

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
WORK SESSION HELD ON  
TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2025**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at 2:00 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, Interim County Administrator  
Joe Casey, Interim Deputy County Administrator  
Denise Riden, Civil Deputy County Attorney  
Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

Attendees: Chuck Potucek, City Manager of Sierra Vista

Chairman Antenori called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

***ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION***

**Board of Supervisors**

1. Discussion and possible direction regarding the Flood Control District update.

Jackie Watkins, Engineering and Natural Resources Director, presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Ms. Watkins outlined the priority for flood control projects to minimize flooding impacts on roads, emphasizing cost-effective, data-driven approaches. She also discussed the flood control district's budget, which including operating costs for programs like the National Flood Insurance Program and storm sewer systems, while exploring potential partnerships with National Resources Conservation Districts (NRCD) for watershed health initiatives.

The Board and staff discussed the possibility of using free or low-cost labor from property owners for watershed health projects, such as building check dams, with support from NRCDs. The Board and staff will explore the legalities and consider working with NRCD to ensure proper execution of these projects while benefiting flood control efforts.

Ms. Watkins shared current and proposed flood control project locations, noting that several are being eliminated while a watershed study for the Douglas Basin is being considered. She emphasized combining flood mitigation efforts with road improvements, highlighting roads like Washington Avenue, Kansas Settlement, and Central Highway as areas frequently impacted by flooding.

Ms. Watkins explained that the Coyote Wash project, which began with studies in 2015-2016, is moving into the construction phase by July with support from state and federal grants. She stated the project will use a former gravel pit to slow and infiltrate urban runoff from Sierra Vista, aiming to reduce flooding and erosion. Chuck Potucek, City Manager, Sierra Vista, noted that the wash in question has experienced deep erosion, but detention basins built on Fort Huachuca over the

years have helped slow water flow. He stated that some private property owners may have benefited, the overall impact has been a public benefit by reducing flooding.

Ms. Watkins explained that a diversion channel from Coyote Wash will direct low flows into an old gravel pit to help restore the natural water flow. She stated the project is designed to slow water and reduce flooding on Mosen Road, with federal funding requiring environmental clearance and alternative site analysis.

Ms. Watkins described the geologic analysis used to determine optimal recharge locations, including boreholes to test soil and water infiltration. She stated the team looks for areas without clay or rock layers to ensure effective groundwater recharge. She noted previous studies in Palominas showed that natural channels and infiltration basins with trenches work best. She stated that data will be reused for future projects in the San Pedro area, including Willcox and potentially the Douglas Basin.

The Board and staff discussed the Bisbee Effluent Project, which is currently in the property acquisition phase with 30% of design work completed. Ms. Watkins stated the plan involves using treated water in a retention basin to recharge the aquifer, not discharging directly into the river. The Board raised concerns about pharmaceutical contaminants in the water, and staff noted the need to follow state and federal safety standards.

The Board and staff discussed the Bay Acres flood control project and concerns were raised about the estimated \$15 million cost. The Board considered placing the project at a lower priority pending further funding opportunities and public input.

The Board and staff discussed the Leslie Canyon Pond project, which is located north of Douglas. Ms. Watkins stated the project involves removing a dam from its jurisdictional designation and repairing the berm to address safety concerns related to downstream flooding.

Ms. Watkins discussed the Willcox Regional Flood Mitigation and Groundwater Recharge project, which involves a watershed study for the entire 1,694 square miles of the Willcox basin. She stated the study aims to identify locations for recharge basins that will both decrease flooding and support groundwater recharge. She stated the study will be completed in October, with a focus on the Willcox and Sunsites areas, using data on water flow depth and velocity to guide the next steps for flood control and recharge infrastructure.

In response to the Board, Ms. Watkins explained that solar farms are required to conduct hydrology studies to ensure they don't increase flooding offsite. She stated if a retention pond is proposed, infiltration testing is done, no soil testing is required after installation.

Ms. Watkins explained that the Rucker Creek watershed study, funded by the Corps of Engineers, is being conducted with 100% funding due to Ifreda being an economically disadvantaged area. She stated the study, split into two phases, will first analyze Rucker Creek's sediment balance and later focus on recharge locations to address flooding. She explained that Pomerene Road watershed study aims to address flooding issues over the road, with citizens' concerns prompting the investigation into upstream solutions to reduce flooding.

The Board and staff discussed various water management initiatives, including

involvement in the Upper San Pedro Partnership, a coalition of 20+ agencies contributing to research and projects along the San Pedro River. Ms. Watkins stated the funding for projects is supported through partnerships with local agencies and contributions, with the goal of securing an endowment fund for monitoring and maintaining these projects. Ms. Watkins stated the Fort Huachuca Central Landscape offers potential for grant funding in the Douglas and Wilcox basins, supporting infiltration and water conservation efforts. Ms. Watkins stated Sulfur Springs Water Alliance focuses on projects to improve infiltration across the region.

Chairman Antenori adjourned the meeting at 3:01 p.m.

APPROVED:

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Frank Antenori, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board