

**Colorado Association of Conservation Districts  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
August 18, 2021, via Zoom Meeting**

**Attendees:**

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

**Absent:**

Tyler Neely, CACD Vice President - Rio Grande River Watershed

**Guests:**

Clint Evans, NRCS  
Randy Randall, NRCS  
Cindy Lair, CSCB  
Noah McCord, CACD Youth Programs Director

**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 forward with the agenda.

**Prior Meeting Minutes:**

**President Scott Jones** asked for a motion to approve the **July 2021** minutes. **Director George Fosha** made the motion to approve the **July 2021** minutes and **Director Charlie Carnahan** gave the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the CACD BOD's **July, 2021** minutes was **passed**.

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

Clint reported that they have selected Amber Fruehauf, Resource Conservationist from the Lamar Field Office, for one of the State Level Program Specialists. She is now on the state programs team as the Conservation Stewardship Program Specialist. She is also the lead for the Local Working Group meeting guidance that will be coming out in October. The Local Work Group guidance was not issued for 2021. Numerous Conservation Districts have held their Local Working Group meetings for 2021. NRCS will be issuing what is called a **Local Working Group Tool Kit**. It will contain GIS maps that include information on land use types, acres of crops, numbers for livestock and any priority resource issues, like water quality etc., that have been previously identified for their given county or service area. He thanked Cindy Lair and the CSCB team for their support for facilitating the Local Working Group meetings. The 2022 Local Working Group meetings will use the tool kit preparing for 2023 program roll out.

Current covid vaccination guidance has been received. There is a different process for employees versus partner staff and customers. Partner staff and customers will voluntarily complete a form that they will keep with them. Employees will fill out a certification that will be returned to their supervisor.

Randy added that what is being asked of partners and customers, is that they complete a form that goes through and discloses whether an individual has been vaccinated or not. He will send the form to Bobbi. He has already sent the form to Cindy to share. The intent is employee safety. If an employee is not vaccinated, there will be additional mask and social distancing requirements to make sure the exposure is limited. There will be additional guidance for NRCS personnel that requires unvaccinated employees have a weekly or bi-weekly covid test. There have been many questions from NRCS employees on the procedures. Employees are not being asked to get the vaccine. This is all still very fluid with updates coming on a regular basis.

Bobbi asked Clint and Randy how they feel about the in-person CACD annual meeting. Per the cooperative agreement between CACD and NRCS, if there are covid restrictions, it is her understanding that CACD might not be able to use the agreement funds for the annual meeting expenses. Clint stated that if the level of infection stays high, NRCS will not have approved overnight travel. They might be able to attend the meeting in person if it only requires day travel. There would be a smaller NRCS staff presence at the meeting. There is guidance on mission critical travel so there may be additional restrictions that will be considered later. The NRCS return to work schedule has been delayed from October until the 1<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year. NRCS is still operating at 50% office capacity. FSA is operating at 75% office capacity. Randy said they would look at the virtual/remote opportunities for attendance so NRCS could maximize its participation.

Bobbi asked Cindy the same question. Cindy stated that they are like USDA. They are not being forced to get vaccinated, however in September they will be required to show proof of vaccination. If a person is not vaccinated, masks will be required, and the employee will be required to be tested every two weeks to show they are covid free. In-state travel is not restricted at this time. Right now, CSCB is still planning to have their State Conservation Board meeting face-to-face in Alamosa on Sept. 13 & 14.

Scott asked if CACD has their annual meeting, could there be funding guidelines where they would require guests to show proof of vaccination. Clint replied that if it is not being held in a USDA building, NRCS has no control or authority to require proof of vaccination. Randy added that the only thing that might happen is that CACD be asked to follow CDC guidelines. That could possibly be a hotel requirement.

**Bobbi clarified that CACD would be able to use the cooperative agreement funding if CACD follows the CDC guidelines. Randy said that was correct.** Due to different restrictions on the number of people at a meeting, once the number of attendees is known, Randy would like to know how many people will be attending the annual meeting.

#### **CSCB Update – Cindy Lair:**

Cindy reported that they have hired two new employees. John Miller started on Sept. 16. He worked as a DCT and Salinity tech at the Delta CD office and for NRCS as an engineering tech. He is very familiar with Conservation Districts and what they do. He replaced Alyssa. Garth Schaffer will start on Sept. 20 and will replace Rachel. He has a master's in Ag Economics and a diverse background working in foreign countries. He has done natural resource management and ag work. He will also fill the duties of Communications to help Petra per the agreement with NRCS.

