

Tsaile – Wheatfields Farm Board and Water Users Joint Meeting  
Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ  
Thursday, January 29, 2015

**AGENDA**

**I. ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- a. Meeting call to order
- b. Roll call
- c. Invocation
- d. Adopt agenda
- e. Reading and adopt last meeting minutes, January 11, 2015
- f. Announcements:
  - **Title:** Chapter Planning Meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 3, 2015  
**Time:** 3pm  
**Place:** Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ
  - **Title:** District 11 Grazing Meeting  
**Date:** Monday, February 2, 2015  
**Time:** 10am  
**Place:** Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ
  - **Title:** Central Regional Water Plan Meeting  
**Date:** Thursday, February 12, 2015  
**Time:** 10am  
**Place:** Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

**II. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Community Water Plan

**III. NEW BUSSINESS**

- a. Irrigation Projects for Upper Wheatfields and Tsaile Farmland Area
  - Request NRCS staff – Chinle Office to present guidelines, policies and funding possibilities
- b. Land User Permit- Transfer, Relinquish, Probate, etc.
  1. No Request at this time
  2. Request BIA Staff – Chinle Natural Resource Office
  3. Revitalization of Farm Land Project
- c. Proposals
  1. Beginning Farmers and Rancher Proposal
  2. Conservation Innovation Grant – NRCS USDA

**IV. Reports**

- A. Farm Board
- B. Water User

**V. CONCLUSION**

- A. Identify next agenda items
- B. Schedule next meeting date
- C. Adjournment

Tsaille – Wheatfields Farm Board and Water Users Joint Meeting  
Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ  
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MEETING MINUTES

I. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Meeting called to order at 10:20 am.
- b. Roll call  
Farm Board: Lorena Eldridge, Lucinda Davis, and Dorthea Litson were all present.  
Water Users: Dorthea Litson present. Aaron Begay and Kathy Johns were absent.
- c. Invocation conducted by Lorena Eldridge.
- d. Adopt agenda  
Dorthea reviewed agenda. No amendments to the agenda.  
*Action: The reviewed agenda was accepted as read.*  
*Motioned by Dorthea Litson*  
*Seconded by Lorena Eldridge*  
*Voting: 8 yes; 0 no; 0 abstained* *Motion Carried*
- e. Reading and adopt last meeting minutes, January 11, 2015  
Dorthea read the last meeting minutes. No amendments, questions, or comments.  
*Action: The read meeting minutes was accepted as read.*  
*Motioned by Dorthea Litson*  
*Seconded by Lorena Eldridge*  
*Voting: 7 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained* *Motion Carried*
- f. Announcements:
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The additional announcements provided were as follow:

- Farm to School – Through Land Grant Office at Dine’ College. They host a 3 hr. workshop for farmers in Shiprock area through a grant they wrote and was funded. Next workshop is scheduled for Thursday, February 26, 2015 @ Red Valley Day School regarding School Bidding Process.

II. OLD BUSINESS

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a. Community Water Plan

Lorena explained, the community of Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock is embarking on a journey to develop a community water plan. At the last meeting, we had assigned people to do curtailed task.

Dorthea provided an update on her task:

1. The Chapter Officials and staff and I were to have meeting with Bohannon Huston, Engineering Firm, but I miss the meeting and conference call. I know they worked on the scope of work.
2. Data Warehouse – she spoke with several people who can create data system. They all indicated that the organization need to come together to design what data will be collected, so on that desire is how the data can be developed.
3. Navajo Nation Regional Water Plan – They had a meeting on Jan. 12, 2015, but there were no audience as a result they asked the Farm Board to host them, and add them on there on agenda on February 12, 2015.

Questions, comments, and suggestions:

Lorena, “In the past, we have as BIA to help with software, and can they help with water shed study?” Genevie indicated that BIA does have a software and we can use that software to collect data.

Mr. Notah, “BIA is very limited to do many things, but more likely can help with water shed map and provide technical assistance in water shed study.”

