

TSAILE/WHEATFIELDS JOINT FARM BOARD AND WATER USER MEETING
TUESDAY JUNE 6, 2017 @9 AM
WHEATFIELDS CHAPTER HOUSE, WHEATFIELDS, AZ

AGENDA

RECEIVED

JUN 27 2017

Tsaile/Wheatfields
Chapter BY: 

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Meeting called to order
- b. Invocation
- c. Roll Call
- d. Recognition of guest(s) and visiting officials
- e. Review and adoption of agenda
- f. Review and adoption of last meeting minutes, May 28, 2017

II. OLD BUSINESS

NNFB 2017 goals - Below are the Program Performance Criteria (PPC and Goal Statements for all Farm Boards) The Farm Board elected officials will be assigned 1 or 2 PPC, see below.

- A. Each FB will submit 12 crop inventory reports from their respective Agriculture Land Use Permittees (ALUP).

Goal Statement: Each FB will submit at least 3 respective crop inventory reports quarterly in table format (3CIR x 13 FBs).

- B. Facilitate farm improvement/outreach activities for farmers in collaboration with tribal, state and private sectors.

Goal Statement: Conduct 2 agricultural educational outreach/workshops for farmers per quarter per 13 FBs.

1. Wheatfields Agriculture Projects

- C. Provide training and assist farmers in updating or developing a conservation plan as required by BIA and the Navajo Nation.

Goal Statement: With farmer participation, implement conservation training and develop 2 or more plans per quarter per FB review.

1. Fish & Wildlife – prairie dog treatment

2. Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture – Crop collection

- D. Assist with farm area improvements such as land leveling, erosion control: with funding sources such as USDA.

Goal Statement: With farmer participation, each FB will implement 1 improvement per quarter according to conservation plan.

- E. Each FB member shell inventory at least 3 ALUP/Farm Permit within respective FB area.

Goal Statement: With BIA and Farmer participation, reconcile and inventory as to the status of each ALUP or Farm Permit. (3ALUP x each 13 FB member)

1. Land Use Permit – Freddie Sarracino
2. Land Use Permit – Mae Chee
3. Land Use Permit – Emerson/Ambrose Chee

III. NEW BUSINESS

IV. RECEIVING REPORTS

- A. Reports
- B. Announcements

V. CONCLUSION

- A. Next Agenda Items
- C. Next Meeting
- D. Adjournment

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Meeting Minutes

I ORDER OF BUSNISS

- a. Meeting Called to Order at 10:05 am

Please Note: Dorthea open the meeting, but Lorena took over the meeting after agenda adoption. At 12:05 pm Dorthea took meeting minutes due to other work obligation that Lucinda had to attend. (After Fish and Wildlife staff presented.)

- b. Invocation by Dorthea Litson

- c. Roll Call

- Farm Board – Lorena Eldridge, Lucinda Davis, and Dorthea Litson all present
- Water User – Anelda Kedelty and Dorthea Litson present. Aaron Begay, Amelda Benally, & Kathy Johns were absent.

- d. Recognition of guest(s) and visiting officials

Chinle BIA Natural Resource Office staff – Ben Begay and Herbert Jones

Navajo Nation Fish & Wildlife staff – Mr. Emerson and Mr. Blacksheep (he showed up at later time)

- e. Review and adoption of agenda

Lucinda reviewed the agenda.

Amendments made to the agenda were to add Financial Report under new Business, and to put BIA staff report under section E within Old Business.

Action: The agenda was accepted with amendments.

Motioned by Emerson Chee

Seconded by Ambrose Chee

Voting: 5 yes; 0 no; 4 abstained

Motion Carried

- f. Review and adoption of last meeting minutes, May 28, 2017

Lucinda reviewed the last meeting minutes from May 28, 2017. No amendments, questions, or suggestions.

Action: The meeting minutes accepted as read with no amendments.

Motioned by Emerson Chee

Seconded by Ambrose Chee

Voting: 7 yes; 0 no; 4 abstained

II. OLD BUSINESS

NNFB 2017 goals (*Below are the Program Performance Criteria (PPC and Goal Statements for all Farm Boards.)*)

The Farm Board elected officials will be assigned 1 or 2 PPC see below.

- A. Each FB will submit 12 crop inventory reports from their respective Agriculture Land Use Permittees (ALUP).

Goal Statement: Each FB will submit at least 3 respective crop inventory reports quarterly in table format (3CIR x 13 FBs).

Lorena explained that the Farm Board will continue to except the crop report from farmers. This quarter for many it's "Zero."

