

**Colorado Association of Conservation Districts  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
December 11th, 2019, at 7:30 AM via Teleconference**

**Attendees:**

*Scott Jones, CACD President - Colorado River Watershed  
Mike Cleary, CACD Vice President - Gunnison/Dolores River Watershed  
Jim Cecil, Director - Republican River Watershed  
Charlie Carnahan, Director - Upper South Platte Watershed  
George Fosha, Director - Upper Arkansas River Watershed  
Nick Charchalis, Director - North Platte/White/Yampa River Watershed  
Steve McEndree, Director – Lower Arkansas River Watershed  
Nancy Berges, Director - Lower South Platte Watershed  
Tyler Neely, Director - Rio Grande River Watershed  
Bob Warner, CO Alternative Representative to NACD  
Brett Moore, CACD Lobbyist  
Bobbi Ketels, CACD Executive Director*

**Absent:**

*Gary Thrash, Director - San Juan Basin Watershed /CO Representative to NACD*

**Guests:**

*Clint Evans, NRCS  
Les Owen, CDA  
Cindy Lair, CSCB  
Mark Cronquist*

**Call to Order:**

*The meeting was called to order by President Scott Jones at 7:30 AM after establishing a quorum. President Scott Jones asked for any additional agenda items. Scott moved approval of the minutes further down on the agenda and started with Clint due to time constraints. With no additional requests, the board moved on with the agenda.*

**NRCS Update-Clint Evans:**

*The biggest news for this week is the interim final rule for EQIP is supposed to be published in the Federal register by the end of the week. Out for 60-day public comment period. This will allow them to formally announce the fiscal YR-20 sign up cut off dates for EQIP. They were supposed to have the Ag Conservation Easement Program (ASEP) out about the same time, but it has been delayed and won't be out until early January. NRCS program rules are coming out slow for the 2018 Farm Bill, but once they have those, they will be able to announce each sign up.*

*FSA announced the Conservation Reserve Program sign up which opened this past Monday on December 9<sup>th</sup> and closes on February 28<sup>th</sup>. Clint stated there are about six to eight counties in Colorado that are already meeting or exceeding the 25% cropland enrollment cap. Those counties do have an opportunity; there is a CRP notice #866 that allows for a conservation district to write a letter of support, as well as getting signatures from at least one county commissioner in order to submit the necessary forms to the FSA's county office committee to request consideration to have that percent of cropland cap raised for a given county.*

*There is criteria within that CRP notice #866 that conservation districts can review and look for those opportunities if they can get the support from a local county commissioner and from the local FSA county office committee to submit a request to their state office and then to their national office to get an increase in that cap. Clint does not know what the likelihood is; he knows Baca County was trying to gather signatures yesterday and working on filling out the appropriate forms to submit that request, but from conversations he has had with Farm Service Agency it may not be something that FSA is willing to consider at the present time just because there is a large number of counties across the country that are meeting or exceeding that enrollment cap. Clint stated he just wanted CACD to be aware that the CRP sign up is underway and there are opportunities for conservation districts to play a part in those acre enrollment caps; if they so choose.*

*On the staffing front; as far as staffing changes, they have not made a lot of progress over the last three weeks. They have made some selections and they have several tentative offers out on the street. They have made 10 selections over the last three weeks. Human resources are getting those out to the applicants and so far out of the ten, two have declined because they had already accepted other positions in other states. Right now, they are hitting about 80% on these most recent offers, but they have not seen responses from all the applicants yet. They are trying to get folks hired and boots on the ground, but it is a slow process.*

*Clint wanted to add lastly as a reminder that we had all talked a little bit at the annual meeting about the possibility of developing a student intern program for districts to work with a local FFA Chapter or local kids that have an interest in agriculture. Clint just wanted to put out a proposal if this is something CACD is interested in moving forward with. We have to update our general agreement between CACD and NRCS; if interested we could incorporate that criteria into that standard agreement. This would increase the admin in that agreement. It would be similar to the way we are doing the workshop funding; open to all districts on a first come first serve basis. He does not have any figures pulled together yet as far as funding per district and other details.*