Mr. Ben Begay, “The BIA office from the Gallup Office needs to be involve, and his name is Chuck Nickson.”

Action: No action at this time. We will wait for Lucida to come back to this item of topic.

### III. NEW BUSSINESS

a. Irrigation Projects for Upper Wheatfields and Tsaile Farmland Area

- Request NRCS staff – Chinle Office to present guidelines, policies and funding possibilities

Lorena thank all guesses, NRCS staff and BIA Natural Resource staff for coming. Furthermore she talked about the following:

1. Lower Wheatfields Irrigation project was completed through EQIP where NRCS –USDA was the funder.
2. The Farm Board and Dineh Water Users establish the Operation & Maintenance fee at \$3.00 per acres which the farmers pay as an annual fee. Water Users does all the invoices to the farmers.
3. Sublease – Farm Board asked the farmers whose land were idling to sublease, and they all said no, but two were sublease.
4. Survey – Farm Board conducted a survey with farmers asking them, Why they do not farm the farmland? The farmers responded that they don’t have the farm equipment or personal finance. As result, the Farm Board wrote a proposal to the Navajo Nation Council requesting for Farm Equipment and personnel. The proposal is now in the hands of the Navajo Nation Council.
5. Food Policy – The Farm Board has been involved and will continue to be involved in developing food policy.

Now, the Farm Board is seeking to developing new project for Uppers Wheatfields and Tsaile Farmers. We have not been involved with NRCS for a couple of years and we are requesting to hear what the new guidelines and requirements are for seeking funding for irrigation project.

Questions, Comments, and Suggestions:

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LaVern, NRCS area Staff commented, “ to lay out the vision and understanding – the Farm Board is seeking new irrigation project for Upper Wheatfields and Tsaile farmland area, and the Farm Board represents the farmers who have Land User Permit, and the BIA is the one who issues out Land Use Permits?”

Lorena, commented, “Yes.”

Kresta, NRCS Acting Director from Flagstaff office, commented that she is the Acting Director while Ray Dotson is on detail to Montana.

Lyndon, NRCS Fields Staff in Chinle, commented that Policies are different now. It has changed a lot since the Lower Wheatfields Irrigation Project has been completed.

The following are what the NRCS staff indicated that are different due the New Farm Bill:

Entities	Individuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DUNS number</li> <li>• SAM registration</li> <li>• BIA involvement is critical to have at the table as partner.</li> <li>• Develop an assessment on resource concerns:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Water need</li> <li>○ Soil assessment</li> <li>○ Plant assessment ( What can grow – match crop to soil)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If the organization is recognize as Tribal entity then they are exempt from the limitation at \$450,000 (2 out of 5 years – limitation waiver opportunity is a possibility, but it depends on the interpretation of the law.)</li> <li>• Farmers need to be on Board</li> <li>• Farm Board must establish documents with FSA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No DUNS number or SAM registration</li> <li>• Develop an assessment on resource concerns:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Water need</li> <li>○ Soil assessment</li> <li>○ Plant assessment ( What can grow – match crop to soil)</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Funding is cap at \$450,000</li> <li>○ Farmer must establish documents with FSA</li> </ul>

Currently, the NRCS contracts have LESS flexibility.

Dorthea asked, “If Lyndon can began working with us in terms of collecting assessment on resources concerns while the Farm Board is in the process of moving forth in submitting the application?”

Kresta, NRCS Director, commented that he can began working with us.

Leonard Notah, BIA Manager at Chinle office comment the BIA will support the project.

Lyndon asked, “There needs to be resolution in place to indicate the specifics for collect assessment on resources concern, and the farmers need to be notified that he’ll be out in the field working.”