She wrote a letter to Wilfred Big, Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture, to request to attend the meeting to explain the crop reporting since Roxy June DOES NOT come out to chapters or Farm Board meeting.

- B. Facilitate farm improvement/outreach activities for farmers in collaboration with tribal, state and private sectors.

Goal Statement: Conduct 2 agricultural educational outreach/workshops for farmers per quarter per 13 FBs.

1. Wheatfields Agriculture Project

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Lorena explained the following:

The farm board wrote a proposal based on a survey conducted with farmers. The farmers were asked, "Why is your farmland idling?" 89 of the 127 producers were surveyed and the data indicated:

- No Farm Equipment
- Lack of financial
- No help
- Lack of water

The initial proposal was written for \$3,000,000 plus and to submit to the Sihastin Fund that was awarded to Navajo Nation at 554 million dollars, and made several presentations on the proposal to various place with the Navajo Nation. On the other hand, this proposal was funded at 5 million dollar by the Navajo Nation Council through Permanent Trust Fund Income, and funded for five years. Year 2 is funded at \$3 million and Year 4 is funded at \$2 million.

Currently, the packet for the funding has been submitted to Navajo Nation Office of the Controller. They are considering it as a grant item. We are moving forward.

Dorthea reported that she submitted the invoice to DNR again, and asked to resubmit with more detail. At this point, "I don't know what else to add to the invoice. Maybe the entire MOU document. If so the invoice is going to be about 10 to 12 pages long."

Questions, comments, or suggestions;

Farmers are concern that the growing season here is Wheatfields and Tsaille is very short. If the funding comes in late June then it would be hard to plant. They suggested, 'if the funding comes in late perhaps we should work on the all other activities listed but hold on to planting until next year in spring 2018.

Action: *To accept the updated reports regarding the funded the Wheatfields Agriculture.*

Motioned by *Bennie Litson*

Seconded by *Emerson Chee*

Voting: *11 yes; 0 no; 8 abstained*

Motion Carried

- C. Provide training and assist farmers in updating or developing a conservation plan as required by BIA and the NN. Goal Statement: With farmer participation, implement conservation training and develop 2 or more plans per quarter per FB review.

1. Fish & Wildlife:

- Deer and other wildlife – fencing requirements

Mr. Edison Emerson from Navajo Nation Fish & Wildlife presented the following information:

- ☐ Helping farmer in following way:

Farmer knows the acres that he or she plant. If a farmer is requesting for help regarding Deer problem than he/she must report the problem. The staff from office will come on to site to investigate to determine what has been eaten. They will take picture, and the farmer himself can take pictures. If the investigation declares that deer or elk is the problem then a solution will be figured out. For example, a 12 feet fence pose can be recommended. The farmer will need to meet us half way on the solution. We have never worked with electric fences, but willing to try. Importantly, Fish & Wildlife only works with Individual farmers.

Questions, comments, and suggestions:

Dorthea Litson asked, "How can we partner in developing high fencing so deer or elks is unable to come into our farmland? They are a huge problem where they eat what was planted. You indicated that you only work with Individual farmer, but here in Tsaille/ Wheatfields/ Blackrock community we are looking to establishing a high fencing around all three areas of the farmland, and to fence in ONLY the PERIMETER

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FENCE. So do you think your office can help us with fencing material? We do have farmers willing to cost share with men power in installing fences.

Bennie Litson commented, "As farmers we know we all have problem with Wildlife so we know that Fish & Wildlife can work with us on an individual base. At the same time, people need to receive small gaming license."

Noel Bikeddy commented, "Where do we go to receive small gaming licenses?"

Mr. Emerson responded:

- ☐ Where to get small gaming licenses? Window Rock office, Winslow, Shiprock, and T&R store. He shared that Gunnison Prairie Dogs are endangered.
- ☐ From Mr. Emerson point of view, farmland and rangeland are important for owners to take of it.
- ☐ Mr. Emerson shared that most electric fence is 3 ft above ground level.

Lorena asked, "Several years ago, Fish & Wildlife from Navajo Nation help farmers in Asayi, New Mexico with fencing. How was that implement? What process has been taken to do that project by your department Mr. Emerson?"

Mr. Emerson responded:

- ☐ There is a need to talk to director such as Jeff Cole, Gloria Tom, and Bidtah Becker to request for cost share in creating fence for outside perimeter fence in all three farmland area.

