

Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
October 15, 2014 @ 7:30AM
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Via Teleconference

Attendees:

Gary Moyer, CACD President
Don McBee, CACD Vice President
Gary Thrash, Director
Anthony Lobato, Director
Scott Nocks, Director
Jim Cecil, Director
Charlie Carnahan, Director
Brett Moore, CACD Lobbyist
Bob Warner, NACD Alternate Board Member
Elise Boeke, NRCS Acting State Conservationist
Larry Sweeney, CSCB Board President
Sharon Pattee, CACD Executive Director

Absent:

Brian Starkebaum, Director
Susan Raymond, Director

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by President Gary Moyer at 7:34AM after establishing a quorum. Moyer called for any additions to the agenda, and hearing none, moved on with the agenda.

Prior Meeting Minutes:

President Gary Moyer entertained a motion to approve the September 2014 Minutes from last month's teleconference call. Scott Nocks made the motion to approve the September Minutes and Don McBee provided the second. Without any further discussion the motion to approve the August 2014 Minutes passed unanimously.

Legislative Update:

Brett Moore started his Legislative Report with comments on the interim meeting of the Water Resource Review Committee that he attended, with six bills that will go to the Legislative Council. The Leg Council will probably move forward the bills that have good bi-partisan support. Brett next addressed the status of the CO State Water Plan, that the draft was due December 14th. He asked if any of the CACD Board Directors had attended one of the scheduled stakeholders meeting in the past few months; several Directors mentioned that they had. The final Plan would be unveiled in 2015, and would most likely end up being a "guide" for the Legislature, unless there was further Legislative action. These CWP meetings were mandated, including Basin Implementation Plans. Gary Moyer commented that CACD's Policy, approved by the CACD membership, strongly supported the Prior Appropriations Doctrine and also supported developing water storage plans. CACD has attended several meetings of the CO Ag Water Alliance.

Brett then moved to the subject of the Governor's twenty-one member Oil and Gas Task Force, which had come out of a compromise with House Rep Jared Polis to pull the oil and gas initiatives off the November ballot. This group was to provide recommendations to the Legislature. The members of this task force were mainly comprised of Hickenlooper and Polis supporters, with minor representation from Ag related persons, with Rocky Mountain Farmers Union being one of the few. It was mentioned by Gary Moyer that CACD has strong private

property rights Policy, and that one of the 2014 Resolutions that was coming forth from the Watershed level, and would be heard and voted on at the upcoming CACD Annual Meeting ,was about developing CACD Policy on oil and gas issue. Don McBee asked about a recent survey that he saw on “Watershed Health”. No one was able to comment on that, so Don said that he would research it further.

With several Resolutions coming up from the Watersheds regarding CACD lobbying for additional funding for the Districts statewide, the conversation moved to discussing what the best way to go about that would be in the coming 2015 Legislative session. This will be a big topic of discussion in the District and Association Outlook Resource Committee hearing in Loveland, on November 11th. There would need to be much “homework” done, with important statistics gathered and reviewed, before going in front of the Legislature.

CO State Conservation Board Updates:

Cindy Lair, Program Manager for CSCB, was on vacation, so Larry Sweeney, President of the CSCB provided updates. Larry commented that CSCB would gladly assist CACD on obtaining facts and figures for the request for additional funding in 2015.

Larry moved on to mention how a phone call initiated by CACD and CSCB to John Salazar, Commissioner of Agriculture, had resulted in immediate “fixes” to the financial program problems that had resulted in a delay of Direct Assistance, District Technician, and Matching Grant money reimbursement and funding delays. Larry briefly touched on the subject of Matching Grant funding being used for “emergency” needs by a District. He reminded the group that it wasn’t a good idea for CSCB to decide what would constitute as an emergency.

Gary Moyer asked about CSCB’s responsibility in paying for District consolidation costs, because he had been in conversations recently where that subject had come up. Larry responded that, yes, CSCB would in fact pay for the expenses incurred by one District consolidating with another.

Larry ended his report with the fact that it is CSCB’s turn to Chair the annual joint Board meeting in November, in Loveland, and is making preparations to do so. This joint Board meeting will start at 9:30AM on the 10th of November.

NRCS Updates:

Elise Boeke, from Utah and the current acting State Conservationist for Colorado until the first of the year, introduced herself to the group. She was busy getting up to speed for her 120 day stint in Colorado.

Elise Boeke then moved the conversation to the current Colorado RCPP proposals, commenting that the program is a result of the Farm Bill that passed last year. She stated that it is a combination “roll up” of several NRCS programs that encourages new partnerships from groups not previously involved with the NRCS contracts and programs, and that NRCS is looking for more diverse partnerships.

At this point, Gary Moyer told Elise that this was exactly what is fueling a lot of the discord between NRCS and the Conservation Districts in Colorado, and around the country for that matter. It was brought up about CACD’s concern about the seeming change in attitude that NRCS currently has on its relationship with the Conservation Districts. It was again mentioned also that just as soon as NRCS appoints a new State Conservationist for Colorado, CACD and CSCB plan to hold a meeting with that appointee in order to explain the recent negative feedback that CACD and CSCB has been given from the Districts.

It was then that the several 2014 Resolutions were mentioned, that were addressing some of the issues that the Districts have with NRCS at this point. This problem wasn’t going to go away with just a meeting within the state NRCS office. Gary Moyer reminded the group that Astor Boozer, NACD's Western Region Issues Conservationist, would be attending the Annual Meeting in November. She commented that she wouldn’t be able to attend CACD’s Annual Meeting in November, but that Randy Randall would be attending in her place. She said that

there would be a good showing of NRCS staff at the conference, and that she looked forward to meeting the CACD Board sometime soon.

