

# **Forest and Watershed Restoration Advisory (FAWRA) Board**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**July 9, 2019**

### **1. Opening**

A meeting of the Forest and Watershed Restoration Advisory (FAWRA) Board was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on July 9, 2019 in Santa Fe by Laura McCarthy, State Forester, Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), Forestry Division.

#### **Advisory Board Members and Delegates Present**

Sarah Cottrell Propst, Cabinet Secretary, Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department  
Todd Leahy, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department  
Laura McCarthy, State Forester, EMNRD, Forestry Division  
Andrew Frederick, Resource Management Bureau Chief, EMNRD, Forestry Division  
Mark Myers, Forester, State Land Office  
Molly Magnuson, Water Use & Conservation Bureau Chief, Office of the State Engineer  
Lucia Sanchez, Interstate Stream Commission  
Abe Franklin, New Mexico Environment Department Surface Water Quality Bureau  
Stewart Liley, Chief of Wildlife, New Mexico Department of Game & Fish  
Carrie Wells, Project Coordinator, Economic Development Department  
Randy Varela, Deputy Fire Marshal, Fire Service Support, Fire Marshal's Office  
Kathy Holian, Public Member  
Brent Racher, Public Member  
Steve Hernandez, Public Member

#### **Invited Federal Agencies Present**

Elaine Kohrman, Deputy Regional Forester, Southwestern Region, United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service  
Xavier Montoya, State Conservationist, United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Kristin Graham Chavez, Deputy State Conservationist, United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

### **2. Welcome**

The Board, public members and guests were recognized by EMNRD Cabinet Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst. Secretary Cottrell Propst expressed her appreciation for the representatives on the Board who will be working to help implement the new Forest and Watershed Restoration Act. She also highlighted the connection of this Advisory Board's work to Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's Climate Change Executive Order. Following the Secretary's introduction, the FAWRA Board members, invited non-voting participants, and members of the public introduced themselves.

### **3. Overview of the Forest and Watershed Restoration Act**

Laura McCarthy presented an overview of the Forest and Watershed Restoration Act. Her presentation covered the purpose of the Act; responsibilities of the FAWRA Board under the Act; and the funding source for projects. She also covered the connection of this Advisory Board to the existing Forest and Watershed Management Coordinating Group, noting that the Coordinating Group will function as a stakeholder group performing staff-level work that will assist the FAWRA Board to foster partnerships and cooperation and co-funding and leveraging of priority projects.

Laura McCarthy provided copies of the Agenda, Forest and Watershed Restoration Act, and supplemental documents.

### **4. Advisory Board Business**

- **Appointment of FAWRA Board Chair**

The meeting then proceeded to the election of the FAWRA Board Chair.

Brent Racher nominated Laura McCarthy as Chair. Kathy Holian seconded the nomination. After discussion, Lucia Sanchez moved for nominations to cease and that Laura McCarthy be approved as Chair. Brent Racher seconded the motion. The FAWRA Board approved the motion.

Upon nominations duly made and seconded, Laura McCarthy was unanimously elected as Chair of the FAWRA Board. Laura McCarthy thereupon assumed the role of Chair of the FAWRA Board.

- **Approval of Open Meeting Resolution**

The meeting then proceeded to the approval of the Open Meeting Resolution. Steve Hernandez moved to approve the Resolution as written. Kathy Holian seconded the motion. The Open Meeting Resolution was unanimously approved and distributed.

### **5. Proposal for Project Recommendation Criteria and Ranking**

FAWRA Board Chair Laura McCarthy proposed a process for selection of projects with the first year of funding, given that the Act went into effect on July 1 and the field season is already half over. She explained that the Forestry Division staff prepared eight priority projects for FAWRA Board consideration. These projects were chosen by Forestry Division staff from more than 30 projects submitted through the Division's district offices, in coordination with the USDA Forest Service, other agencies and local partners. The total cost of these eight projects is \$2.7 million, which exceeds the \$2 million available, and thus some projects will need to be eliminated or funded at a reduced amount. Laura McCarthy suggested that after the FY20 funds are allocated, the FAWRA Board could review the process and design an improved protocol for FY21. For example, the calls for proposals could take place October to December for the following fiscal year. From

January to March, the FAWRA Board could review the projects and make funding recommendations. The final project selection could be made by the end of the prior fiscal year so that on July 1 Forestry Division staff could move forward with contracts for the work to proceed.

- **Discussion of Criteria and Using a Scoring or Ranking System for Recommendation of Priority Projects**

The FAWRA Board discussed and made edits to some of the 11 criteria proposed by the Forestry Division to rank the proposed projects.

- **Motion to Recess**

Laura McCarthy proposed to recess for 15 minutes. Steve Hernandez motioned to recess for 15 minutes. Brent Racher seconded the motion.

The FAWRA Board unanimously approved the motion to recess. The FAWRA Board and non-members returned to continue the meeting after 15 minutes.

- **Approval of Criteria and Using a Scoring or Ranking System for Priority Projects**

The FAWRA Board discussed using a 0-5 scoring system compared to a ranking system. FAWRA Board Chair Laura McCarthy proposed the FAWRA Board make a motion to adopt changes to the project criteria for recommending projects and incorporate a scoring system.

Stuart Liley moved to adopt the criteria and scoring as presented on the screen (tv in conference room displays the updated criteria that can be seen by the FAWRA Board and non-members present). Mark Myers seconded the motion. The new criteria and 0-5 scoring system for recommending projects was unanimously approved and will be distributed.

## **6. Rapid Overview of Proposed Projects**

Laura McCarthy used the story map, available at <http://arcg.is/14m9GK0>, to provide a high-level summary of each project and distributed paper copies of the written project summaries. Each project received brief discussion. Leverage and co-funding opportunities were also highlighted and discussed by the FAWRA Board.

## **7. Recap of Next Steps**

The FAWRA Board chose the date of August 6, 2019 for its next meeting. In between, each FAWRA Board member will rank the eight recommended projects and submit their scoring sheet to the Forestry Division by July 30, 2019. The staff will compile the scoring sheets in preparation for the August 6 meeting, whose purpose is to finalize the FY20 project recommendations. In addition, the FAWRA

Board set November 13, 2019 as another meeting date, for the purpose of evaluating the FY20 process and preparing guidelines for recommending FY21 projects.

- **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was duly made and seconded at 12:00 p.m. by Lucia Sanchez and Brent Racher. The next meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. on August 6, 2019, in Santa Fe.

Minutes submitted by: Wendy Mason

Approved by: Laura McCarthy