

TSAILE /WHEATFIELDS /BLACKROCK CHAPTER  
FARM BOARD AND WATER USERS JOINT MEETING  
MONDAY, MAY 12, 2014 @ 5PM WHEATFIELDS CHAPTER HOUSE

**AGENDA**

**I. ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- a. Meeting call to order
- b. Roll call
- c. Invocation
- d. Adapt agenda
- e. Reading last meeting minutes, April 23, 2014
- f. Announcements:
  - Workshop – Irrigation Management and Water Measurement, Saturday, May 24, 2014 @ Wheatfields Chapter House and out at Farm Fields from 8:30am to 3 pm conducted by University of Arizona
  - Chapter Meeting, Sunday, May 18, 2014

**II. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Dine' Policy Institute staff conducts their report on Food Sovereignty Research findings
- B. Interpret Soil Testing Data
- C. Types of Crops to Plant
- D. 1<sup>st</sup> Nation Expenditure Report

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. LUP Issues- Transfer, Relinquish, etc
- B. Opposing Operation and Maintenance Fee – Tsaille Irrigation
- C. Design Big Ideas for collecting data to use for Community Water Plan
- D. Develop strategies to present at Chapter meeting so people can understand, Alternative Plan

**IV. CONCLUSION**

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

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MONDAY, MAY 12, 2014 @ 5PM WHEATFIELDS CHAPTER HOUSE

**MEETING MINUTES**

**I. ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- a. Meeting call to order at 5:45pm
- b. Roll call
- c. Invocation conducted by Dorthea Litson
- d. Review Agenda  
The agenda was reviewed by Dorthea Litson. No questions or amendments made.  
Action: The read agenda was accepted.  
Motioned by Bennie Litson  
Seconded by Calvin James  
Voting: 7 yes; 0 no; 4 abstained Motion carried.
- e. Reading last meeting minutes, April 23, 2014, read by Dorthea Litson. No questions, comments, or amendments.  
Action: The read meeting minutes as accepted as read.  
Motioned by Calvin James  
Seconded by Julia Litson  
Voting: 12 yes; 0 no; 3 abstained Motion carried
- f. Announcements:
  - Workshop – Irrigation Management and Water Measurement, Saturday, May 24, 2014 @ Wheatfields Chapter House and out at Farm Fields from 8:30am to 3 pm conducted by University of Arizona
  - Chapter Meeting, Sunday, May 18, 2014 @ 10am

**II. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Dine' Policy Institute staff conducts their report on Food Sovereignty Research findings  
The staff from DPI, Dine' College, wrote a proposal two year ago and it was funded. As a result, they studies Food sovereignty for two years with five communities. One of community that was involved was the Tsaille-Wheatfields-Blackrock. The following were some of the data they have collected:
  - The Navajo people food systems have change a lot over time.
  - 230 plus people were interviewed
  - 63% of people received food assistant
  - 40% of people want fresh food, but don't have access to fresh foods
  - 51% of people have to travel off the reservation to get there food
  - 74% of people stated that the current food causes health problems
  - 90% of people want Dine' Food
  - 82% of people are interested
  - 91% of people stated that they are interested in farming
  - The traditional foods were corn, beans, squash, and tobacco

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There are many recommendations.

- The primary one is the need to establish food policies for our Dine' people.

Questions and comments:

In the southwest, which tribe has food policy in place?

The response was the Tohono O'odham Nation in Sells, AZ are the only one that have a food policy established.

The comments: The DPI staff and the Tsaile-Wheatfields Farm Board, in collaboration have submitted a \$35,000 grant to establish food policy for the community.

*Action: The people accepted the report provided by the staff of Dine' Policy Institute, Dine' College.*

*Motioned by Teresa Chee*

*Seconded by Bennie Litson*

*Voting: 9yes; 0 no; 7 abstained*

*Motion Carried*

B. Interpret Soil Testing Data

Benita Litson, Land Grant Director of Dine' College, explained the soil testing that was completed for Lower Wheatfields about two year ago. He interns at the time collected the soil and submit that to NAPI. As results, the soil data is at Land Grant for people to have. The results of the nutrients of the soil were presented several times through workshops and farm board meetings. She explained to the people how to read the nutrient data using the ph scales of 1 to 14. The nutrient level needs to be at 7 particularly nitrogen and phosphorus.

Questions:

When can the other farmlands soil be tested?

Benita commented that can be conducted if there is request and when interns are available.

C. Types of Crops to Plant

Dorthea explained topics covered on April 12, 2014 workshop, and presenters were from University of Arizona talked about the soil, plant, and water relationship. In one of the presentation, the presenter presented information about what crops and vegetables to plant in our area. All of this was based on our soil types and regional information. It is important to understand that when we work with these presenters, they designed these workshops based the farmers needs in our area, Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock community. We give them as much information to make our learning that much more meaningful.