*Clint will get the template he received from Arizona and share with CACD within the next couple weeks in order to have some time to look it over and put together any questions we may have. Clint stated we could talk a little more in depth when we all get together at the stock show meeting. He stated that he is very interested in making this a part of the current agreement if this is something CACD would like to do. President Scott Jones stated he feels it is a great idea to look further into this opportunity.*

**CDA Update-Les Owen:**

*Les put a request out to everyone on the call. He is attending a meeting with EPA leadership next week in Salt Lake City. They are asking for input as to any EPA regulations that are negatively impacting Ag operations. If there are any EPA related regs that anyone is dealing with, please get in touch with Les so he can put together a discussion list for this meeting. Maybe it will be a good opportunity to try to make some changes if it will be beneficial to producers.*

*On the Federal Lands front; there is a lot of the planning processes where they are still in the long process of going through those. There are always a few things in the Big Horn Domestic Sheep realm that are somewhat troublesome and some where they are trying to renew some permits that have sheep concerns where they are just trying to push through. So, some good and bad on this front. Director George Fosha stated to Les that he assumes during the EPA meetings the Waters of the United States issue (WOTUS) will be coming up sometime in discussion. Les said yes, and he would be asking when they may be coming up with their final rule and how similar it looks to what they published a year ago. Les will report on what is discussed at their meeting*

### **CSCB Update-Cindy Lair:**

*Cindy started her update with stating that they have spent a lot of time working on the soil health program that they have been working to create. As talked about at our last meeting the Governor's budget has included a place holder for a soil health program. They have put \$166K in there and right now they have been answering questions for the Joint Budget Committee on this matter. The JBC seems to be pretty positive about it and they have had one hearing on the soil health inclusion in the Department of Ag's budget. They had some very positive questions and she thinks they will probably have meetings with different legislators who want to learn more about it. She thinks they will support it as she has not heard a lot of negative thoughts on it from the JBC yet at this point.*

*With this amount in the budget there is not a lot of money included for on the ground grants at this point. They would be working on hiring a program manager for it and there would be funding where they could enter into a partnership agreement with NRCS to hire a couple of technicians on the ground to work directly with landowners on implementing and planning their soil health activities. This month and next month one of Cindy's goals is to get a couple of proposals written to the non-point source program and also the water conservation board to be able to get some different funds that they could use for grants that would go out on the ground for a year's time. They seem to believe this would be favorable and would not be too hard to get these types of grants funded.*

*Cindy has been in contact with Mike Beacom of NACD to work with them on a Western Wildfire Summit. Right now, it looks like it will be in Denver. They are trying to invite conservation districts from Colorado and other western states to learn more about how conservation districts can play a role in helping with post-fire rehabilitation projects, forest thinning, a lot of pre-fire, post-fire activities on the ground and land management that conservation districts could be creatively partnering on. It looks like this will be in June, but no specific date has been set.*

*CDA does not have a new Governor's Appointee yet for the State Conservation Board. Margaret Lenz will be going off of the CSCB board at the end of the year. She has been a very strong board member for about nine years, and she will be missed. Waiting to see who they will appoint for that. Harold Unwin is also term limited off of the State Conservation Board. They held an election and Don McBee is going to be filling the place for the Lower Arkansas Watershed representative on the state board. Another board position that they had an election for was in the San Juan. Bob Becker had been finishing out a term. Once that term was finished, he had to be in an election for the next go around to serve another term. He won his election and will be able to serve a full four-year term.*

*Cindy is making some changes to Mark Cronquist's position description; changing some boundaries around and looking at coverages within the state to make sure they are appropriately using everyone to their full extent, and also having people be able to work on other projects that benefit the conservation districts as well. A part of this position is going to be youth education as discussed before. Cindy will open this position soon and should be doing interviews in January.*

*Cindy is meeting with Brett Moore and Helen Silver today for lunch; talking more about the soil health program with the JBC and any other relevant discussion points that need to be covered that effect conservation districts. Cindy announced their next board meeting will be held on January 24<sup>th</sup> between 10 AM and 3 PM with a little bit of a different format. It will be in Broomfield at the Department of Ag. Director George Fosha asked Cindy if CSCB has had any involvement with Senator Bennett's proposal on the carbon sequestration. Cindy stated she has looked at it but have not spent a lot of time making comments at this point. She stated she still needs to provide some input to them. George stated he also has not had a chance to read all the way through it but something he feels we all need to keep an eye on.*

Clint had a few updates to share with Cindy. He spoke with Mitzi Jett with Baca County CD and they have recently extended an NRCS offer to their current district technician. They extended an offer to him for a soil con technician position there in Springfield. Baca County CD will be submitting a request to fill two DCT positions. Clint gave her Mitzi verbal concurrence, so he will follow-up with an email to Cindy and Abbey to confirm that he said he would support hiring a couple of DCT's in Baca County.