Mr. Herbert Jones, Chinle BIA Natural Resources, questions and comments on the follow:

- ☐ How is the O & M fee paid by the famers?
- ☐ Fencing is not the problem, but it's the farmer that is the problem because they are mending their fencing and caring for their land. It's been shared that a large number of farmers land are idling.
- ☐ Electric fencing need more consideration due to people in the area being unaware of it.
- ☐ Grazing can be manipulated by water, salt, and feeding. HOWEVER, Fish & Wildlife staff on the Navajo Nation need to FIGURE OUT a Management Plan for their wildlife.
- ☐ Navajo Nation Forestry need to share their Commercial Forestry plan, and need to pay attention to special project area.

Lorena explained, "1950 to 1960 there were many prairie dogs and was treated during that time."

Bennie Litson, "my concern is that the laws are there, but collaboration among programs and grassroot people is a huge problem!!!" Programs offices are consistently indicating the grassroot are the problem, but the reality, is Program staff only talked about the problem, but no solutions! Why are programs to programs NOT talking to each other so they can come up with solutions?!!! **For many, Livestock owners rely on their Livestock – this is their bread and butter!!! And yet you are messing with their livelihood.** So who is in control?"

Mr. Emerson stated, "I have been working for Fish & Wildlife for 20 years, and we are asked to present on behalf of the program. The Program Managers of these offices are critical to be here to present to the Grassroot people."

Lorena stated, "What will we explore electric fence or explore High fences?"

Noel asked, "What are other option, how can I be help as an individual producer with fence from Fish & Wildlife?"

Lorena responded:

"Yes, you are welcome and encourage to try to work with other farmers and other programs such as Fish & Wildlife. As long as your farmland is put into production. So go seek and explore other option for your farmland as producers."

Action: *Accepted to go with high fencing for perimeter fence in all three farmland areas and to seek partnership with Navajo Nation Fish & Wildlife and BIA Natural Resources office in Chinle.*

Motioned by *Dorthea Litson*

Seconded by *Anelda Kedelty*

Voting: *10 yes; 0 no; 9 abstained*

Motion Carried

- Prairie dog treatment

Mr. Charles Blacksheep reported on the Prairie Dog treatment. He start off introducing himself and he has worked for 25 years for Fish and Wildlife of Navajo Nation, but mainly in the Western Agency. He primarily works with wildlife. Mileage is huge problem for him.

Prairie dogs are treated in many ways. For Fish & Wildlife, he and Gloria are the only one who are certified to do Fume Toxicant. However, Navajo Nation EPA has put a stop on this type of treatment. The best option now is for the farmers to receive a small gaming license.

Action: *To accept Mr. Charles Blacksheep's report.*

Motioned by *Merle Kedelty*

Seconded by *Anelda Kedelty*

Voting: *9 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained*

2. Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture – Crop collection
NO show from Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture.

- D. Assist with farm area improvements such as land leveling, erosion control; with funding sources such as USDA.
Goal Statement: With farmer participation, each FB will implement 1 improvement per quarter according to conservation plan.

Lorena explained to the people that we will be working with USDA in the future. We submitted paper work on behalf of Upper Wheatfields Farmer and Ni dishchi Chí hi nikaad farmers to NRCS – USDA, but were unable to help due to their criteria, the farmer must show production for 2 years. With this funding that is coming, we hope to accomplish that criteria so we can request for more funding to repair irrigation system for Upper Wheatfields and Tsaile farm land area.

Action: *Not action it just informational*

- E. Each FB member shall inventory at least 3 ALUP/Farm Permit within respective FB area. **Goal Statement:** With BIA and Farmer participation, reconcile and inventory as to the status of each ALUP or Farm Permit. (3ALUP x each 13 FB member)

1. Land Use Permit – Freddie Sarracino

Action: *No action taken due to no show. This will not be deferred to next meeting.*

2. Land Use Permit – Mae Chee

Action: *Defer to next meeting. Due to no show.*

3. Sublease – Emerson Chee & Kee D. Chee and Emerson Chee & Felcita Bahe

Emerson requested for deferment to next meeting. Due to sublease lease agreement not fill out between he and his uncle, and his uncle is not present at the meeting. He will not obtain a sublease with Felcitia due to some dispute issues.

Action: *Defer sublease of Emerson Chee and Kee D. Chee to next meeting.*

4. Chinle Natural Resources BIA staff update:

- ☐ Land Use Permit
- ☐ Invasive Plant treatment request

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Ben Begay, Technician, Chinle BIA Natural Resources, explained that fixing the ownership of farmland can be a complex issues due to several reasons. Area office directors are micro managing the entire work that we are doing at the local level. He said, "They often are directed to another project without finishing one." In addition, the Chinle BIA office has been audit, and based on that they were directed to fix their permit filing system, so now Ms. Jumbo is correcting the filing system.

