***Colorado Association of Conservation Districts***

***Board of Directors Meeting Minutes***

***October 20, 2021, via Zoom Meeting***

***Attendees:***

*Scott Jones, CACD President - Colorado River Watershed*

*Tyler Neely, CACD Vice President - Rio Grande River Watershed*

*Jim Cecil, CACD Director - Republican River Watershed*

*Charlie Carnahan, CACD Director - Upper South Platte Watershed*

*Nick Charchalis, CACD Director – North-Platte/White-Yampa River Watershed*

*Gary Thrash, CACD Director - San Juan Basin - CO NACD Alternate Representative*

*Mike Cleary, CACD Director - Gunnison Dolores Watershed*

*George Fosha, CACD Director - Upper Arkansas River Watershed*

*Bob Warner, CACD Alternate Director - CO NACD Representative - NCF Trustee*

*Bobbi Ketels, CACD Executive Director*

*Brett Moore, CACD Legislative Liaison*

***Absent:***

***Guests:***

*Clint Evans, NRCS*

*Randy Randall, NRCS*

*Les Owen, CDA*

*Cindy Lair, CSCB*

*Noah McCord, CSCB*

***Call to Order:***

*The meeting was called to order by* ***Director Jim Cecil*** *at 7:30 AM after establishing a quorum.* ***Director Jim Cecil*** *asked for any additional agenda items. Without any additional agenda items, the board agreed to move forward with the agenda.*

***Prior Meeting Minutes:***

***Director Jim Cecil*** *asked for a motion to approve the* ***September 2021*** *minutes.* ***Director George Fosha*** *made the motion to approve the minutes and* ***Director Charlie Carnahan*** *gave the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the CACD BOD’s* ***September 2021*** *minutes was* ***passed****.*

***NRCS Update- Clint Evans & Randy Randall:***

*Clint stated that to allow for more engagement with the Districts to review conservation plans, he is working on a draft memo that he will route to Cindy and Bobbi. Bobbi can share it with the Board. He hopes to have the memo out just before or shortly after the CACD Annual meeting. Reviews can happen in a regular meeting or in an executive session with the use of numeric identifiers without using producer names in the meeting minutes. Cindy will review the Colorado Open Record Acts for issues with someone requesting the information. Clint feels it should still be protected by the Federal Statutes (1619).*

*NRCS did receive their initial budget allocation under the Continuing Resolution. They are funded until December 1, 2021.*

*Last Tuesday, Range Conservationist, Josh Tashiro from Canyon City and Clint participated in a Cattleman-to-Cattleman video in Fountain CO at the Hannah Ranch. It featured the Ranch and their history on use of conservation easements and NRCS programs. It will air sometime this fall or early next year. When the video is available Clint will send it to Bobbi to share with the Board.*

*Randy added to Clint’s covid update information. He stated that some of the concerns and challenges they are facing is the increase in transmission rate and the need to decrease the offices to the 25% occupancy. Some people have been slow to get their vaccinations, but most are getting their shots. Some employees have requested medical or religious exemptions and those requests are in process. The exemption decisions are made at management levels above Clint and Randy. Colorado is in the top 20% of covid transmissions. Randy encouraged Board member to reach out to him with any questions.*

***CSCB Update – Cindy Lair:***

*Cindy opened by saying that there is an open invitation to anyone interested in being on the Soil Health Advisory Committee. She refers to the Committee by the acronym SHAC. The deadline is Nov. 30. CACD has two positions on the Committee. She would like to know, by Nov. 30, who from CACD will be fill the positions. CSCB has two positions that will be filled after the election is complete. Two CSCB positions are up for election, one in the South Platte and one in the Colorado River Basin.*

*The Soil Health Stimulus money (SB235) put $2M in the soil health program and $3M in the Acre3 program. They have put together a robust package on how Conservation District can participate in implementing STAR locally. There is funding for capacity building that will help Districts serve the needs of the program. Seventeen Districts have been notified that they were chosen to participate in the program. Those not chosen received a letter of their status. They received twenty-two applications. It was a difficult decision on how to award the funding. They looked at the geographic diversity, which Districts were willing to cove another District (with that District’s permission), chosen Districts also had to be in good standing with the State and able to function as a local government. Current funds available have been committed. CSCB has a list of interested Districts and as more funding is available, they hope to accommodate Districts that have expressed interest. There are four entities that have expressed interest in participating. They are Colorado Corn, Dolores River Water Conservancy District, the Audubon Conservation Ranching Program, and the Southern Utes.*

