

**Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
August 12, 2020, at 7:30 AM
via Zoom**

Attendees:

Scott Jones, CACD President - Colorado River Watershed Director
Gary Thrash, Director - San Juan Basin Watershed /CO Representative to NACD
George Fosha, Director - Upper Arkansas River Watershed Director
Nick Charchalis, Director - North Platte/White/Yampa River Watershed
Charlie Carnahan, Director - Upper South Platte Watershed
Nancy Berges, Director – Lower South Platte Watershed
Bob Warner, CO Alternate Representative to NACD
Jim Cecil, Director - Republican River Watershed Director
Mike Cleary – Director-Gunnison Dolores Watershed
Brett Moore, CACD Lobbyist
Bobbi Ketels, CACD Executive Director

Absent:

Tyler Neely - CACD Vice President - Rio Grande River Watershed
Steve McEndree, Director – Lower Arkansas River Watershed

Guests:

Les Owen, CDA
Randy Randall, NRCS
Cindy Lair, CSCB
Noah McCord, CSCB

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. Without any additional agenda items, the board agreed to move on with the agenda.

Prior Meeting Minutes:

President Scott Jones asked for a motion to approve the **July 2020** minutes. **Director Gary Thrash** 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 **July 2020** minutes was **passed**.

Legislative Update – Brett Moore:

Brett Moore reported that he sent the legislative wrap up to everyone. The session was interrupted by covid-19. They did maintain their general funding line items in the long bill. There may be short falls in funding from severance taxes. All the legislative interim committees were suspended this year to save on costs and time. The recess of 72 days pushed back the session. The next session will probably have the concepts that were not addressed this session, come forward. The next 84 days will be spent going around to fund raisers and getting to know people.

Brett noted that the Resolutions for the Policy Book have gone out to the body for review. He would like to hear the feedback when it is available. He thanked the Committee for all their hard work reviewing and providing proposed changes to the Policy Book. Bobbi noted that she has not received any feedback yet. **Director Nick Charchalis** stated that the Douglas Creek CD, backed by the White River CD, submitted a resolution concerned about diversions made pursuant to their water rights, not being recorded in the Division Engineer's database. A letter was sent to the Division Engineer and she responded stating there is a shortage

of personnel in their region and there are not enough water commissioners to get to all locations to record the measurements. They have come up with a plan for self reporting but there must be a protocol on how that is recorded. The Division will work hard with the water users to get the official data entered.

CACD ED Bobbi Ketels will be sending out a Legislative Update later this week. A Legislative Committee meeting was set for Sept. 2 at 7:30 am.

Scott asked Brett about the wolf initiative. He has received an email from Stop the Wolf PAC. He does not believe that this is the official campaign. Bobbi stated that she spoke with Callie, Nick, and Terry Fankhauser with CCA about this issue. Together they came up with an email to send on talking points, but she has not received feedback. CCA will be spearheading the campaign efforts. Director Jim Cecil asked if CACD could send monies to support CCA efforts. This would depend on the legalities and structure of CACD, which is a 501C (3). Brett suggested that CACD speak with their attorney. Brett will also check the laws. Jim Cecil moved to give \$500 to the "No Wolf campaign" if allowed under the non-profit laws. Motion failed for lack of a 2nd. This issue will be addressed again when there is more information available. Much discussion followed.

CDA Update-Les Owen:

Les Owen updated the Board on the CDA covid situation. They are still not working from the office and probably will be working from home until the end of October. They can attend meetings with 10 or less people.

He stated that the NEPA changes were finalized within the last month. They should be filed and in place by August or September. He believes there will be numerous legal challenges filed. He does not expect a lot of changes to agency regulations.

Within the last week, the Fish and Wildlife Service came out for comment on a definition for "habitat." Les will send the announcement to Bobbi. Comments are due September 4. The Endangered Species Act does not define habitat and the regulations do not define habitat, only critical habitat. Habitat must be able to support part of the life cycle of the species.

There have been recent changes on how emergency haying and grazing is authorized on CRP ground. Prior to this it had to go through local and state committees to get approval. It has been changed to operate like emergency declarations made for drought. If the drought monitor indicated that a county has been in D2 or worse for 8 weeks, it is an automatic approval for emergency haying and grazing. This can be done through the FSA office.