Administrative Updates:

Sharon Pattee, CACD Executive Director, had provided copies of the September 2014 financial statements and asked if there were any questions on the documentation. There was little discussion about the financials, and with that Gary Moyer asked for a motion to accept the September financial statements as submitted. Scott Nocks made the motion to accept, and Charlie Carnahan provided the second. Without further discussion, the motion was passed unanimously by the Board.

She mentioned that she had received the NRCS District Outreach Program expense reimbursements through June 30th, which she had submitted for last month. Sharon let the Board know that the DOP contract expired September 30th, with the contract being only partially completed. After the first of the year, when there is a permanent State Conservationist in place, that CACD may want to look at entering into another agreement with NRCS in this regard.

There was then discussion on recent requests made to her, by a few Districts, about the possibility of waiving the annual meeting registration for District Supervisors that were coming to the Resource Committee meetings. Sharon asked the Board for direction in this regard, cautioning the Board about setting a possible precedent, in that waiving the registration fee in this case would create confusion, much less generate a lack of registration fees that help pay for the meeting overall. Sharon shared with the group that it costs approximately \$40K to \$45K to put on the annual meeting, and is paid for by registration fees and sponsorship contributions. She then gave the Board the current status of the annual District dues paid to date and encouraged the Directors to look to the Districts within their own Watersheds that haven't paid their 2014 dues and to petition them to pay.

Sharon moved on to report that the planning of the 2014 Annual Meeting is underway and going well, as far as she could tell. The Program was almost finalized, and that she was waiting to hear back from just a few speakers. She reminded the Board that the Program Committee is meeting on an almost weekly basis, that the 2014 Resolutions were in the hands of the 2014 Resolutions Committee for assignment, and that the 2014 Award nominations were being reviewed by Gary Thrash and his Awards Committee.

Moving to the subject of the Conservator, Sharon said that she had looked into getting some figures from Print For Less on what it would cost to do only an electronic version of The Conservator, perhaps after the annual meeting. She reminded the Board that the bulk of the expense in putting out an issue lies in the hard copy printing and mailing of the almost 5000 copies out statewide. She hoped to have a bid from PFL by the November Board meeting.

Sharon then brought the Board up to date on what she knew was happening with the Employees Association. She said that Brenda Anderson was continuing to try to get answers from Bethleen McCall on the changes made to the EA By-Laws that were not approved by the EA membership, as far as she knew. She has received no communication from Bethleen in this regard. Sharon stated that she was going to provide a meeting room on Wednesday, November 12th, at the annual meeting for the District Managers to meet and try to get things sorted out, and made it clear that this was not an Employees Association meeting. Several of the BOD commented that they sincerely hoped that the certain District Managers would hopefully get to the bottom of the EA dysfunction and move forward in a healthy and collaborative way, being affiliated with CACD. Sharon reported that she had been invited to attend a meeting at the State Land Board office in Denver, regarding proposed changes to their grazing rates on state land leases. She will be sending out their proposal for the Districts to review by Friday, October 24th. Comments by interested parties were due back to the SLB by October 31st.

The discussion then moved to the 2015 Annual Meeting site options—specifically Snowmass, Beaver Creek, and Vail, given that the meeting is due to be on the western slope. She will be getting bid information from Conference Direct within the month and will bring it up at the next Board meeting in November, in Loveland.

Sharon concluded the Admin portion of the meeting with thanking the Board for allowing her to attend the NACD Executive Directors meeting in mid-September and gave a quick review of the highlights of that meeting.

President's Updates:

Gary Moyer provided his report on the NACD Southwest/Pacific Region Meeting which was held in Portland, OR, last month, highlighting the unanimously passed Resolution to NACD regarding the Region's position against the proposed changes by the EPA on the Waters of the US issue.

The group was then brought up to speed with respect to the "Ask CACD..." teleconference calls that had taken place in the past several weeks with the western slope Watersheds/Districts. Overall, Moyer felt that these calls worked out well, although District and Board member participation could have been better. The conversations that were had proved to be enlightening as far as the broad range of misconception about funding, policy, administration, and communication between CACD and the Districts. Sharon commented on the seemingly uninformed Board Supervisors, realized due to perhaps a lack of communication/information flow from the District Manager to their Boards. If Board Supervisors don't receive the information that CACD is sending out, then there is a disconnect between CACD and the District Board members. It was determined that, after the first of the year, that there would be the same "Ask CACD...." teleconference opportunity provided to the Front Range area of the state.

Moyer then reported on the status of the 2014 Resolution process and the Resource Committee meetings to be held in Loveland on the afternoon of November 11th. The Resolutions were in the hands of the CACD Resolution Committee for assignment to one of the five Resource Committees, and then would be sent to the RC's for a quick review, prior to them being sent out to the CACD general membership for review before the 2014 Annual Meeting.

Gary briefly commented on a letter received from Prowers CD about NRCS and stated that, as mentioned earlier in the meeting, these comments would be addressed with NRCS just as soon as a permanent State Conservationist was in place after the first of the year. Also, Gary mentioned the conversations that he had been having over the past several weeks with Scott Nocks and Tracee Bentley regarding some funding assistance to the area victims of the Colbran mudslide. Tracee had reported that she currently was in communication with the Governor's office in respect to the matter.

Adjournment:

There were very brief Watershed updates from a few of the Directors, after which Moyer called for any additional items from the Board. Hearing none, he asked for adjournment, stating that the November BOD meeting would be held in Loveland at the Annual Meeting, at 9:30AM on November 10. Without further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:41AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Pattee
CACD Executive Director