*CSCB, CACD and NRCS have been partnering on a legacy conservation video about the Bob Warner Ranch. Cindy has asked Christy Bode the videographer, to have the video ready for the CACD Annual Meeting in November.*

*CSCB is working on the next Conservation Board meeting. Due to cost associated with an in-person meeting, which is their preference, they will hold the meeting virtually on November 10. The following meeting will be in January, most likely in Broomfield.*

*Cindy stated that consolidation of Conservation Districts has an incentive of 3 years of double Direct Assistance funding. The Rio Grande Watershed has asked if this could be a permanent offer. The CSCB Board is going to study this issue in sub-committee. This will be a topic at the next CSCB Board meeting.*

*Cindy, Les, Sam Anderson and Jordan Beasley have been working on the Natural and Working Lands Climate Strategic Plan. On October 28 at 3:00 there will be a stakeholder outreach meeting via Zoom. She will post the link. They are asking for the ag community input on where they are mitigating greenhouse gasses, etc.,*

*and how they can be incorporated in a strategic plan that is meaningful to the agricultural community.*

*The Ag Pro office has posted a position for a policy advisor to the Department on drought and climate resilience issues.*

***Director Gary Thrash*** *asked Cindy if the positions on the Soil Health Advisory Committee must be board members or, since they are an Association, can they appoint a District Supervisor to represent CACD. Cindy will check on the wording of the Bill. Les followed up and noted that the Bill language does say* ***two Board members of the CACD or its successor organization****.*

***Director Nick Charchalis*** *stated the CACD fought hard to get the two positions on the Committee. He feels the Board should do what they said they would do. Later they can discuss an emissary for the positions.*

***Bobbi Ketels*** *asked Cindy if the two Board members are required to complete the on-line application for the committee. Cindy stated that it is not required but she would like them to.*

***Director Mike Cleary*** *asked where and when the meetings will be held. Cindy replied that they will be held virtually and quarterly. Mike asked about a more specific date such as the 1st Monday of the quarter, so it will not be subject to change. Cindy agreed and will work to confirm a specific date and time. Les added that the statute says the Advisory Committee shall meet with State Conservation Board at least four times annually.*

***Director George Fosha*** *asked Cindy is she had an idea of how many Districts have a need or desire to consolidate. Cindy replied that there are several Districts interested in consolidating. Right now, there are three or four Districts having the conversation including the South Platte area and the Colorado River area. These consolidations were being discussed before the Conservation Board discussions about double assistance. Clint mentioned that there is an additional Conservation District that encompasses six ranches, and they may be interested in consolidating with El Paso County.* ***Director Nick Charchalis*** *added that there are several Districts struggling in the Upper Arkansas as well. How these consolidations will affect CACD dues collection was discussed.*

***Director Jim Cecil*** *asked if the Board could have the names of the Districts that were chosen for the STAR program. Cindy will supply the names in the chat box.*

***CDA Update - Les Owen:***

*Les gave an update on SB-234, Drought Grant funds. CDA received ninety applications for a little over $8M. The grant is for $1.5M. The Review Committee is currently going over the applications. They will meet next Monday to discuss which projects to fund and forward the recommendations to Commissioner Greenberg. They hope to notify applicants of their status within 2-3 weeks.*

*Later today there will be a Zoom meeting for the Western States on Waters of the US. Each State will be allowed 3 minutes to speak. Other Colorado State agencies have asked CDA to be the spokesperson for Colorado. Colorado will make the point that all ag exemptions should be retained. Other points will include pushing for more clarity and certainty when identifying a significant nexus. As a whole, the State supports CDPHE’s idea of a nexus. EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers will have a lot to say. There will be more stakeholder outreach sessions that will be open to everyone.*

*The GMUG draft plan is out for comment until November 12.*

*Les addressed the Wolf Release Plan. The Stakeholder Advisory Group meets next week, and the Technical Working Group meets this week. There will be a habitat suitability map presented at the Advisory Group meeting. The discussion will start with what considerations are there for; where wolves will be released, when do they start the release, how many will be released, what will the pace be, at what number do they stop, etc. Livestock interactions along with compensation will be discussed. Minimization and compensation discussions are always contentious. Pro wolf groups feel that for a livestock producer to be eligible for compensation certain conflict minimization efforts must be implemented. CDA is against that. Consideration for recommendations that come from the group will be the responsibility of Colorado Parks and Wildlife.*