Clint also spoke with Adam Chambers. They talked about the request and the work Cindy is doing on the greenhouse gas project with the Governor's priorities; looking at how working Ag lands and natural lands may have been under that comment tool that was developed. Adam had reached out and wanted Clint to send a request to his acting supervisor out in Portland. Clint did this yesterday requesting Adam's support to work with them on the greenhouse gas project.

Cindy stated the Governor's office has been working on a greenhouse gas roadmap. Most of it is just to figure out ways that the state can work on greenhouse gas emissions and also mitigate greenhouse gas through different practices and agriculture fits well within a lot of mitigation efforts. Cindy has been participating in their meetings from an Ag perspective, talking about ways to include agriculture activities especially conservation activities.

Cindy stated NRCS has put millions of dollars on the ground in different Farm Bill programs over the years and there is a lot of carbon benefits that have been tracked; no one has really tracked them but CSU has the comment tool that they have developed through the assistance of NRCS and this has been maybe fifteen years ago that they did this and the tool is great for calculating carbons, greenhouse gas reductions and also mitigation through conservation practices. What Clint is talking about is they have an atmospheric scientist on board that works with CSU on the carbon tool and they are able to look at the different practices that have been implemented in Colorado and what is potential out there for future voluntary conservation practices to occur that will not only create a lot good conservation benefit on the ground but have a greenhouse gas reduction as well. This roadmap is mostly going to entail energy and transportation sectors. Cindy sits in on the meetings and listens a lot, but when it comes to the agriculture side of things, she has been providing input to cover that side.

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

Brett reiterated that he will be joining Cindy Lair and Helen Silver for lunch today to review our soil health issues and where we are on that. We also have Ag Council from 1-5pm for their winter meeting for the producer groups to get together and talk about the issues. Brett will be in attendance. Now that we are entering a new year; a couple of house keeping items first for the board members to determine who will be on the legislative committee and on the policy subcommittee for the 2020 year.

The legislative session starts January 8<sup>th</sup> and we are going to start seeing bills coming through fast and furious. All indicators point to seeing some things this year that are going to be more targeted at Ag. This could be in pesticide and herbicide bans or regulations, or animal husbandry, or any other number of issues that may be of concern to our landowners and private property owners. We really need a policy committee that is able to respond quickly to Brett when a bill comes up where we need to take a position, or we need to get somebody down to the capitol, or we need to get a paragraph written so Brett can read it into testimony or if somebody else comes down to read it into testimony. So, in the short-term Brett really needs folks who are able to help him and to give him the support he needs over the 120-day legislative session.

We have a current committee and Brett thinks now is the time for anyone to say if they would like to be on this committee or if anyone would like to step off the committee, now is the time to voice this as well. Nick stated he has been on the committee for a couple of years and he would be happy to step off and make some room for someone else and he can move over to help work on the policy book as a good project that needs

attention. Brett stated to Nick this was a good idea. President Scott Jones read off the list of who was on the committee in 2019. He asked with Nick stepping off if Steve, Jim and George would still stay on. Steve said he would but felt someone else might be able to do better. Scott asked if anyone else had joined. VP Mike Cleary and Director Charlie Carnahan had joined the call. Brett gave a rundown of the policy book revision process and what this could entail for those who join this subcommittee.

Brett stated part of his plan is to continually through-out the year to review where we are with the current resolutions that have passed, stay in communication with the districts on progress and making sure that the policy book is kept properly revised as needed. Scott asked if anyone would like to join Nick on this subcommittee. Director Nancy Berges stated she would like to be on the committee. Director Tyler Neely stated he would take Nick's place on the legislative committee. Directors George Fosha and Jim Cecil stated they would stay on the legislative committee and would also help Nick and Nancy with the policy book subcommittee. Brett stated that he and Bobbi would be working on a proposal where he may be able to carve out an hourly rate for one of his Junior staffers to help CACD with tasks such as the Conservator, social media and other writing and reporting needs.

