he has begun the process to close the Caliente NRCS office.

As reported by District Conservationist Cory Lytle: work completed in North Lincoln – 2 Water Facilities and new conservation plans were developed on private (3) and public range allotments (3) with six new contracts worth over \$573,272.00

As reported by District Conservationist Jasmine Wilson: completed practices within South Lincoln that were certified in FY 2021 were 14,050 feet of Firebreak for \$38,660.03 and 219.6 acres of Brush Management for \$34,986.67.

Jasmine Wilson is the new District Conservationist for the Las Vegas Service Center. She introduced herself as, *“I’ve been with NRCS for 10 years, where I started as a student trainee during the last two summers while in college. I started my career with NRCS in the state of Kansas where I spent about three and a half years in multiple offices before transferring to NRCS New Mexico. I spent a little over four years in New Mexico as a Soil Conservationist and District Conservationist before transferring to my hometown of Las Vegas; I’m excited to finally make it back home and to get conservation on the ground in our surrounding areas.”*

The Environmental Committee advises on the Southeastern Lincoln County Habitat Conservation Plan and will continue to monitor and advise on this and other projects on federal land that will affect life in Lincoln County and the West.

CD BUSINESS

LCCD continued the agreement under NvACD to obtain insurance coverage with Nevada Public Agency Insurance Pool (POOL/PACT). This policy is a huge improvement from our previous policy coverage to protect our Supervisors and property. LCCD provided the required information to the NV Department of Taxation for unemployment claims.

The POOL/PACT insurance allowed LCCD to be the partner on the Camp Valley Project that provided insurance for the heavy equipment and to hire the staff and cover the volunteers

needed to complete the work. The insurance also covered the workers and volunteers for the Pahrnagat Drain project.

LCCD pays dues to and sponsors the Nevada Association of Conservation Districts (NvACD), pays dues to the National Association of Conservation Districts, and fulfills the requirements of the Nevada State Conservation Commission to receive the Legislature's grant to districts in good standing of \$4000.