***Director Nick Charchalis*** *asked if there will be additional meetings on the Western Slope. Les stated that next Wednesday there is a meeting in Glenwood Springs, November they will meet in Colorado Springs, and December’s meeting will be in Denver. Les expects more meetings will be held on the Western Slope and SW Colorado. The Group will be meeting monthly for the next year.* ***Director Charchalis*** *feels that the money compensation is the biggest issue. Proponents feel that it would be easy to come up with $40M for compensation. Les added that other States that have compensation for losses, none of them make the rancher whole with the losses. He feels Colorado needs to do just that. Indirect impacts will need to be compensated as well. Nick pointed out that the industry standard for loss is 2%. Once the wolves are released, it should increase to 5% and they should compensate all ranchers for the difference.* ***Director Mike Cleary*** *concurred with Nick’s comments.*

***Legislative Update - Brett Moore:***

*Brett reported that the Water Resource Committee will meet next Wednesday to review seven* ***draft*** *Bills that will come out at the next Legislative session. The Legislative session is 84 days out and starts January 12. This will be Jerry Sonnenberg’s 16th and final session and CACD might want to do something to recognize that. Brett will prepare a ranking for Legislator of the Year award so the Legislative Committee can select one at the Nov. 3rd committee meeting. The Policy Book is in good shape. The CACD is running an amendment that will be presented at the annual meeting. The amendment deals with the CACD’s Resolution follow up and communication process. A tally has been made of outstanding resolutions and we are going back to address the ones we can, Brett added. The Resolution will add an Action Item Appendix to the Policy Book that all Districts can review.*

*Brett spoke to Jordan Beasley, Cindy and Les about the District Grant Program that is sunsetting. We will need to re-up the program either through a Bill or another process. After funding was restored in 2011 and 2012, it has basically remained static. He will be working closely with Jordan to make sure the grant stays in place.*

*After the $15,000 funding was given to each District, the Department asked that Districts provide a report on how the funds were used. They would like to know if the funds provided leverage for work on the ground. Les will be making a request to the Districts to send pictures and a brief narrative on the work Districts are doing on the drought realm. CDA can then report back to the Legislature on Bill 234, and the excellent work the Districts have done with the funds. He thinks additional drought funds are on the minds of some legislators. Funding is limited by TABOR.*

***NACD Update – Gary Thrash and Bob Warner:***

***Director Gary Thrash*** *reported that NACD has a sunset on any policies so challenges must be in by November 5. They will be sending out a link to see what policies have been challenged. He will forward the link when it receives it. The Council on Environmental Quality is reviewing regulations on The National Environmental Policy Act. NACD is in discussions on the regulation changes, through the Public Working Lands Group, which may occur with the NEPA. NACD is also working with the Army Corp of Engineers and EPA on WOTUS. Coming up November 18 there will be a forestry working group online seminar with the USFS. Friends of NACD has a district grants program open nationwide and will award eight grants in 2022. NACD upcoming meetings include the Annual meeting in February in Orlando, Fl., the Summer meeting will be in July in San Juan, Puerto Rico; and next fall the SW Regional meeting will be in Maui, HI.*

**CACD Programs Update:**

Bobbi added to the report Randy provided on the Demonstration Agreement. Bobbi will submit a formal letter requesting the in-kind match for the 25% match. She and Petra will be working on an announcement to the Districts. NRCS does not have a requirement that the application process be competitive, but the Board needs to be thinking if it should be on a first come first serve basis or another process for award. Currently the goal is seven projects with a limit of $10,000 per project. If the program is successful, there is a possibility that NRCS will add funds to the program. Bobbi is ready to submit to NRCS for reimbursement on the education workshop grant. Because QuickBooks online does not work the same as the desktop version, she has had challenges breaking out her time for this project. Once this is resolved, she will complete the invoicing. Bobbi would like to provide education and outreach funding to the 17 Districts that were chosen to participate in the Soil Health Program (STAR) through the NRCS education workshop agreement. She is working with Phil Brink and CCA on the funding ($14,000) that was previously approved by the Board. She will send the Board the financials, prior to the Annual Meeting, so they are aware of what will be presented at the meeting.

The Annual Meeting agenda has been emailed to all Board members. Monday November 15 the CACD/CSCB meeting will be held from 10:0-12:00, the CACD Board meeting will be from 1:00 – 3:00, the Resource Committee Chair meetings will be from 3:00-4:00 (Bobbi is working to make sure there will be a quorum at these meetings), the newcomer meeting will be held at 4:00-5:00, and at 6:30 there will be a combination of three Resource Committee meetings, (Water, Energy and Education). Tuesday November 16 the Soil and Land Committee will meet at 6:30. Wednesday November 17 the District and Financial Committee will be at 6:30. Thursday November 18 will be the general membership meeting at 6:00. Swearing in of officers will be at the November Board meeting Monday the 15th. Friday the 19th is the CACD/CDA award ceremony, and the Poster Contest awards. A final agenda for Friday is not firm yet. Bobbi suggested that the scheduled guest speakers give their planned presentations on Zoom in December or January during the evening. She will discuss schedules with the presenters.

