

*Tsailé - Wheatfields - Blackrock Joint Farm Board and Water Users Association Meeting
Sunday, April 14, 2013 @ 1PM
Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ*

Meeting Minutes

- I. Order of Business
- a. Meeting called to order @ 1:30pm.
 - b. Roll Call: Farm Board members: Lorena Eldridge, Lucinda Davis, and Dorthea Litson all present. Water Users Board of Directors: Aaron Begay, Kathy John, Lapita McClanahan, and Dorthea Litson all present. Violet Hunter and Myron Begay were both absent.
 - c. Invocation conducted by Lorena Eldridge.
 - d. Review agenda by Dorthea Litson. No questions or comments.
Action: Agenda accepted as it was written.
Motioned by Thomas Litson
Seconded by Yolinda Staley
Voting: 12 yes; 0 no; 2 abstained *Motion Carried*
 - e. Reading of last meeting Minutes, March 25, 2013 conducted by Dorthea Litson. No questions or comments.
Action: Last meeting minutes was accepted as it was read.
Motioned by Merle Kedelty
Seconded by Lucinda Davis
Voting: 15 yes; 0 no; 0 abstained *Motion Carried*
 - f. Announcements
 1. Chapter Meeting, Sunday, April 21, 2013@ 10am, Wheatfields Chapter Hse.
 2. Operation and Maintenance fee Mailed out to all Farmers April 19, 2013
 3. Seed Planting workshop, Dine' College April 22 and 23, 2013.
- II. Reports
- a. Farm Board
 1. President
Lorena Eldridge stated she really has no report, but she re-submitted the office space agreement to the Chapter Official and staff requesting for the changes made at the last meeting on March 25, 2013. To date, she has not heard anything from them. The office is being remodeled.

There were no questions, suggestions, or comments.
 2. Vice President
Lucinda Davis reported she attended the Chinle Agency Council in Hard Rock, AZ two weeks ago. There many resolutions were passed. They request for Farm Board

*Tsaile - Wheatfields - Blackrock Joint Farm Board and Water Users Association Meeting
Sunday, April 14, 2013 @ 1PM*

Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

members present. One of the resolutions submitted was to increase the stipend payment for both grazing and farm board.

Questions, comments, and suggestions were as follow:

- Lorena Eldridge: “When is the next Agency Council meeting?”
- Lucinda Davis: She responded, “July 6, 2013 @ Rock Point 9am, and October 5, 2013 @ Lukachukai 9am.”
- Lorena Eldridge: “Was the resolution passed for Grazing and Farm Board Stipend requesting a supplemental?”
- Lucinda Davis: She commented, “Nelson Begaye, Council Delegate, stated the grazing have many things to do to accomplish their job. The Farm Board members do the same. They should not be requesting for budget annually. Instead it should be a continuous or revolving budget.”
- Thomas Litson: “What forms, and how does the farm board completes report, monthly and quarterly? The Agricultural Department has a more detail budget, and the Agricultural Department staff is the one who report for us, yet they are the one not working out in the field.”
- Lorena Eldridge: The forms for farm board, grazing, and eastern land board are all the same. The Form 2 does not reflect the actual work. For example, any Land Use Permit changes take time. There are a lot of limitations to Title 3.
- Thomas Litson: “Yes, Tsaile-Wheatfields-Blackrock community people are the one who elected me, yet he works with other chapter. This is what the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture staff does not look at.”
- Lucida Davis: The report is not looked at; therefore, the farm board created a task force to examine the possibility of working with Title 26. To date, there is only one person being proactive, and the taskforce team has not met.

3. Secretary

Dorthea Litson reported on the following:

Reservoir Projects: She is working with Water Resource Department to remove sediment from Kee White Reservoir and Rita Jishie Reservoir. The next on the list to repair are Roanhorse Reservoir and Walter Begay Reservoir.

Conservation Plan Workshop is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, May 17 and 18, 2013. She is working with Steve Barker to facilitate the work sessions. The focus is for the five farmers, but all is encouraged to attend.

Meeting with BIA: She wrote a letter to Harry Yazzie, BIA office, to request for his help to fix the name on the map in Upper Wheatfields and Tsaile Farm land. However, he has change the scheduled to another day. The idea is also to figure out the cases for each farm land.

*Tsaile - Wheatfields - Blackrock Joint Farm Board and Water Users Association Meeting
Sunday, April 14, 2013 @ 1PM*

Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

Meeting with NRCS: She reported that she personally submitted for EQIP project with NRCS to do some work in Lower Wheatfields for do some work in 50 acres of farmland. She met with them on Thursday, April 11, 2013. They revealed that the soil is at stage III. In addition, the staff stated, about 90% of the farmland in all areas are at this stage. There are eight stages, but stage three is a problem for farm lands. It is describe as a soil with severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants or that require special conservation practice.