*Action: Both Benta's presentation of Soil interpretation and Dorthea's crop types to plant presentation were accepted.*

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*Motioned by Bennie Litson*

*Seconded by Aaron Begay*

*Voting: 11 yes; 0 no; 6 abstained*

*Motion Carried*

D. 1<sup>st</sup> Nation Expenditure Report

Dorthea reported how the \$10,000 grant received from First Nation was spent. She reviewed the entire proposal.

No questions or comments made.

*Action: The report on First Nation Grant expense was approved.*

*Motioned by Aaron Begay*

*Seconded by Teresa Chee*

*Voting: 11 yes; 0 no; 4 abstained*

*Motion Carried*

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. LUP Issues- Transfer, Relinquish, etc

*Action: No action taken due to no request.*

B. Opposing Operation and Maintenance Fee – Tsaille Irrigation

Mr. Allen Begay, Tsaille Farmer, presented a letter to farm board. He explained his letter. He stated that the some farmers who refuse to pay the Operation and Maintenance fee due to limited water access for farming. The farmers would be willing to pay until there is dependable water source. He also explained how the underground irrigation systems for Tsaille area was establish in the 1980s. He requested to stop the O&M fees until dependable water source is establish for farming.

Questions, comments:

Lorena explained that the Land Use Permit and the Navajo Nation Code, Title 3, already state operation and maintenance fee to be paid. The Farmers of our community started paying \$1.50 an acres, and requested to increase the cost to \$3.00 an acres. Currently, the fee is \$3.00 an acre. Many are paying already.

Lucinda commented that yes, water is limited, but through the collection of O&M fee that already exist we were able to repair some irrigation systems on the main line. She is always aware of the idea that was once put on the table to pump water from Tsaille Lake. She can check into that status.

Dorthea explained the funding used to repair some of the major irrigation line for Tsaille and Upper Wheatfields area. She stated that we still have many projects to improve the major irrigation line.

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Aaron commented, "How are we to help to ourselves?" We have to collaborate together to move forward. We already started collected the O&M fee, and many are paying. We cannot go backward in our plans. We are trying so hard to move forward to improve.

*Action: Mr. Allen request to stop the Operation and Maintenance fee was denied by the people. Instead, the people re-affirmed the need to continue for all farmers to pay for their Operation and Maintenance fee.*

*Motioned by Bennie Litson*

*Seconded by Teresa Chee*

*Voting: 9yes; 0 no; 3 abstained*

*Motion Carried*

Additional comments after the Action took place were as follow:

Mr. Harvey Kenny Jr. stated that within his farmland area there are existing homesites that has been grandfather in. "How do I get the acres on his farmland changed?"

It was explained to Mr. Kenny that he need to request the change at the next farm board meeting. A supporting resolution for his request will be attached and submit the request to BIA so it farmland can be re-surveyed. His item will be addressed at next Farm Board Meeting.

Mr. Frankie Spencer commented that he pays for his O&M fee. He is aware of the growing need of irrigation improvement. The recent report provided by the DPI staff regarding the food sovereignty is a concern to him.

C. Design Big Ideas for collecting data to use for Community Water Plan

Dorthea explained that at the last meeting, we, Farm Board, Water Users, Grazing member, and CLUPC, all sit on different board or committee, and talked extensively about creating a water plan for the Tsaille - Wheatfields - Blackrock Community. The next steps that needs to happen is to come together to plan the big ideas of timeline for a possible proposal to write. It seems than we all hold extensive water data for our community.

*Acton: To meet on Sunday, June 8, 2014 as a join meeting with CLUPC to figure out timeline of big ideas.*

*Motioned by Bennie Litson*

*Seconded b y Aaron Begay*

*Voting: 7 yes; 0 no; 2 abstained*

*Motion Carried*

D. Develop strategies to present at Chapter meeting so people can understand, Alternative Plan

Dorthea shared her concern for presenting the Alternative Plan at next Chapter Meeting.

She reviewed the alternative plan with the farmers, and asked how we can best present the alternative plan, so people can understand it?

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Base on reading of the alternative plan, the farmers commented that sharing of the crops at end of season needs to be change from 50% sharing. The only way the 50% share of crop will depend on how much each farmer is willing to contribute.

*Action: The alternative plan needs to change the 50% sharing of crops with farmers will need to be change. It will be depended on the farmer's involvement. At the presentation only present the alternative plan not the chart. The chart will be confusing to people.*

*Motioned by Aaron Begay*

*Seconded by Teresa Chee*

*Voting: 7 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained*

*Motion Carried*

IV. CONCLUSION

A. Identify next agenda items

Nothing was mention for next item on agenda.

B. Scheduled next meeting, *Thursday, May 30, 2014 at 6pm Wheatfields Chapter House*

C. Adjournment at 10:00 pm

*Action: Meeting adjournment was accepted.*

*Motioned by Teresa Chee*

*Seconded by Aaron Begay*

*Voting: 8 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained*

*Motion Carried*