**Director Jim Cecil** asked how much money Bobbi is thinking they give to each of the 17 District in the STAR program. Bobbi replied she was thinking of $1,000 each for the education piece, however since the Annual Meeting will be virtual, CACD could give more but that would be a decision made by the Board once they have final numbers.

**Camp Rocky & Envirothon Updates: Noah McCord**

Noah stated that the Camp Rocky registration will be early this year. They plan to open registration in January. Every year there are core topics for Envirothon with a current topic for each year. This year the current topic is ***Waste to Resources***. The entire guide has not been released, but it is more related to States that have navigable waters, and it talks about waste capture. It would be more of a science project for Colorado students. He would like to hear opinions from the Board. **Director Nick Charchalis** would like to have more participation from Colorado schools. He gave Noah a couple of suggestions for contacting school science departments. He added that it would be nice to have adaptions of the current topic that is relatable to Colorado. It is a great program and CACD wants to help increase participation.

**Financial Report Ending 9-30-2021 – Bobbi Ketels**

***CACD FINANCIAL SUMMARY: 09-30-2021***

***Beginning Balance in checking on 09-30-2021, $153,223.45***

*Checks/Payments Cleared -$14,414.34, Deposits & Credits Cleared $9,250.00*

***Statement Ending/Cleared Balance in Checking as of 09-30-2021 $148,059.11***

*Total Uncleared Transactions = -$9,740.52*

***Ending Register Balance as of 09-30-2021 $138,318.59***

***Reserve Total $41,075.15****\*To be transferred to a US Bank Savings Acct*

*2020 Estimated Funds Rolled Over & Designated for Youth Programs* ***$9,232.29***

*Final Breakdown to be reported in Sept Financials \*after Camp Rocky Final Expenses/NRCS Reimb*

***NOI as of 09-30-2021 $88,011.15***

***Credit Card Beginning Statement Balance as of 10/06/21 $987.15***

*Charges Cleared $380.25, Credits/CC Payments Cleared -$987.15*

***Credit Card Ending Statement Balance as of 10/06/21 $380.25***

*Total District Dues Paid as of* ***10/20/21 $57,000.00*** *(membership invoiced (76) $90,000.00)*

*Total District Dues Paid as of* ***10/06/20 $50,850.00*** *(up by $6,150.00)*

***Grand Total District Dues PD in 2020 $55,900.00***

***UARRP Activity 09-30-2021 YTD:***

*Total pass-through income $74,878.29*

*Total pass-through expenses -$74,878.29*

***Total CACD Income Earned YTD $4,573.91***

*(Includes 5% Admin & Payroll Reimb)*

*Balance of UARRP Federal Funds Available $37,149.02 from Mod #2 – There will be no Mod #3. CACD contract will end once this balance is expended, or by 12/31/22.*

***Open Invoices:***

*(7) Total $19,010.26 As of 9/30/21 – UARRP & NRCS*

***Profit & Loss / Balance Sheet:***

*P&L Sept 2021* ***$566.18*** *- P&L Net Revenue YTD 9-30-21* ***$4,822.14***

*Balance Sheet = \*Accts Receivable* ***$19,010.26*** *- Undeposited Funds* ***$2,400.00***

*Net Revenue YTD 9-30-21* ***$4,822.14***

***US Bank PPP Loans:***

***2020: $11,257.50 (SBA PPP Pmt -CARES Act) –*** *Loan Forgiveness Approved – Balance $0*

***2021: $11,257.00 (SBA PPP Pmt -CARES Act) –*** *Loan Forgiveness Approved – Balance $0*

*Bobbi thanked Bob Warner for his sponsorship of the virtual annual meeting for 2021.*

***President Misc. Discussion and Updates:***

***Bobbi said that CACD, through their sponsorship fee, have two tickets to the CAWA meeting. If a Board member would like a ticket or if there were a producer, they would like to receive a ticket, please let Bobbi know.***

***The next Board meeting will be November 15, 2022, at 1:00 pm. The next Legislative call will be Nov. 3.***

*Respectfully Submitted,*

***Bobbi Ketels***

***CACD Executive Director***