The State Drought Plan has been activated. Both Les and Cindy Lair are on the Ag Impact Task Force. If there are drought issues the CACD Board would like brought forward to the administration, they would be happy to share the concerns with everyone on the Task Force.

With reference to the Wolf release, CDA will be doing some outreach when they know what is going on regarding what compensation in Colorado should look like. They will be having stakeholder meetings to determine what would be best.

CSCB Update:

Cindy Lair reported that the next CSCB meeting is going to be Aug. 26 from 1-5 pm. They will hold it as a virtual meeting. They will send the link to CACD if someone would like to attend.

The CSCB has three board positions up for election. Current people in those positions are term limited. They are looking for nominations. It is an election conducted within the CSCB office.

Cindy made the Board aware of the new provision for water management entities that can apply for EQIP funding. Historically near farm project challenges have been problems with an irrigator on the ditch that exceeded the AGI for EQIP. This did not allow the ditch to apply for funds. The guidelines from Washington require every landowner meet the eligibility requirements with normal EQIP. CWCB, CRD, Paul Kehmeier and Cindy have been working to put together language to be sent to Senator Bennett's office to get this changed. They have also been speaking with Aster Boozer, NRCS Regional Conservation Specialist, to change this requirement.

Cindy reported that the Soil Health program continues to move forward even though they were unable to receive funding in the Legislative Long Bill. NRCS will provide soil health technicians to work in the four quadrants in the State. For now, they will hire one soil health specialist to get the program moving. NRCS will pay 75% of that employee's salary and CDA will pay 25%. The Colorado Collaborative for Healthy Soils has been working to get foundation funding through Gates Family and the Wallace Research Foundations. There may be \$100,000 available.

***CACD Director Mike Cleary** advised Cindy that there is a funding need for producers to get their water from a pressurized line to their farm or ranch. There are BOR funds available for large off-farm projects that benefit all users. But funding for getting the mile to mile and a half from the pressurized line to their property is the issue. If all funds for off farm are depleted with funding large pipelines, there could be consequences where the people that need to make the final hook-up and need the funding; funds will not be available. Cindy agreed and stated that Clint Evans understands the issue.*

NACD Updates – Gary Thrash & Bob Warner:

***CACD Director Gary Thrash** reported that he attended the NACD Summer Board of Director meeting that was held virtually on July 20. It had been scheduled to be held in Bismarck, ND. The main discussion centered around a formal statement about diversity, equity and inclusion that should be in all NACD technical assistance grants. Gary feels that CACD should have similar wording in their contracts.*

The NACD Market Place has several promotions right now, including a Cabelas hooded sweatshirt. Gary suggested that CACD look at these items as awards for the annual meeting.

The Annual NACD meeting will be held in New Orleans on February 5 -8, 2021. It will be the 75th Anniversary. The 2021 Summer meeting will be held in Chicago, where Hugh Hammond Bennett signed the first conservation district into law.

Gary also stated that the reorganization of the BLM has been finalized. They are still working on filling positions in the new offices, including Grand Junction, which is scheduled to be the headquarters employing about 40 people.

***Director Bob Warner** encouraged everyone to attend the NACD meeting in New Orleans. He anticipates it to be an excellent meeting.*

Envirothon Update: Noah McCord:

Noah stated that he continues to work with UCCS on planning spaces for a potentially in-person Envirothon. He hopes to know what school districts are planning by October. The next Envirothon could possibly be virtual. Some schools will not have out-of-district travel for the entire school year. He is working with subject matter experts to do some content and lessons that they can use to get additional teachers engaged. They could use this information over the winter and spring preparing for the competition. He is trying to increase the number of teams participating as well. The National Envirothon is asking questions on how Colorado is working on diversity in the schools they are reaching out to. He is looking at how to pull in some of the rural urban interfacing schools. He is getting word out about what CACD and the Districts are doing with relation

to Envirothon. He welcomes thoughts and ideas on what could be added to Envirothon to make it a program that stretches out over a few months rather than just a week.

