

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT
WORK SESSION HELD ON
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2025**

A work session of the Cochise County Flood Control District was held on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room, 1415 Melody Lane, Building G, Bisbee, Arizona.

Present: Frank Antenori, Chairman; Tom Crosby, Vice-Chairman; Kathleen L. Gomez, Supervisor

Staff Present: Sharon Gilman, County Administrator
Joe Casey, Deputy County Administrator
Paul Correa, Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney
Bert Whitehead, Deputy Civil County Attorney
Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

Attendees: Jackie Watkins, Engineering and Natural Resources Director

Chairman Antenori called the meeting to order at 1:13 p.m.

ACTION

Engineering & Natural Resources

1. Discussion and possible direction regarding drainage concerns identified during the County Road Maintenance Special Meeting held November 6, 2025.

Jackie Watkins, Engineering and Natural Resources Director, presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Ms. Watkins provided an update on the Coyote Wash project, noting it is under construction using roller compacted concrete, with a cost of \$5.5 million and an expected completion in February. She stated the work is being performed by Rummel Construction. She also discussed drainage needs on Moson Road, a 7.7-mile project carrying about 4,500 vehicles daily. She stated the design reflects long-standing practice by significantly increasing culverts and bridge structures to manage substantial north-south stormwater flows.

Ms. Watkins explained the hydrology at the Port of Entry, showing water depth and flow levels across the area. She stated the maps illustrate significant stormwater volumes and noted the segment is about one and a half miles long, with box culverts alone estimated at \$8 million. The Board and staff discussed drainage funding challenges and the large volume of stormwater flowing west to east toward Highway 80 and into Mexico.

The Board and staff discussed Pomerene Road and the ongoing watershed study showing drainage volumes that exceed existing box culverts causing overflow. Ms.

Watkins stated the area includes a historic irrigation canal from the late 1800s on private property that is deteriorating and contributing to drainage issues affecting county easements. She stated Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) flood maps indicate a long flood zone corridor where mitigation would require significant funding, and development in the area must meet elevation and flood insurance requirements under established flood control practices.

Ms. Watkins explained the differences between the 2003 and new FEMA maps for Old Pomerene Road, noting the area is very flat and prone to flooding. She highlighted that increasing box culvert size would push more water onto private property, as the roads are not designed to contain all runoff. She provided photos by residents showing flooding occurring even during minor storm events.

In response to the Board, Ms. Watkins explained that the 1.3-mile floodplain overwhelms small drainage solutions, as a one-foot ditch or 24-inch culvert can only handle minimal flow compared to the over 7,000 cubic feet per second in a 100-year storm. She stated even properly sized culverts would be insufficient to prevent flooding across the road.

Ms. Watkins explained that public concerns about stormwater and drainage prompted the meeting to clarify conditions on county roads. She showed how drainage from surrounding areas, including Moson and Hereford Roads, crosses the roadway. She noted that accommodating smaller washes with culverts or pipe covers costs approximately \$500,000 per mile, excluding larger box culverts.

Ms. Watkins provided a detailed update on drainage for Moson Road, noting 2,363 linear feet of 24-inch pipe culverts costing \$283,000, with total culvert costs at \$3.8 million. She explained that FEMA's updated flood maps, based on detailed contours, will be adopted in 2026, placing many previously unmapped areas into flood zones, requiring residents with mortgages to carry flood insurance. She emphasized that north-south roads naturally channel water, and even maintained or graded roads can turn into riverbeds during storms, reflecting the power of natural hydraulics that cannot be altered.

Ms. Watkins outlined plans for the coming year, including a floodplain preservation meeting in January-February focused on increasing watershed retention, slowing water velocities, and improving watershed health through erosion control measures like check dams and riprap. She noted ongoing and upcoming studies, including the Pomerene Roads watershed, Douglas Basin, and investigations into stormwater recharge options, emphasizing that these projects take years of study before construction. She also highlighted public engagement, website updates, and coordination with local agencies, while noting that all of Cochise County relies on a sole source of aquifer for potable water.

Ms. Watkins explained that the Silver Jackets, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers intergovernmental partnership, will hold three all-day flood-preparation workshops in June for areas including Bisbee, Douglas, Elfrida, Benson, St. David, Wilcox, and surrounding communities. She stated the workshops will coordinate with local agencies and fire departments to educate residents on flood preparedness and self-protection, emphasizing response times and safety in remote areas.

Chairman Antenori adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m.

APPROVED:

Frank Antenori, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board