Additionally, looking forward to the 2020 legislative session; we have a bill in drafting based on policy that came through last year about a tax exemption on fencing supplies. That bill is currently in drafting with Representative Marc Catlin and he has Senator Don Coram and Representative Barbara McLachlan on that bill so far. We are waiting to see the first draft on that. This will check another box on our 2018 policy priorities, and this will give us something to talk about at our legislative session this year that will help our farmers and ranchers in these tough commodity times.

We are monitoring the JBC process and the budget is looking to remain the same as it has in years past, but we are always on the lookout for other opportunities on other ways we can get more funding to the districts; particularly given some of the direction from membership that we received at the annual meeting we will keep an eye on that. George brought up the subject of the reintroduction of wolves into Colorado. Board discussion took place and Brett stated he will reach out again to see if he can promote more engagement with CACD on this campaign. George will work on this as well. Jim brought up the number of signatures needed to get on the ballot. Brett confirmed, stating that this would mean there were enough signatures to get on the ballot.

**Envirothon Update-Mark Cronquist:**

Mark confirmed the 2020 Envirothon dates of April 21-22 and the venue is the Colorado State Fairground Livestock Pavilion. They are currently working on finalizing the materials for the state website with the topic experts. They are developing talking points for sponsorship requests and he stated to the board if they have people or entities that might be particularly interested or well suited for an ask for Envirothon funding he would appreciate hearing about these. They are looking at the volunteer needs for the contest this year which will be a bit different because they will be setting up themselves on Monday the 20<sup>th</sup>. They will need three or four additional people to help with set-up.

The committee is also updating the state rules. There were changes on the national rules surrounding the oral presentation piece and they are working to comply with these rule changes. The committee will be sending those out to the teams that will be participating approximately two weeks prior to the contest. The participants will do their presentations prior to arrival. They will deliver them in flash drive format and then they will use those power point presentations as they give their oral presentations. This is a bit different and we need to be positioned to ask the appropriate questions to make sure the kids did the power points rather than someone else.

VP Mike Cleary asked Mark to confirm his new contact information. Director Nick Charchalis asked who the previous sponsors have been. Discussions took place about possible sources for funding. Mark discussed the sponsorship and other volunteer support received from Smithfield Foods. Mark went down a list of contacts that will take place this year. They are looking for a naming sponsor for down the road to give a financial base for the future. Mark encouraged CACD board members to attend when the committee gives presentations to possible sponsors.

There will also be an email that will be drafted and sent out to the districts for a sponsorship and volunteer request at the district level. Mike asked to confirm if they intend to continue to run under the CACD nonprofit 501(c)3. Mark confirmed the intention to maintain under the CACD umbrella. They would like to continue this for the foreseeable future. Mike gave Mark a couple of prospects for sponsorship sources; The Gates Foundation and John Deere. Mark stated that part of the emphasis in the ask is the need for youth to understand agriculture from a production and economic standpoint. Nick asked more questions about getting more urban kids included in this program. Further discussions took place about the importance of this program for our youth. Discussions also took place on this year's budget. The ballpark figure is \$15 to \$18K.

#### **NACD Update-Bob Warner:**

Bob Warner stated he did not have much more to add to Gary's written report previously submitted via email (included below). He did remind and encourage people to attend the Pacific-Southwest Region meeting which will be the week of September 14<sup>th</sup> in Hawaii. They do not know the exact dates or location yet. Bob offered again to sponsor the dinner cost at the Cattleman's grill during the CACD evening at the stock show. He said he would be happy to pay for the dinner cost for our board and our guests. He also reminded everyone of the NACD Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada February 8-12<sup>th</sup>. President Scott Jones thanked Bob for his offer to pay for the NWSS dinner.

