

**Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
October 14, 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
Nancy Berges, Director – Lower South Platte Watershed
Jim Cecil, Director - Republican River Watershed Director
Mike Cleary – Director-Gunnison Dolores Watershed
Tyler Neely - CACD Vice President - Rio Grande River Watershed
Charlie Carnahan, Director - Upper South Platte Watershed
Brett Moore, CACD Lobbyist
Bobbi Ketels, CACD Executive Director

Absent:

Bob Warner, CO Alternate Representative to NACD
Steve McEndree, Director – Lower Arkansas River Watershed

Guests:

Les Owen, CDA
Randy Randall, NRCS
Cindy Lair, CSCB
Noah McCord, CSCB
Alex Funk, Guest Speaker

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 **September 2020** minutes. **Director Jim Cecil** made the motion to approve the minutes and **Director Mike Cleary** gave the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the CACD BOD's **September 2020** minutes was **passed**.

Legislative Update – Brett Moore:

Brett Moore reminded everyone that Colorado has a big election in 20 days that include the presidential race, one Senate seat, all 65 State House members and ½ of the 35 State Senate seats. He sent a political report in September and there is nothing additional to report.

Brett noted that this time of year his time is spent attending different fundraisers getting to know candidates and reconnecting with current office holders and making donations and building relationships.

The By-Laws review process will be a big item at the annual meeting. The 5 resource committees will hear the policy book changes applicable to that committee. The changes will be voted on at the meeting. There has not been a lot of participation at the Watershed level for appointments to the resource committees. It will be important for Board members to attend the resource committee hearings to make sure their watershed has a voice. Cleaning up the Policy Book will make it easier for CACD with quicker reference for the staff, districts, and district supervisors. Brett plans to be at each resource committee hearing.

Additionally, Brett will go over the resolution progress form in his annual meeting presentation. It will go back to 2017-2019 to make sure all resolutions will be looked at, which in most cases they have. They have been following up on those that have not had action taken. By the meeting date, they will be through about 95% of the backlogged resolutions.

Gary Thrash asked about the reapportionment exercise on the census and what involvement CACD had in it. Brett replied that there is a group called Colorado Communities that focuses on getting good participation from across the State in the redistricting and reapportionment process.

In 2018 voters passed Measures Y and Z which reallocates how our State Legislature is reapportioned and how our US Congressional Districts are redistricted. The census will cause the congressional districts to be redrawn to have equal representation over all Districts. A Congressional seat will be added. Currently we have 7 seats. In the past, committees that are responsible for drawing the maps have been more partisan and appointed by the governor. The Legislature drafts the Congressional districts, and the Legislative districts are drafted by committee. In both cases the process has been stopped by lawsuits and they have gone to a District Court Judge.

In 2001 and 2011 a Denver District Court Judge approved the final maps. There will be new checks and balances in place due to Measures Y and Z. There is a recruitment process for people to apply to be on this 12-person committee/commission. The deadline is in early November. Groups are pushing to have a rural Colorado voice on the committee. CACD is being asked if they would like to cosponsor a few webinars to get the word out. Brett feels it is important to get this out to the Districts so anyone interested can apply.

Director Gary Thrash moves that CACD cosponsor these webinars to get the word out. **Director Jim Cecil** seconds the motion. **Director George Fosha** asked Brett, due to the growth on the front range and urban areas, how can we be successful in getting the rural areas more representation? Brett encouraged everyone to watch the presentation by Alan Philip. He goes through the system on how to draw the new. **Motion Passes.**

CDA Update-Les Owen:

Les Owen reported that there is new covid guidance that suggests things might ease up some by the end of October. However there has been a spike in covid in recent days.

No update on WOTUS currently. We are waiting for State lawsuits to be resolved. He will have an update at the annual meeting.

Yesterday the Water Quality Control Commission had an informational meeting. First agenda item was the voluntary nature of Best Management Practices for non-point sources associated with Ag, and others for lakes and streams, under Reg. 85. The Ag industry was well represented. CDA submitted written comments. CSU had a good presentation about edge of field monitoring. A strong case was made to continue the voluntary efforts. In 2022 this will be back on the agenda.

Les stated that the Drought Impact Task Force is still meeting regularly. It is impossible to quantify the impacts of the drought while it is still going on. Impacts can last for several years. CWCB is trying to get stories from farmers and ranchers about how the drought has impacted them.

Les stated they were appreciative that FSA moved quickly to get the emergency haying and grazing waiver in place for the program.