As of Aug. 1, the application process for the soil health program funding opened. Applications will close on September 15. Conservation Districts, along with other entities, will be able to apply for the funds. Sixteen Conservation Districts and four entities, like grower groups, non-profits, tribes, local governments, and

conservancy districts, will be awarded contracts. Colorado Corn has expressed interest in participating and implementing the STAR program and possibly having a partnership employee through the NRCS/CSCB agreement. Colorado Corn is already building a partnership with the Pork and Beef group because they see value in this program. All applications will be ranked, and the 1<sup>st</sup> sixteen Districts will get the stimulus funds. Other grants applied for include the PPP grant through the **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation** and the **NRCS CIG**. If they receive these grants, they fund additional applicants. An announcement will be going out to attract people that might want to serve on the advisory committee for the program. CACD has a couple of positions on that committee.

The **State Conservation Board** meeting and tour will be September 13 & 14 in Alamosa. They have two tours planned. One will be a matching grant tour through the Mosca Hooper CD. They will also have a tour of the acequia system and the improvements in the Costilla CD area. There will be Zoom availability.

Cindy reported that she has been working with the **Natural and Working Lands Task Force** which is a group that is helping implement the greenhouse gas reduction roadmap. Cindy is the CDA representative. The roadmap looks at all sectors, energy, transportation, etc. She is with the natural and working lands part of the group which includes parks and forestry, private and public lands, and agriculture. They are putting together a plan specifically from the climate perspective and how we can implement voluntary, incentive based natural climate solutions. There are several things that farmers and ranchers are already doing to reduce emissions and sequester carbon. There will be a process to review the plan and it will be based on stakeholder input. Cindy suggested that CACD keep this on their radar as landowners and for the CACD/CSCB partnership.

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

Brett reported that it is a slow time of year with little activity. The **Water Resource Committee** has set a meeting schedule. The next meeting is set to be held in Steamboat Springs on August 24-26. The actual hearing is on the 25<sup>th</sup>. He suggested that Board members in that area attend the meeting. There will also be meetings on September 14 and October 27 at the State Capital. He will be following those meetings.

At 9:00 today the **Ag Council Summer Meeting** begins. He will be facilitating a discussion on remote participation. Brett feels that remote participation is important as ag reaches each corner of the State and producers can testify without having to be in Denver. He expects some "push back" after having so many remote testimonies this last session. It seemed difficult to hold Legislators' attention. He would like to have a rural exemption to allow remote testimony.

The CACD Legislative Committee met a couple of weeks ago to review the outstanding Resolutions and what might still need to be accomplished. The Committee has been working on ways to create more transparency on the resolution process.

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

**CACD Executive Director Bobbi Ketels gave the update for Les Owen.**

CDA is ready to open applications for the drought stimulus funds on September 1<sup>st</sup>. He encourages Districts to apply for any drought related projects that can be completed by Sept. 1 of 2022.

Bobbi will send an email to Board members with GMUG information from Les.

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

**Director Bob Warner** reminded the Board of the combined Southwest/Pacific Region meeting in Jackson, WY on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of this month. **Director Gary Thrash** reported that he will be attending the meeting in Wyoming.

He added that **NACD** is trying to obtain health benefits for the dues paying membership. This would include District Supervisors and employees.

The Federal Infrastructure Bill includes funds for conservation. If the Bill is passed, there may be additional funding available for NRCS programs.

The Administrations **30-30 Plan** was discussed at the **NACD** general meeting and at the Southwest meeting on NACD's position. There are several States that have submitted comments on the Plan. There is a discussion on what constitutes "conservation" under the plan. Conservation Districts have asked Bobbi what CACD's position is on the Plan. She would like to let Districts know CACD's position but also let Districts know that they can take their own position if they choose. **Director George Fosha** asked Bobbi to send Gary's NACD letter out to all the Conservation Districts so they would be aware of NACD's position.

Gary added that the State of Arizona submitted a Resolution to get Missouri River flood waters at the Colorado River drainage. Texas has been trying to get Louisiana's Mississippi River water into Texas. He feels we are 30 years out from being able to do that.

#### **ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE**

**Executive Director Bobbi Ketels** reported that she discussed virtual options with CSCB. Due to staffing issues, CSCB will not have the staff to participate in the virtual conference as they did last year. CACD would need to find other sources to support a virtual meeting. They would, however, help with the five resource committee meetings and the membership business meeting. If the meeting is in person, CSCB will be able to help with the resource committee meetings as they have in the past. Bobbi is currently looking for assistance with the general meeting and the Resolution discussions/changes. This involves someone typing the changes into the computer using an overhead screen and reading the Resolutions out loud to the attendees. Mary, from Brett's office, may be able to fill this roll. **President Scott Jones** would like to have the Resource Committee meetings and the one-day membership business meeting, held virtually. Noah will help Bobbi with creating an online registration site.

Bobbi will schedule Annual Committee meetings for Wednesdays, starting next week, if Tyler agrees. Rakeel Sanchez will be representing CSCB on the Committee calls.

Bobbi sent a draft meeting schedule to each Board member and would request that each reply with comments, ideas, or suggestions for the Committee before the first meeting.