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*Action: Request NRCS field staff from Chinle to begin collecting assessments for resource concerns to determine the project for future.*

*Motioned by Lucinda Davis*

*Seconded by Dortha Litson*

*Voting: 5 yes; 0 no; 4 abstained*

*Motion Carried*

- b. Land User Permit- Transfer, Relinquish, Probate, etc.
  - 4. No Request at this time
  - 5. Request BIA Staff – Chinle Natural Resource Office
  - 6. Revitalization of Farm Land Project

Lorena explained of three things to the BIA staff:

- 1. The Farm Board is requesting help in providing updates on identifying current owner of each Farm Plots
- 2. The Farm Board is requesting to have BIA provide an update on all the people who have come to the Farm Board meeting requesting to relinquishment, transfer, and probate cases. Farm Board made recommendation for them. We want to know if the request we granted by the BIA.
- 3. Due to the high percentage of idling farmlands, we develop a plan call *Revitalization of Farmland Project* where the Farm Board would sublease the farmlands for ten years, and work with the owners of the land to revitalizing their farmland. Now, the question is can BIA support the sublease that the farm Board is recommending?

Mr. Notah commented that he has experience working with NRCS, and is willing to support the project with NRCS. In terms of granting the request of sublease is really in the hands of the land owners and it would be hard for BIA to support it. However, Many Farms Farm Board currently in the process of canceling 30 LUPs. It has been past in resolution and is now at the desk of the manager in Gallup BIA Natural Resource Office. He suggested that this Farm Board to the same and that is to cancel Land Use Permit on idling farmlands.

Mr. Begay commented to have the Farm Board create one Conservation Plan for all three Farmlands, and that is the farmers can use that when renewing LUPs. He also indicated that they have a new boss name Virginia Yazzie Ashley who will be located at the Gallup BIA Office.

Mr. Notah and Mr. Begay both indicated that they can work with the Farm Board to update the current Land Owners for the Farmland in all three areas, Upper and Lower Wheatfields, and Tsaile area.

*Action: The Farm Board will work with BIA office staff in Chinle to update Land Owners and; BIA provide technical assistance in conducting environmental assessment; and Farm Board needs to create one conservation plan for all three farmland areas.*

*Motioned by Lucinda Davis*

*Seconded by Dortha Litson*

*Voting: 6 yes; 0 no; 3 abstained*

*Motion Carried.*

- c. Proposals
  - 1. Beginning Farmers and Rancher Proposal
    - Dortha explained this proposal is due on March 13, 2015 and it's funded by USDA for three years at 250,000. She shared the design of the proposal. Work with 20 producers where 10 are farmers and ranchers and the other 10 are farmers with 12 interns over the three years. This is just an idea, but want input on the designed.

Questions, comments, or suggestions:

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This is a funding opportunity for us to think about  
The current designed present is a good idea.

2. Conservation Innovation Grant – NRCS USDA  
Dorthea explained this funding is due February 24, 2015 and it's funded by USDA – NRCS. The focus of this grant is to use innovative conservation approaches and technology.

Questions, comments, or suggestions:  
This proposal is too soon might have to let this one go.

This CIG grant is normally for colleges or universities who have been conducted research, and use to further the research efforts as mentioned by one of the NRCS – USDA staff.

Both of these grant requires DUNNS Number.

*Action: No action. It was considered as report.*

#### IV. Reports

- A. Farm Board  
President – No report

Vice President – She reported that Farm Board, Eastern Land Board, and Grazing received the supplemental funding from the Navajo Nation.

Secretary – No report

- B. Water User  
No report form Water Users

*Action: No action taken.*

#### V. CONCLUSION

- A. Identify next agenda items  
The next agenda items were as follow:

- Proposal
- Continuous work with NRCS
- Financial Report
- Community Water Plan
- Indirect Cost

- B. Schedule next meeting date  
Next meeting date scheduled for Monday, February 16, 2015 @ 10am.

- C. Adjournment  
Meeting was adjourned at 1:40pm  
*Action: The meeting adjournment was accepted.*  
*Motioned by Lucinda Davis*  
*Seconded by Dorthea Litson*

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*Voting: 2 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained*

*Motion Carried*