CSCB Update:

Cindy Lair reported that the Colorado Collaborative for Healthy Soils is moving along. It is a stand-alone group and is not part of CDA. She is giving updates at the meetings for CDA. The meaningful information coming from the group is appreciated. They have created a well put together Bill by Helen Silver. The Soil

Health Collaborative has been able to pull in some funds through different grants. They have received \$150,000. from the Gates Family Foundation to be used over 2 years. It will come through the CDA for the STAR Program to make it work for soil health in Colorado. Also, they received a grant from the Wallace Research Foundation for \$50,000. to fund the team to further the soil health program.

Cindy reported that the NRCS Agreement came through. She thanked Randy and his team for meeting the deadline for the agreement to continue the DCT program. Other aspects of this agreement are monies that include a NRCS 75% cost share to hire soil health specialists. The job description is currently being worked on. The Gates Foundation grant will cover the CDA required 25% match. Rachel is assisting NRCS with outreach materials and this agreement helps fund this position.

Cindy received a call from Gene Backhaus, and he informed her there is an office where the employees were not abiding by the covid-19 protocol and some were not feeling well and had a family member that tested positive. She and Gene wrote a letter to all employees to remind them that the NRCS protocols should be closely followed. The letter will go out this week from the CSCB

Cindy announced that Noah created an on-line testing system, called Noodle, for the certification program. The program has been reworked with updated modules. More pictures have been added and more interaction as well. The testing system will make it easier to take the tests and get results faster.

The CSCB team has been working hard on the CACD annual meeting and the Conservator. They are anxious to see how the remote meeting goes. Due to her schedule, she has not been working on the meeting as much as in the past, but her team has been assisting.

President Scott Jones and Executive Director Bobbi Ketels thanked Cindy for allowing her staff to help with the annual meeting. It would be difficult without their help this year due to the new virtual format.

NRCS Update-Randy Randall:

Randy thanked CSCB for being supportive during the agreement negotiations. The agreement is in place for 5 years.

He noted the uptick in positivity with covid cases. Due to covid acting much like the flu, some employees thought it was just the flu but in one office they had two positive cases of covid, not the flu. There were two positives in another location as well. They have emphasized that employees use due caution. If there is a positive case in an office, that office must quarantine employees for 14 days, however employees without symptoms can telework to keep the work moving as they follow protocols.

He reported that NRCS has not received their portion of the budget yet. They have direction, through the continuing resolution, until Dec. 11 and to continue their work with the allocated percentage rate. They cannot enter into agreements. It is primarily essential work only at this point.

The fires have created serious challenges for NRCS. They are dealing with the Cameron Peak fire. The main concern being water storage and reserves in Northeast Colorado. It has been elevated to the Chief. The Secretary and Under Secretary are aware of the issues. Everyone is watching the issues with this fire closely. Todd Bolt in Ft. Collins is the State NRCS lead for this project. Last week they briefed the ACs to let them know that their response to the fires is their highest priority. They may need to reach out to other offices to help provide the damage survey reports to get funding reports completed. They are repositioning funds to respond to the fires.

NRCS has encouraged their employees to submit their names to attend the CACD annual meeting. There is more flexibility since it is virtual this year. They hope to have final numbers to Bobbi next week.

Randy suggested to Bobbi that she reposition funds that NRCS would normally contribute to the meeting and use the funds for NRCS employee registrations to attend the meeting.

Randy told the Board that there is a movie on Netflix called "Kiss the Ground." It features NRCS and its conservation practices related to soil health. This movie was not made in partnership with NRCS, but it highlights the NRCS resources for farmers. Randy ended his report by stating that Clint Evans comes back November 16th.

NACD Updates – Gary Thrash & Bob Warner:

Director Gary Thrash reported that NACD is looking for Districts that have forestry programs, wildfire mitigation or forest management activities, to share their stories that highlight those conservation efforts. It is part of the theme for Stewardship and Education, "**Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities.**" They would like to know how Districts are teaching communities and educating students about healthy forests and protecting forests. Districts that submit stories will be entered in a drawing for prizes.

#Districtsupportforesthealth is the link to enter the story.

Gary received a call from the Oregon representative. They would like to get a resolution submitted at the **NACD annual meeting** in February on the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. Currently NRCS has a program for getting agricultural lands in an easement. Oregon would like to see the program expanded with a change in the match requirement and the ability of non-profit organizations to tag land and water conservation funds for developing conservation easements.

They would like Colorado to co-sponsor the resolution. Gary is presenting this to the Board and asked for their thoughts about cosponsoring the resolution. Gary will send out additional information to Board members.

Director George Fosha noted that the **Colorado Cattlemen's Association** is highly active with conservation easements. **Director Jim Cecil** asked for the additional information (fact sheet). If they agree to cosponsor the resolution, it will have to go through the State Board. It is not clear what committee it would go through. Resolutions need to be submitted to NACD in December.