They suggested to plant crops that are not deep rooted. Alfalfa is out of the questions due to its deep root. The goal at this point is to re-establish the soil to a productive stage for farming purpose. If nothing is done the soil will be lost.

At this meeting, she learned that the Farm Board is required putting a conservation plan together, and the each farmer and rancher will need to have a conservation plan. This is why it is important for all to attend the workshop.

Now, the questions is how do we work with our farmers and what do we do with the idle land?

Questions, comments, and suggestions were as follow:

- Mr. Weston Carroll: Who takes care of water issues?
- Lorena Eldridge: The Water User Association
- Jessie Tsosie: She thinks the problem is the prairie dogs.
- Rita Bahe: There are many farmers who do not come to the meeting. She suggested writing letters to the farmers to explain the situation.
- Linda Staley: Is Kee White reservoir completed, and ready to release water?
- Dorthea Litson: She told Linda not to release water. The Water Resource staff is still working on removing the sediment.
- Lorena Eldridge: She shared the map and the acres are the not the same, one is done by the BIA and the other is Water management.
- Thomas Litson: Can we make an attempt to find the amount of idle land; figure out the reasons? Have the Farm Board tried all administrative remedies?
- Lorena Eldridge: She paraphrased Thomas's question. She responded that the Farm Board have written letters to Lower Wheatfields Farmers about two years ago letting them know that their farmland was up for sublease.

*Tsaile - Wheatfields - Blackrock Joint Farm Board and Water Users Association Meeting
Sunday, April 14, 2013 @ 1PM*

Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

Majority of the farmers stated the land is not for sublease and they will plant, but they have not worked on it for many.

- Kathy John: She has 9.8 acres of dryland farming, and she needs help. The fence is down. Her dryland has been put into recommendation by the grazing official, but is hold up at BIA office because they need to original copy of the LUP.
- Weston Carroll: Quit Title is a huge problem and hard to overcome.
- Thomas Litson requested to have a meeting with BIA at next Grazing Meeting on May 6, 2013 to figure out how BIA can work with us on collected idle land status with reasons.
- Lapita McClannahan: We really need to develop a conservation plan. She also share there are ways to work with schools to help with fencing, etc.

Action: On May 6, 2013, the Farm Board requested the grazing officials to put on the agenda to talk about working with idle farmlands. (identify probate cases, quit title, and 2yrs not in use)

Motioned by Frank Billy

Seconded by Anelda Kedelty

Voting: 17 yes; 0 no; 2 abstained

Motion Carried

b. Water Users

1. President

Not present

2. Vice President

Aaron Begay reiterated the importance for all, Farmers, to care for farmland and put to use before the soil is depleted. He also stated Land Grant Office staff at Dine' College is wonderful to work with. They can work with you on any questions you might have related to farming and ranching. For example thy have intern where projects can be create with them. They work with others to bring students in to work as intern.

Action: Accepted Aaron Begay report, and no action.

Motioned by Thomas Litson

Seconded by Merle Kedelty

Voting: 18 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained

Motion Carried

3. Secretary

*Tsaile - Wheatfields - Blackrock Joint Farm Board and Water Users Association Meeting
Sunday, April 14, 2013 @ 1PM
Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ*

Not present

III. Old Business

a. LUP – Transfer, Relinquishment, Sublease, Probate (FB)

1. Late Homer Nez family request for research on plot.

Dorthea Litson reported she wrote a letter to BIA office staff, Harry Yazzie, request for technical support in researching the status of late Homer Nez farmland area. Mr. Harry Yazzie called her stating, “The family members will need to call Daniel Largo in Gallup Office to request for finding the late Homer Nez Land Use information due to the Privacy Act.”

Lorena Eldridge: She explained the privacy act. The Farm Board will need to write a letter to the family members of the late Homer Nez to explain what they need to do.

Action: No action was taken, but the farm board will write the letter to family members to inform them of next steps.

IV. New Business

a. Select One Board of Director Position for Water Users (WU)

Since Aaron Begay, Vice President for Water Users, was present, he conducted this part of the sessions. He explained to the people, “The History of Water Users; and the need to do studies on current water use, and determine future water use.” There are four members to here to make a quorum. He opened the floor for people to nominate one Board of Director position need.

Rita Bahe suggested selecting a person for this position at a later time.

Marie White suggested selecting one who is willing to do the work.

Westin Carroll suggested the importance to keep an elder as a part of the board due to their knowledge and experiences. For this reason, he nominated Freddie Yazzie.

Freddie Yazzie responded that he declined the position. We encourage youth people to lead, and they are very intelligent, and work well with technology. As elders we are here just to support.

Action: The people decided to continue to put on the agenda until someone is willing to take part to fill the position. The people respected Freddie Yazzie’s decision to decline.

