***Colorado Association of Conservation Districts***

***Board of Directors December 2021 Meeting Minutes***

***December 15, 2021, via Zoom***

***Attendees:***

*Scott Jones, CACD President - Colorado River Watershed*

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

*Jim Cecil, CACD Director - Republican River 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*

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

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

*Bobbi Ketels, CACD Executive Director*

*Brett Moore, CACD Legislative Liaison*

***Absent:***

***Guests:***

*Les Owen, CDA*

*Cindy Lair, CSCB*

*Tim Macklin, NRCS*

*Randy Randall, NRCS*

*Technical issues persisted throughout this meeting due to severe weather and high winds.*

***Call to Order:***

*The meeting was called to order by* ***President Scott Jones*** *at 7:35 AM after establishing a quorum.*

***Prior Meeting Minutes:***

***Minutes Tabled*** *Technical issues persisted throughout this meeting due to severe weather and high winds.*

***Western Stock Show***

***Director Tyler Neely*** *and* ***Alternate Director Bob Warner*** *discussed having dinner catered at the Activities Pavilion which turned out to be the Ames Activities Pavilion which is a big white tent on the south side near the south food court.  The White Tent is the only facility available for a catered dinner. Bob suggested we go back to the Cattlemen's Grill.  He also suggested we make up signs that say something like "This portion of table Reserved for CACD Board, CSCB, and invited Legislators and Guests.”*

*He recommends we print up dinner coupons such as "Cattlemen's Grill Dinner and Drink coupon for CACD, CSCB, Legislators, & Honored Guests for January 19 between 5:30 PM and 6:30 PM.  Sponsored by Warner Ranch.”* *Plan to use the west cashier for checkout.  We could also add the location or booth number of the "Grill".  These coupons could be given to our Legislators or guests along with their Rodeo tickets at will-call or whenever they arrive at the Cattlemen's Grill.*

*Bob has been invited to the CCA Awards Lunch at the Double Tree (change of location this year, the old Stouffers or Clarion) rather than the Renaissance.  Their Double Tree room block is no longer available, so it might be hard for CACD to get another hotel this late.*

*Please let Bob, Brett or Bobbi know if you have any other suggestions for our dinner before the Rodeo.*

***NRCS Update:***

***Tim Macklin*** *introduced himself as the* ***Acting State Conservationist*** *for the next 4 months while Clint is on detail as the Acting Deputy Chief for Programs at National HQ. The Federal Government is still under a Continuing Resolution until Feb. 18, 2022, so he has been watching budget meetings. NRCs plans to staff ten additional critical positions over the next few months*

***Randy Randall*** *provided the NRCS report. The covid situation continues as NRCS is transitioning employees back to the office setting during January 2022. The State office still has a cap of 25% of employees working in the office. In some offices, staff is allowed up to between 50 to 75% depending on the covid number in that area. In a few instances, they have asked that more staff be allowed in the office to meet certain goals and have received approval to do so.*

*He is currently reviewing budget items such as the Technician Agreement. They need $1.3M to make that agreement whole. He is working with the CSCB staff to accomplish this and plans to have it funded as soon as possible.*

*He followed up Tim’s staffing report. Typically, there is an attrition of 7-10 employees that retire or leave at the end of the year. Colorado NRCS will be hiring to a staff level of 250 employees.*

*Bobbi informed Randy that she will contact him later about the Cooperative Agreement and ideas she has to finish the contract.*

***CSCB Update:***

***Cindy Lair*** *commented on the possible Bill to extend the Sunset. She feels this is a great time to address the idea of increasing funding. If CACD would like to ask for more operational and capacity funding through direct assistance, she has exceptional stories about how the $15,000 helped districts in a number of ways. She would be happy to share these stories to help the legislators decide about added funding.*

*Cindy acknowledged that the staffing changes happening at NRCS are also taking place in the CDA. Noah has moved to a job with the Department of Safety. They are going to advertise his job. The job will involve education and outreach. Once they start to interview for the job, she will reach out to CACD and see if a Board member would like to be included in the interview process. The State Conservation Board will have four new members. The Upper South Platte (Quint Redmond), Republican and Lower South Platte (Margaret Lenz), San Juan (waiting confirmation), Gunnison (Ray Langstaff). A representative for the Upper Ark is also needed.*

*An emergency CSCB meeting will be held today at 1:00. There is one item on the agenda,* ***District Manager Leadership Training****. The Board will decide on whether to support the financial request for this training. The next CSCB meeting, which will have the new Board members in attendance, will be on January 18 & 19, 2022. Cindy will let Bobbi know how many Board members will stay and attend the CACD awards presentation at the Stock Show Rodeo.*