#### **NACD Notes submitted by Gary Thrash:**

##### **Colorado representation at NACD meetings in 2020?**

###### **\*Annual Meeting**

**74th Annual Meeting will be held Feb. 8-12, 2020, at the Bally's Las Vegas in Las Vegas, Nev. Early registration deadline December 14<sup>th</sup>.** The theme, "Conservation Innovation: Working from the Roots Up," exploring innovative techniques for delivering conservation on the ground. I am currently registered to go.

###### **\*Washington D.C. Spring Fly-In.**

**2020 Spring Fly-In is scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2020.** Need to discuss Colorado issues to present to congressional staffs at our January face to face and who to send.

###### **\*Summer meeting in Bismarck ND**

**2020 NACD Summer Conservation Forum and Tour will be held at the Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck, North Dakota, July 18-21.**

###### **\*Pacific/Southwest Region Meeting**

**2020 Pacific-Southwest Region Meeting will tentatively be held in September in Maui, Hawaii. Airfare from Durango to Maui ≈ \$1500.00**

###### **\*Friends of NACD District Grant Program**

RFP NOW AVAILABLE for fiscal year 2020, donations through Friends of NACD will support four grants, up to \$2,500 each, to be awarded at NACD's 2020 Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, Nev.

**\*Discussions on going for a Western Wildfire summit this coming year here on front Range.**

#### **Prior Meeting Minutes and Prior Months Financials:**

**President Scott Jones** asked for a motion to approve the updated minutes for the last three months (Sept, Oct & Nov 2019). **CACD Director Jim Cecil** made the motion to approve and **Director George Fosha** gave the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the CACD BOD's Sep & Oct updated minutes and November 2019 Minutes passed unanimously.

**President Scott Jones** asked for a motion to approve the financials previously presented for Sept and Oct 2019. **CACD Director Jim Cecil** made the motion to approve and **Director Charlie Carnahan** gave the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the CACD BOD's Sept & Oct updated financials passed unanimously.

**CACD FINANCIALS: 11-30-19**

**Beginning Balance in checking on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, \$177,029.05**

**Ending/Cleared Balance in Checking as of November 30th, \$145,866.70**

Checks/Payments Cleared -\$63,690.27, Deposits Cleared \$32,527.92 =**Total Cleared Transactions -\$31,162.35**

Total Uncleared Transactions= -\$5,126.34 Checks/Payments - Deposits \$0

**Ending Register Balance as of November 30th, \$140,740.36**

Reserve remains at \$26,075.15 (remaining payback due to reserve total \$15K)

Funds allocated for AM 2019 \$5,000.00

Funds allocated for AM 2020 \$5,000.00

**NOI as of 11/30/19 \$104,665.21**

**Credit Card Ending Statement Balance as of 12/05/19 \$23,523.00**

**Total District Dues Paid as of 12/10/2019 \$60,700.00**

**UARRP Activity 2019 YTD:** Total pass-through expenses -\$225,347.44

Total pass-through income \$237,240.75

**Total CACD Income Earned YTD 2019 \$11,893.31** (Includes 5% Admin & Payroll Reimb)

Balance of Federal Funds Available \$155,474.88

**NRCS Agreement**

\*2019 Annual Meeting Match Reimb Pending Final – Potential \$25K, 10% Admin \$2500

\*2018/2019 Remaining Funds \$230.07 after receipt of pending reimbursement from NRCS \$1825.77

2018/2019 \$56,100.00 original contract amount – CACD Admin Fees \$5,610.00 earned

2019/2020 Approved Amended Contract \$74,800.00 (CACD Admin Potential \$7,480.00)

VP Mike Cleary asked if there was a P&L for November 30<sup>th</sup> in this packet and stated that there is all the supporting documentation in the packet, but not a P&L and he cannot approve the financials without looking at the P&L and having some footnotes that he can go back and look at. He also stated to get these in the morning to review while trying to listen to everyone can't be done. Mike stated we need some type of protocol where we have a package with some type of thread of continuity from the last package we saw so we can see where we are and he thinks we should address this at the face to face because he is really struggling with financials this whole last year. Bobbi reminded the board that when she was hired, she was instructed to simplify the financial packets and cut back on miscellaneous reports, but that she has no problem to go back to the additional reports. President Scott Jones stated the board would wait to approve the November financials at the January face to face meeting.