Motioned by Dorthea Litson

Seconded by Lapita McClannahan

Voting: 17 yes; 0 no; and 0 abstained

Motion Carried.

b. Identify Registered Agent and identify a time to meet with the Bank (WU)

*Tsaile - Wheatfields - Blackrock Joint Farm Board and Water Users Association Meeting
Sunday, April 14, 2013 @ 1PM*

Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

Aaron Begay explained that the Water User will need to identify one of the Board members to serve as registered agent. Also decide who will be the two to sign checks.

Dorthea Litson also explained the Article of Incorporation needs mailing address for each board member, so these can be submitted to the bank and business regulatory.

It was decided to have Dorthea Litson be the registered agent. Dorthea Litson and Kathy John will be the two to sign checks.

Action: Accept Dorthea Litson to be the registered agent for the Water User. Dorthea Litson and Kathy John are the two people to sign checks for the organization.

Motioned by Thomas Litson

Seconded by Frank Billy

Voting: 17 yes; 0 no; 2 abstained

Motion Carried

c. Schedule release of Water with Safety of Dam (FB)

Lorena Eldridge explained that we have three farmlands to oversee. Two has a diversion dam and don't have to worry about working with Safety of Dam. Lower Wheatfields farmers have to work with Safety of Dam each summer. She iterated that the Upper Wheatfields farmer and Tsaile Farmers can divert the water for farming at this time if they are ready to irrigate. For Lower Wheatfields, when is a good time to release the water?

Dorthea Litson responded that she and her family should be ready for irrigation by May 9, 2013.

Other concerns:

Upper Wheatfields farmers need a new trash rack at the diversion.

Tsaile farmers need road graded to the diversion box, and diversion box need cleaning.

Action: Dorthea Litson assigned to write a letter to Brenda Hatathlie, Safety of Dam Director, to request for water released. The cleaning and trash rack will be part of the reservoir work. Lorena Eldridge assigned to work with Chapter staff and Official to request for grader to grade road to Tsaile Diversion. She requested to have Freddie Yazzie work with her on the arrangement and for him to be on site.

Motioned By Weston Carroll

Seconded by Merle Kedelty

Voting: 20 yes; 0 no; 0 abstained

Motion Carried

*Tsaile - Wheatfields - Blackrock Joint Farm Board and Water Users Association Meeting
Sunday, April 14, 2013 @ 1PM*

Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

- d. Water Master- Hiring Process- Job announcement, job description (BOTH)
Lorena Eldridge explained the Water masters hiring process. It is for 600 hrs. The work is from May to Sept. or October. The process is to post for the announcement, review applicants, and hire. The search is for 3 positions, (2) water masters and (1) Supervisor
The Farm Board will work with Chapter staff.

Action: Farm Board will work with Chapter staff for the hiring process, and to interview the applicant both the Water Users and Farm Board will conduct that.

Motioned by Kathy John

Seconded by Lapita McClannahan

Voting: 17 yes; 0 no; 3 abstained

Motion Carried

- e. Pipe Rental (BOTH)
Lorena Eldridge explained that there are 2 set of pipes, one at 6 inches and the other at 8 inches of gated pipe, and both at 660 ft. The cost for renting is \$ 70 per use.

Dorthea Litson explained the purpose for purchasing the pipes were for 1. Workshop session – People will learn to use the system for irrigating. 2. Farmer would use it for two years to learn, but each farmer will need to purchase their own set. However, at this point the farmers are complaining that there is not enough pipe sets. So the question is, “Do we continue to rent them out for \$70 or pull them back and use for workshop purposes only?”

Thomas Litson: “Is it spell out somewhere that the two pipe sets are use for workshop purposes only, and that each farmer will need to be responsible to get their own pipe set.”

Lorena Eldridge: “It is not written anywhere, but it has been talked about.”

Dorthea Litson: “It has been talked about at a Farm Board meeting.”

Action: The people decided to continue to rent the pipe for one more year at \$70 per use, but this time put in writing to inform the farmer it will be for one more year, and encourage them to purchase their own.

Motioned by Westin Carroll

Seconded by Frank Billy

Voting: 19 yes; 0 no; 0 abstained

Motion Carried

- f. Enforce the use of Farmland or provide alternative Farmland use. (FB)
Lorena Eldridge asked the people on their thoughts.

*Tsaile - Wheatfields - Blackrock Joint Farm Board and Water Users Association Meeting
Sunday, April 14, 2013 @ 1PM*

Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

Dorthea Litson explained as mentioned, from the scientific stand point we are losing our soil quality when we don't do anything about idle lands. Do we sit back and do nothing?