#### **CACD Financials Summary Report-Bobbi Ketels:**

**Beginning Balance in checking on 7-1-21, \$163,304.32**

Checks/Payments Cleared -\$10,588.33, Deposits & Credits Cleared \$10,550.00

**Statement Ending/Cleared Balance in Checking as of 7-31-21 \$163,265.99**

Total Uncleared Transactions = -\$4,300.26

**Ending Register Balance as of 7-31-21 \$158,965.73**

**Reserve remains at \$26,075.15** (July payback to reserve total \$15K-Opening up Savings in Aug)

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

**NOI as of 7-31-21 \$108,658.29**

Cleared transactions after 07/31/2021 \$0.00

Uncleared transactions after 07/31/2021 -\$7,671.92

**Register balance as of 08/17/2021 \$151,293.81**

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**Reserve remains at \$26,075.15** (June payback to reserve total \$15K-Opening up Savings in Aug)

2020 Est. Funds rolled over & designated for Youth Programs **\$9,232.29**

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

**NOI as of 8-17-21 \$100,986.37**

**Credit Card Beginning Statement Balance as of 7/08/21 \$3,748.41**

Charges Cleared \$1,005.48, Credits/CC Payments Cleared -3748.41

**Credit Card Ending Statement Balance as of 8/05/21 \$1,005.48**

Total District Dues Paid as of 08/17/2021 **\$46,200.00** (membership invoiced (75) \$90,000.00)

Total District Dues Paid as of 08/17/2020 **\$45,550.00** (up by \$650.00)

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

**UARRP Activity 07-31-21 YTD: NO ACTIVITY THIS MONTH**

Total pass-through income \$0

Total pass-through expenses -\$0

**Total CACD Income Earned YTD \$3,923.16**

(Includes 5% Admin & Payroll Reimb)

Balance of UARRP Federal Funds Available \$53,585.08 from Mod #2 – There will be no Mod #3. CACD contract will end once this balance is expended, or by 12/31/22.

**CACD/NRCS Programs-Revised 2021 Budget (Detailed update coming in separate report):**

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**Open Invoices:**

(4) Total \$1100.00 As of 7/31/21 - Camp Rocky Sponsorships

**Profit & Loss / Balance Sheet:**

P&L July 2021 **-\$11,949.37** - P&L YTD 7-31-21 **\$4,047.26**

Balance Sheet = \*Accts Receivable \$1100.00 - Undeposited Funds \$2,450.00 \*checks not deposited until August.

**US Bank PPP Loans:**

**2020: \$11,257.50 (SBA PPP Pmt -CARES Act)** – Forgiveness App Submitted, pending SBA approval.

Bal shows \$0; Still waiting for a confirmation letter.

**2021: \$11,257.00 (SBA PPP Pmt -CARES Act)** – Application Portal Opened July 16<sup>th</sup>. – On Aug 4<sup>th</sup>, SBA updated the process again. Application in the works.

**Director Mike Cleary** asked the status of the UARRP. **Bobbi** stated that they have \$53,585. left. There will not be a mod 3 on the project. CACD has until 12/31/2022 to spend the funds.

**CACD Programs Update:**

**Bobbi** asked the Board for a vote on the location for the next face-to-face meeting. After a discussion on the topic, **Director Gary Thrash** moves to have the face-to-face meeting in Broomfield at the Drury Inn. **Director Jim Cecil** seconds the motion. **Motion passes**

**CCA Contract:** **Bobbi** reminded the Board that they and NRCS voted on the proposal, which was much like the contract except for the additional legal language. The funds must be expended by May 25, 2022. She has

verified with Randy Randall, that if Phil Brink's mileage and expenses exceeds the \$1400.00, that would be okay. **Director George Fosha** moves to approve and sign the CCA contract as written. **Director Jim Cecil** seconds the motion. There is no discussion. **Motion passes**

Bobbi will send the contract, along with the revised packet for NRCS demonstration projects agreement to **President Scott Jones** for signature.

**President Misc. Discussion and Updates:**

**President Scott Jones** reported that he attended a focus group meeting about the **Wolf reintroduction**. It was a good conversation with a lot of people attending the meeting. CCA brought up the topic of funding, where it will come from and how the funds will be handled. They are visiting with other States about what has worked and what has not worked. A plan for Colorado is being developed. Wolves are on the endangered list in Colorado. Scott invited any Board member(s) wanting to discuss this issue with him outside the Board meeting, to do so. He would be happy to take any questions back to the Wolf reintroduction meetings.

**Director Nick Charchalis** reported that he also attended a focus group meeting on this issue and was given 3 minutes to speak. It was stated that to start, 10 breeding pairs would be enough for sustaining a population. Actual population is expected to be around 500. The reimbursement program has numerous issues including proof and verification of loss. **President Scott Jones** stated that hiring a range rider, paid by the program, was discussed at the meeting he attended.

The next CACD BOD meeting will be a face-to-face on September 15<sup>th</sup> at the Drury Inn in Broomfield.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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