**Annual Meeting:**

Discussions took place about the annual meeting and if we should have the 2020 meeting again at the Hotel Elegante. Everyone agreed it was a substantial savings. Attendance was down, but this could be for many reasons. Mike wants clarification on the 10% savings if we do not use a third-party booking company. Scott explained the reason for the third party is the guarantee for the booked week. If the hotel messes up, they have to cover our cost. Scott explained this is why we have always used a third-party company. Bob stated that if we are satisfied with the hotel, he thinks we should not pay the extra 10%. Bobbi clarified that this is not an additional cost to CACD, it is a cost to the hotel.

*Bobbi stated she felt the board should vote as soon as possible about staying at Hotel Elegante. Director George Fosha stated that we could wait for the final changes in the contract and everyone could vote via email once received. Further discussions took place about the annual meeting and Tyler confirmed we are good to go for the stock show signs. Bobbi reviewed costs breakdown for the Hotel Elegante. Discussion took place about the stage setting and that some changes might need to take place for next year.*

**Corporate Fundraising:**

*No Update*

**Camp Rocky:**

*Bobbi received the 2020 contract and needs time to review with Corbin to find out what will be required of CACD with the new Daycare laws for 2020.*

**NW Stock Show Update:**

*Scott stated that Bobbi had shopped hotels. Bobbi stated she had sent these proposals out to the board for review and she gave a rundown of each. Bobbi asked the board for a vote. Director George Fosha made the motion to stay at the Radisson. Director Nick Charchalis gave the second. Motion passes.*

*Discussions took place of what would be going on at the Capitol the morning of the CACD stock show event. Brett stated that typically the Ag Council does a breakfast at the beginning of the legislative session and stated that if we wanted to do something similar, we needed to plan right away. Scott stated the importance of board members having the opportunity of visiting the Capitol; even if we did not try to plan a breakfast. Brett stated we will not know the legislative calendar until around the week of the 13<sup>th</sup>. Scott ran through the schedule for the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> for anyone who wants to come down early to tour the capitol.*

*Nick stated he really enjoyed it last year and encouraged everyone to go. Director Tyler Neely stated he would be interested. Nick thought it would be a good opportunity for those on the legislative committee to take the opportunity to meet with legislators and invite them to lunch if possible. Nick felt we need to take the opportunity to engage the legislators as much as possible. Brett said these are all good ideas, but we probably should not try to do both a lunch and an evening event. Scott said he and Brett would talk as the day gets closer.*

*Discussions took place about staying at Cattleman's or looking at some of the quotes Brett is working on to have a more intimate dinner setting, allowing for better engagement with our legislator guests. Discussions also took place about knowing who your legislators are and seeking them out if we cannot get a more intimate setting for dinner. Scott reminded the board that we take the chance on availability of the legislators to attend. Brett reminded everyone we target those who work in our arena and it is a meaningful opportunity. Jim asked if Commissioner Greenberg was able to attend. Bobbi stated she is confirmed for dinner and the rodeo. The board asked Bobbi to put in a request for the Commissioner to also attend the face to face meeting. Bobbi asked everyone to send her a room count for how many nights everyone needs. Bob will have a dinner cap if we go anywhere else other than Cattleman's, but he is game to go somewhere else if the board decides and, in this case, he will split the meal cost with CACD.*

**President Misc. Discussions:**

*Scott stated that he was not able to go to the CAWA convention and asked if anyone else was able to attend. Discussions took place about thanking them for speaking at the annual meeting. Bobbi asked everyone to take a look at the dates for 2020 board meetings and to confirm at the face to face. Scott stated that he and Bobbi had been discussing ideas for additional help and would like to schedule a separate call with the board*



*to discuss further. Scott will present to the board ideas discussed and further conversations will take place at the face to face in January. Tyler talked about the Rio Grande Watershed quarterly meeting and that they hosted the CO Collaborative for Healthy Soils. Tyler said it was very good and encouraged everyone to attend further scheduled meetings in their area if possible. Jim stated that NACD presented an award to a producer in Nancy's area. Jim attended for Nancy and this was a filmed interview. Jim stated it was very enjoyable and informative.*

*Meeting adjourned at 10:06 AM*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

**Bobbi Ketels**  
**CACD Executive Director**