Thomas Litson provided these suggestions:

1. Identify the probate, quit title cases, and possible disputed area. This we can work with BIA and land owners.
2. Use all of the administrative remedies.
3. Request Chapter support Farm Board to address as the state of emergency for our area. It can be subleased to Farm Board and Chapter for at least 5 to 10 years while owners develop ways to work on their land.

Aaron Begay: For Lower Wheatfields farmers, we tried mailing, certified letter, to inform them about their farmland. Furthermore, he explained to the people, we can't set back and do nothing about the farmlands. The wind is taking all of our good soil, and leaving us nothing. As people we should be serious about taking care of our farmland. To have a land is very precious. We should be doing all we can to care for it and protect it. It can provide us a lot if used.

Frank Billy: For many years we have not farmed for many reasons; repairing Wheatfields Lake and installing underground irrigation system. According to the Navajo story, the wind purpose is for planting. The other issue he wonders about is "Is there enough water for all?"

Lapita McClannahan: The Farm Board needs to do something to protect the land. They need to work with the policies. Each one of us as people have conservation plan on our mind.

Freddie Yazzie: Many us acknowledge and support the work you all do as Farm Board and Water Users, but not all think that way. He suggested that enforce is a harsh word to use with the people. Will we be putting you in trouble or who will be at fault? As Navajo people we all think differently.

*Action: To write to all farmers to exhaust all administrative remedies. In the meantime the Farm Board will work on figuring out probate cases, quit titles, idle lands as they work with BIA, and will submit a request to Chapter using the approach for emergency status; might look at ways to sublease land. In the letter it should state the data and oppositions and plan to overcome idle lands.
Motioned by Merle Kedelty
Seconded by Anelda Kedelty
Voting: 18 yes; 0 no; 0 abstained*

Motion Carried

- g. Seed Purchase (BOTH)

*Tsaile - Wheatfields - Blackrock Joint Farm Board and Water Users Association Meeting
Sunday, April 14, 2013 @ 1PM*

Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

Lorene Eldridge explained the seed purchase budget at \$2,000. The seeds are for workshop attendees.

Dorthea Litson stated this is budget in the First Nation Grant that we received. The purpose was for those who have attended all of the workshops. She spoke Freddie Yazzie since he has attended all workshops.

Freddie Yazzie commented that he spoke Dorthea about the seeds he is looking at. The cost is Alfalfa – 50lbs for 6 acres – the cost is \$261.00 a bag. ; Oats – 50lb for 6 acres too; cost is \$34.00

Action: The seed purchase is for the five farmers who have volunteered for the being part of the project to develop a conservation plan. The people decided the following:

(5) Workshop attended – Freddie Yazzie allocate \$600.00

(5) Workshop attended – Kathy John – allocate \$600.00

(2) Workshop attended – Laurena John – allocate \$300.00

(2) Workshop attended – Merle Kedelty – allocate \$300.00

(1) Workshop attended – Patricia Morgan – allocate \$200.00

Motioned by Thomas Litson

Seconded by Weston Carroll

Voting: 17 yes; 0no; 1 abstained

Motion Carried

h. Logo for Water User (WU)

Aaron Begay explained that Water Users are look at developing Logo.

Lapita McClannahan reported she spoke with the Tsaile Public School principal for children to do Logo designed. He wants some sort of parameter for children to think about.

The people decided to have the following key features:

- Wheatfields – Tsaile – Blackrock
- Water
- Agriculture

Action: Open it to the youth that we know at our home, and they will bring their logo to next meeting. The Prize can be garden supply.

No motion or seconded taken, but youth will bring their drawing to next meeting.

i. Agriculture Day (BOTH)

*Tsailé - Wheatfields - Blackrock Joint Farm Board and Water Users Association Meeting
Sunday, April 14, 2013 @ 1PM*

Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

Aaron Begay shared he went to Shiprock Agricultural Day, and it was pretty neat. He learned a lot. There is a lot of learning for us all to do every day. The day can be about:

- Farm Safety for all and youth
- Successful farmer(s) in our area sharing his/her success.
- A day to be a community.

Others shared the following ideas:

Clanship

Mr. Frank Billy suggested having this event in October when harvest season is taking place.

Action: To continue to put on the agenda to take little steps to planning, and by October it should be planed, so the event can take place.

No motion or seconded taken.

V. Other
None listed

VI. Conclusion

a. Next agenda item

Lego for Water Users

Agricultural Day

Select (1) Board of Director for Water User

Water Master

Sublease

Irrigation establishment – Evelyn Litzin and Weston Carroll

Action: No action taken.

b. Next meeting date @ 3pm on Thursday, April 25, 2013 Wheatfields Chapter, Wheatfields, AZ

c. Adjournment @ 7:35 pm

Action: Meeting adjournment accepted.

Motioned by Merle Kedelty

Seconded by Westin Carroll

Voting: All in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstained

Motion Carried