NRCS Update-Randy Randall:

Randy Randall informed the Directors that **Clint Evans** is still in Texas on detail until mid November. Randy will be Acting State Conservationist starting September 13 until Clint returns. Staff is completing programmatic items. Colorado requested an additional \$3M in easement funding. They are forecasting about \$2M in lapse funds that allowed NRCS to go through and enhance contracts with additional funding. Due to cancellation of events, he hopes to go through and repartition funds relative to Camp Rocky, Envirothon, etc. CACD might want to adjust matching grant opportunities. They are still able to add \$90,000 to that agreement. He would welcome input on adjusting funding categories based on covid.

He reported that NRCS staffing is doing well. There are numerous job announcements out right now. Current staffing is at 202 and they have 3 people coming on next Monday. Staffing level is much better this year than last. By the end of September, they should have 210 staff.

They are in the process of developing the 2021 budget. This budget would include NRCS initiatives and looking at EQIP funding as well as conservation technical assistance funding. He is optimistic that funds will be received early so they can get funds out to producers earlier.

Director Gary Thrash noted that **Chief Lohr** has resigned and asked if the Acting Chief will be there through the election year? Randy stated **Kevin Horton** will be the Acting Chief. Randy does not expect them to replace the Chief position.

Gary also noted that RCPP funds will be coming out. Randy said Colorado has seen some activity with renewals and a couple that were approved.

Cindy stated that the RCPP announcement came out last week and CDA is planning to apply for soil health funding. She said that the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District has \$1M to use as a match. Their money will go on the ground for water quality and soil health. They want to put the funds towards an RCPP application. Randy asked that she fly the application by him. Anyone putting in for RCPP funds should keep them as focused as possible. They can become too diverse. The applications are extremely competitive.

Monthly Financial Update-Bobbi Ketels:

CACD FINANCIALS: 07-31-2020

Beginning Balance in checking on July 1, 2020, \$127,651.78

Checks/Payments Cleared **-\$10,744.77**, Deposits & Credits Cleared **\$6,957.90** (dep=UARRP \$3357.90, district dues \$2600 & NACD \$1000)
(Total Cleared Transactions **-\$3,786.87**)

Ending/Cleared Balance in Checking as of July 31st, \$123,864.91

Total Uncleared Transactions = **-\$6,821.50** (Checks/Payments **-\$6,821.50** - Deposits \$0)

Ending Register Balance as of July 31st \$117,043.41

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

Funds designated for Envirothon 2020/2021 **\$9,806.16** (minus admin \$573.87 = **\$9,232.29**)

NOI as of 07/31/2020 \$81,735.97

New Transactions as of 08/07/2020

Checks and Payments -\$2,317.06

Deposits \$0 (breakdown of deposits=0)

Total New Transactions -\$2,317.06

Ending Register Balance as of 08-09-2020 \$114,726.35

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

Funds designated for Envirothon 2020/2021 **\$9,806.16** (minus admin \$573.87 = **\$9,232.29**)

NOI as of 08/09/2020 \$79,418.91

Credit Card Ending Statement Balance as of 08/06/2020 \$100.00

Total District Dues Paid as of 07/31/2020 **\$44,350.00** (membership invoiced (75) \$90,000.00)

Total District Dues Paid as of 07/31/2019 \$48,200.00 (down by \$3,850.00)

Grand Total District Dues PD in 2019 \$61,300.00

UARRP Activity 07-31-20 YTD:

Total pass-through income \$7,725.95

Total pass-through expenses -\$7,725.95

Total CACD Income Earned YTD 7-31-20 \$944.29

(Includes 5% Admin \$404.29 & Payroll Reimb \$540.00)

Balance of Federal Funds Available \$142,504.85

Mod #2 (additional funds \$120K) will be added in August for additional expenses, including...

Lake County has a set of culverts that they need to replace on the Arkansas river. The UARRP has agreed to help with the replacement cost & has been approved by US Fish & Wildlife to pay out of the UARRP lawsuit settlement. The UARRP portion is \$163,250. *Only \$120K being added now. A Mod #3 will get processed in 2020. The original renewal contract was for \$500K. Renewal contract dates 9-1-2017 thru 12-31-2022

NRCS Programs:

Education Outreach Workshops YTD 7-31-2020:

Workshop Approved, Pending Completion (1) \$5,000.00 (Mesa CD)

Educational Video Approved, Pending Completion \$2500 (Bookcliff Video)