*Applications for the Soil Health Advisory Committee have been received and they are going through them. Their recommendations will be sent to Commissioner Greenberg.* ***Director Scott Jones*** *and* ***Director Nick Charchalis*** *have volunteered to serve as the CACD representatives on the Advisory Board. They have also received applications from NRCS employees for the one NRCS ex-officio position on the Committee.*

*Applications for the STAR program are actively being processed. The 17 Conservation Districts that are taking part will receive in-person training, if possible, on January 24 & 25, 2022.*

*Bobbi confirmed that CACD and CSCB will not attempt a joint meeting during the Stock Show, but the invitation to all CSCB members still stands and they are welcome to attend the dinner and the show. Cindy offered a meeting space at the CDA offices in Denver if CACD would like to meet at their building. Cindy added that if it could be arranged, there could be a joint meeting on Jan. 19 at the CDA Denver office.*

***CDA Update:***

***Les Owen*** *reported that the latest version of* ***WOTUS*** *is now on the Federal Register and comments are being accepted until Feb. 6, 2022. The State of Colorado will be submitting comments on this version. This version reverts to the rules that were in place pre 2015 with a few changes. Les has not had the opportunity to read the Federal Notice yet. This procedure is step one in the process and will see legal challenges. He will keep track of the information as it comes out and will keep the CACD Board up to date.*

***The Stakeholder Advisory Group for the Wolf Plan and the Technical Workgroup*** *are having joint meetings. They are discussing a livestock compensation program and wolf management. There have not been any major accomplishments or decisions on what to recommend. The statute says there will be a compensation program so it is law that there must be compensation for losses. There is consensus that if livestock is killed, there should be compensation of at least 100% of the value of that animal.*

*Steve Ryder, the State Weed Coordinator, has retired. CDA is currently interviewing for the position.*

***President Scott Jones*** *asked Les about projects that are in the construction phase and if WOTUS will have an effect on the project. Les recommended that the Army Corp be contacted as there may be restrictions.*

*Brett addressed the matching grants line on the Sunset Bill. It expires at the end of 2022 so the 2022 Legislative Session will be addressing this funding. Brett spoke with Jordan Beasley and if CDA would run the Sunset, CACD would support it. If CACD runs the Sunset, they could extend the funding line and attempt to receive additional funding. It would be in the same sprit as the $15,000K given to all State CDs. Jordan said they would support the Sunset part but not the added funding. Brett suggests getting Sen. Donovan and Sen. Sonnenberg to pick up the Bill in the Senate. Brett asked Cindy and Les for their opinions. Les thought it sounded like a good plan to move forward with. Cindy agreed with Les, especially with the additional funding. Cindy suggested that if CACD does request additional funding, it should specify how the funds should be spent by the Districts, such as direct assistance, matching grants, etc. She also offered staff assistance with context on how funding has been spent in the past. Brett stated that he would like to collect stories from Districts on how they spent the $15,000 they received in 2021.*

***Legislative Update – Brett Moore:***

*Brett said that the Sunset Bill for funding programs will be a priority for him.*

*Brett, Bobbi, and Bob Warner have been working with the Stock Show to investigate other accommodations for the CACD sponsored dinner on the 19th of January.*

*After the CACD Annual Meeting, new Resolutions will be addressed at the next Legislative Committee Meeting on the 1st Wednesday of January. He asked that anyone interested in serving on the Legislative Committee please sign up so that at the Jan. 5th meeting the Committee can move forward with the Resolutions.*

*Brett thanked the Board for the new consulting arrangement and contract. There is a lot of work coming in 2022. The Legislative Session starts on January 12, 2022.*

***Director Nick Charchalis*** *noted that the additional funding the Districts received made a stark difference for many districts across the State. He feels this is a good opportunity to ask the Legislature for additional funding for 2022.*

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

No Update due to technical difficulties

**CACD Programs Update:**

No Update due to technical difficulties

**Camp Rocky & Envirothon Updates:**

No Update due to technical difficulties

***CACD FINANCIAL SUMMARY* 11-31-2021*:***

*Not addressed due to connectivity issues during meeting.*

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

*Most of the Board members and the Executive Director lost connectivity due to severe weather conditions.*

***Vice President Tyler Neely*** *and Bob Warner continued discussions and Vice President Tyler Neely adjourned the meeting.*

***The next Board meeting will be January 20, 2022, in person at the Western Stock Show, Denver, CO***

*Respectfully Submitted,*

***Bobbi Ketels***

***CACD Executive Director***

***December 17th, 2021***

*A CACD BOD continuation meeting took place for those who could be on the call. Further discussion and planning took place for the CACD Face-to-Face meeting and the NWSS event to be held January 19th, 2020.*

*No CACD business was conducted.*

*Meeting Adjourned*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

***Bobbi Ketels***

***CACD Executive Director***