However, he indicated that he will continue to work on records, but taking cases one at the time, so the land ownership can be updated. Currently, he reported that there are 12 LUPs that are ready to be pickup by the land owners.

Questions, comments, or suggestions:

Lorena asked, "Can you provide us an update of several people who submitted their LUP for changes in ownership status, where they are in system, or what is the hold up? Plus, what is the status on the invasive species of plant treatment that we have requested?"

Ben Begay responded, "The Biological and Culture Resource Compliance are the hold up to many Land Use Permit and Grazing Permit. These compliances overlap in many ways. We only work with what is written as a request or what is on the book. Often times, people extend their fence line then they would asked us to do the paper work, but we fine that they extended their fence line. This creates many problems." Furthermore, he explained that BIA has to go through the EPA process, and this information is uploaded into the NEPA tracker, and if there are parts of the application not fill out or documented then it is rejected from the system.

He stated, he has requested for a better GPS system for his work so the land mapping can be improve with better accuracy for acres. Finally, there are different departments that are not on the same page. Not being on the same page creates a huge disservice to the people.

Lorena used her farmland structure as an example. The farmland crosses the main road and now someone built a house above the farmland area that she/he created another road within the farmland area.

Herbert Jones, Director, Chinle BIA Natural Resources Office, spoke of the following:

- The work load at their office is huge and it is under staff.
- 1,700 acres is a small project, and yet the Farm Board has many idling farmlands to oversee. Currently, BIA is request that each farmer have their own conservation plan for their farm plots.
- He suggested that the Farm Board needs to create one Conservation Plan for the entire project and this becomes a master plan for development. By doing this, it will create a better management for the project.
- Probate is another huge problem due to lawyer fee starting at \$ 6,500 to \$ 8,000
- Youth don't think of farming and ranching today.
- Tsaille / Wheatfields / Blackrock community needs to select their own grazing representative. This Grazing Representative plays a vital role in making a decision on many projects.
- Currently, the Grazing Rep is from Crystal, NM and her name is Louse Mark. She is not familiar with the area and local people.
- This Grazing Representative keeps track of many things, such as "Who" are the actual land user? Needs to figure out who has permits for their livestock? Who are the farmers or/ ranchers?
- It is important to resurvey what is farmable.

Questions, comments, or suggestions:

Bennie Litson - What is Commercial Forestry land and what are is lay? What are the solutions to the problems, that each different programs created and are they done in a collaboratively? There are three boundary lines on the east side of district 11, so what is the correct one?"

Herbert Jones stated that it important for the Farm Board to invite Alex Becenti from Forestry, so he can talk about the future plan for forestry? Plus, Fish and Wildlife on the Navajo Nation, needs to present their management plan for the Deer and elk population. There is a dire need to RESTORE the management practice o

Lorena asked, "Who do we need to write to in order for you to come out to present on weekends?"

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Mr. Jones indicated, Sharon Pinto to John Holiday to Colbert Curley to Leonard Notah. To asked for employee to come to community site to talk with people than write a letter to Leonard Notah to request that?

Bennie Litson commented:

- Whenever the land use permit and grazing permit were issued, many of us in the room have helped our parents who received those permit. Our elders worked very hard on their land and with their animal to raise their children! He is aware that it takes 7 years to restore the land. Currently, the farmland do not produce same crop as it use to once upon a time.
- The plan the Farm Board put together to revitalize the farmland is great and ranchers are part of the plan.
- Each Departments for the different programs NEED to work together to serve the people with full commitment and fine a solution to problems that we are all encountering.

Action: To accept the following: Continue to collaborate BIA Chinle Natural Resource Office, to resurvey farmable farmlands; to write a letter to Alex Becenti, NN Forestry about the work they do; and to submit names of farmers whose land is close to invasive plant that need to be treated or plot their site.

Motioned by Emerson Chee

Seconded by Amelda Benally

Voting: 12 yes; 0 no; 6 abstained

Motion Carried

III. New Business

a. Financial Reports

Dorthea provided the following financial report:

Ending balance as of March 31, 2017	\$ 25,042.35	
Beginning Balance as of April 1, 2017		\$ 25,042.35
Deposits	\$ 0.00	
April Expenditure:		
• Ink for printer	\$ 141.63	
Ending Balance as of April 30, 2017		\$ 24,900.72
Beginning Balance as of May 1, 2017		\$ 24,900.72
Deposit:	\$ 1,142.83	
May Expenditure:		
• Bryceson Pinto	\$ 1,200.00	
• Sage Software Renewal	\$ 976.57	
Ending Balance as May 31, 2017		\$ 23,866.98

Action: To accept the financial report.