Education Workshops (2) Completed & Reimb to CD in July \$3,974.00

Total CACD Income Earned YTD 7-31-20 \$953.70 (10% admin & salary)

Total District Workshops YTD 7-31-2020 (4) \$8,974.00

Speakership Programs YTD 7-30-2020: *No New Activity

Speakership Meetings Approved, Pending Completion \$0

Speakership Meetings Completed & Reimb to CD in July \$0

Total CACD Income Earned YTD 06-30-2020 \$220.15 (10% admin)

Total Speakership Meetings YTD 7-31-2020 (1) \$1,920.00

OPEN INVOICES

NRCS (12) 2020 YTD *\$18,509.52

*NRCS Reimb Report-Bulking all inv into 1 report submitting 8/12/2020

UARRP (1) 2020 YTD *\$378.00

Total \$18,887.52

P&L July 2020 **-\$4,182.92** – P&L YTD \$12,278.73 (minus reserve \$26075.15= **-\$13,796.42**)
Balance Sheet = *Accts Receivable \$18,887.52 – *Undeposited Funds \$7400.00
(\$2400 District dues recorded, pending deposit *\$5K Warner Ranch Journal entry adj needed & \$3600 deposit posted on 7/3/2020)

\$11,257.50 (SDA PPP Pmt -CARES Act) – (Forgivable SDA Loan) – Forgiveness App Still Delayed/Not Available due to pending government changes in the program as of 8/9/20.

Director Mike Cleary feels CACD should start paying down the reserves.

Bobbi reported that even though CACD sent in the financial information to the CPA, their taxes have not been completed yet. The Accounting office had been closed, and the due date is 8-15. She does not have the return yet but is expecting it soon.

CACD Director Jim Cecil made the motion to approve the financials and **CACD Director George Fosha** gave the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the CACD BOD's August financials was **passed**.

CACD Programs:

Annual Meeting Update:

Bobbi reported on the survey that was sent out. Based on this information she would like to Board to make some decisions today so planning can move forward.

Noah reported that 42 people have now responded to the survey.

26 of 41 stated they plan to attend

13 said maybe they will attend

50/50 split with the meeting being virtual (saying they were more likely to attend)

Session preferences: tie for the business meeting, general assembly, and breakout sessions

Most people were interested in attending the opening session with the Welcome from the President

Noah will send out the breakdown of the other breakout sessions people were interested in. There were 16 suggested topics.

An additional question asked about the willingness, (on a scale from 1-5) to see the session later.

Everyone said 3+. He said it is easy to record the meeting.

95% of the people said they have the capability to live stream this meeting.

50/50 split saying that having a virtual meeting will increase attendance in their District

Most people chose a format that does a combination of morning and afternoon sessions with a few evening sessions spread over 2-3 weeks.

Bobbi asked the Board if they have enough information to make some decisions today on a tentative agenda. Nick stated that the responses gave them a lot of information. Speakers should be chosen soon.

Much discussion occurred with comments from George, Nick, Gary, Scott, Bobbi, and Noah.

Bobbi confirmed that all 5 Resource Committee meetings would be run separately in the evenings over a two-week period with (2) district employee type operation sessions held during the day. With the Resource Committee meetings held at night and all separately, everyone will have an opportunity to participate in each one. The membership meeting will be a separate meeting, also held at night. Awards will be split between evening sessions. The auction will be researched as a virtual auction. Bobbi will send out emails as the meeting scheduling moves forward. Theme and speakers for the meeting will be up to the Committee to decide. Committee members from CACD are Scott, Nick, Gary, and Tyler.

Other:

Bobbi reminded the Board that she is on two NRCS Sub Committees: Working Lands and Source Water. JD is helping with the Working Lands and will represent the entire state for CACD as being on the soil resource committee. She will communicate with the Board should there be something that needs their immediate attention such as a vote.

***Director Nick Charchalis** will represent the CACD Board on the CCHS Soil Health Committee. He will communicate with the Board and make sure comments reflect CACD views.*

President Misc. Discussion and Updates-Scott Jones:

***President Scott Jones** confirmed the next CACD BOD call will be **Sept. 9, 7:30 AM**. Meeting adjourned at 9:52 AM*

Respectfully Submitted,

Bobbi Ketels
CACD Executive Director