Motioned by Merle Kedelty

Seconded by Bennie Litson

Voting: 8 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained

Motion Carried

IV. Receiving Reports

a. Reports

Lorena reported the following updates regarding topics be discuss at Chapter Planning Meeting:

- \$100 is requested by CLUPC to conduct Work session
- \$100 is requested by Just Move It Organizer
- Money is being requested for Chinle Agency Council – it was decided to be catered.
- \$50 is requested for a ground breaking ceremony

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- Margie Begaye is selected for Chinle Unified School District Indian Education Committee member
- Resolution for Forestry to request them to cut more trees and cleaning up alongside of road.
- Home site lease request process

Dorthea reported on Irrigation progress in all three farmland area, and provided an issue to be resolve.

Updated on irrigation:

Tsaile –

- Firtzgerald Yazzie completed his irrigation; Marvin Jonnie and Weston Carrol are currently irrigating; Maranda Kenney requesting for water.
- She reported the farmland to Angela Kedelty has been subleased to Farm Board, but someone decided to plow in there and plant. The person who did that should have come to Farm Board to request what would be conducted.

Questions, suggestions, or comments:

Mr. Wesley Begay indicated that he plowed in there and planted corn. He spoke to Bob Evans about it.

Farm Board replied that this has been subleased to them. However, the Farm Board told Wesley to continue to work the plot that he plowed, but the Farm Board will be able to work on the other area that is untouched. This is for this year only. But next the Farm Board will be utilizing the entire farmland.

Lower Wheatfields –

- Sadie Neztosie, Emerson Chee are irrigating; and Teresa Chee is requesting for water. The water for Lower Wheatfields is released to 3.5 from lake.

Questions, comments, and suggestions:

Emerson indicated that Teresa is asking for help so they have been helping her. When she going to be on that line then the water for three farmer will be little. As result, in the future he does not see how the system will be working for more farmers are farming their land.

Dorthea indicated, the system should be able to handle it due the main line being a 24 inch pipe line. However, we will need to be very strategic about planning and working together.

Upper Wheatfields –

- Yolinda Staley was irrigating, but never notified Dorthea.
- Lucinda Spencer requested for water; but Dorthea turned the water off from her on Friday, June 2, 2017 in evening due to water running down the road. She could not leave it like that due to creating greater erosion. She had asked them to fix the problem before turning the water back on. When she arrived to check who was irrigating there was no one on site to talk too, so she called Lucinda Spencer to provide her an update of what she was going to do.
- Another problem that is going to come up is:
Rita Bahe farmland. Her children has fixed her fence and plowed. Dorthea indicated, "I think this is what TJ is concern about the erosion within that farmland, and they filled up more dirt." Now, there is no irrigation cannel, and that needs to be re –establish due to Arlene White wanting to irrigate her farmland.

Action: An email will need to be submitted to TJ to inform him that the irrigation cannel will need to be re-establish so other farmers, Arlene White and Peterson are able to irrigate.

Motioned by Merle Kedelty

Seconded by Anelda Kedelty

Voting: 8 yes; 0 no; 3 abstained

Motion Carried

Action: To accept the reports provided by Lorena and Dorthea.

Motioned by Anelda Kedelty

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Seconded by Amelda Benally

Voting: 8 yes; 0 no; 3 abstained

Motion Carried

b. Announcements

- Tsaile / Wheatfields / Blackrock Chapter Meeting, Sunday, June 11, 2017 at 2pm Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ.
- Annual Veteran Summit, June 9 – 10, 2017
- Tsaile / Wheatfields / Blackrock Community Land Use Planning Committee' Work session, Sunday, June 11, 2017 at 10am Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ
- Family Health Conference, June 11, 2017
- Tsaile / Wheatfields / Blackrock Chapter Veteran Organization Meeting, Tuesday, June 13, 2017 Wheatfields, AZ at Chapter House.
- Just Move It, June 22, 2017 at Wheatfield Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

V. Conclusion

a. Next Agenda Item

As follow:

- Wheatfields Agriculture Project
- Forms for Personnel Policy
- Land Use Permit:
 - ☐ Mae Chee
 - ☐ Emerson Chee & Kee D. Chee – Sublease

b. Scheduled next meeting date, Sunday, June 25, 2017 at 9am.

c. Adjournment

Action: Meeting Adjourned at 3:30pm

Motioned by Bennie Litson

Seconded by Merle Kedelty

Voting: 8 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained

Motion Carried