Each month **NACD** comes out with publications with lots of information about grants and funding that Districts can apply for. He recommends that Districts become aware of these funding opportunities.

Gary also noted that on the 3rd Thursday of each month **NACD**, in partnership with **Scott's Miracle Grow**, hosts an urban and community conservation webinar.

Guest Speaker: Alex Funk, CWCB Ag Water Resource Specialist

Alex gave the background of CWCB and their programs.

Alex discussed the CWCB update of the Colorado Water Plan (CWP). They are working with each Basin Roundtable to update their own regional Basin Implementation Plan (BIP). This process is underway but will really get going in 2021 and 2022. He would like this to be on the radar for CACD. The Basin Implementation Plan and State Water Plan are critical in driving the State water project funding priorities, policy support and overall direction.

There are two parallel processes that are happening over the next two years. One is update to these BIPs and the other is to the State Water Plan. Alex will go into more detail at the CACD Annual meeting.

BIPs are being developed by the 9 basin roundtables. Each is working on revising their unique basin plan. This is important because these regional plans help form the Statewide plan. A key component of these plans is they identify and prioritize water projects at a regional scale. Roundtables are identifying their priorities in three tiers. Alex feels that CWCB funding programs will be geared towards the tier 1 projects. This is important to CACD and the Districts. If they have water projects, it is important that these projects get on the list. The lists will be "living documents" with project changes as they develop. He encourages CACD and

Districts to engage their roundtable and attend virtual meetings. The BIP process should wrap up next summer and then there will be a comment period for each BIP.

On a State level, in 2013 **Gov. Hickenlooper** signed an executive order to create the States first Water Plan in response to a historic drought that happened in 2012. This launched a grass roots effort between CWCB and the Roundtables to create this plan. First publication was in 2015. It is now the 5th year of implementation of that plan.

The 2015 plan will be updated as new information and priorities are presented. The State Plan is important because it will also influence funding and policy decisions around inter and intra state water management efforts. Several scoping activities are currently going on with the Plan. They hope to have input complete by July 2021. They will have an initial draft released in early 2022 with a public comment period. The anticipated final version will be released in late 2022. CWCB invites Conservation Districts to request a meeting about the Plan. He is open to attending watershed meetings or District meetings and talking more about this Plan and the processes.

He asked the CACD Board how they would like to stay engaged and what are helpful ways to share information back to the Board? If there are priority concerns regarding ag and water management that CACD would like reflected in the update, he would be happy to have that feedback.

President Scott Jones noted that one of the Resolutions presented to CACD was to get Districts more involved with the roundtables. There seems to be a disconnect and Scott would like to see that connection work better. He asked if there is an opportunity for CACD to have a seat at the table or at least attend those meetings and have representation for the Districts. Alex stated that seats on the roundtable are set by statute and there are designated seats for ag. There are at-large seats but most of those are geared towards water right owners.

A potential solution is an amendment to the roundtable statute to add a designated conservation district seat. The meetings are open to the public and a District could give updates. Scott would like to meet with Alex and others to discuss ways to get Districts more active and represented at Roundtable meetings. Alex noted that CWCB plans to host 6-7 Ag producer workshops that will be about specific issues like infrastructure, innovations in ag, etc.

Director Nick Charchalis feels that Conservation Districts were underrepresented when the law was handed down. Conservation Districts were not included in the discussions. He would like the State to take the initiative to change that in whatever way necessary. He stated that he does appreciate what CWCB is doing. Nick would welcome an invitation for CACD to become involved in these decisions. Nick and Alex continued to discuss ideas on ways to involve CACD and Conservation Districts in water discussions and on boards. Nick suggested that funding such a position would be helpful. Alex will research this idea.

Director Mike Cleary informed Alex that he was appointed to the **Gunnison Roundtable** this year just before the covid lock down. He has not attended any of the Zoom meetings yet. He feels that the current Zoom meeting format does not work as well due to the personal relationships that need to be formed with the Roundtable Board. Alex recognizes the challenges.

Monthly Financial Update-Bobbi Ketels:

CACD FINANCIALS: 09-30-2020

Beginning Balance in checking on Sept 1, 2020, \$125,152.40

Checks/Payments Cleared -\$8,455.25, Deposits & Credits Cleared \$18,509.79

(dep=NRCS \$18,509.52, PayPal \$0.27)

(Total Cleared Transactions \$10,054.54)

Ending/Cleared Balance in Checking as of Sep 30th \$135,206.94

Total Uncleared Transactions = **-\$5,197.66** (Checks/Payments **-\$5,197.66** - Deposits \$0)

Ending Register Balance as of Sep 30th \$130,009.28

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 09/30/2020 \$94,701.84

Credit Card Ending Statement Balance as of 10/07/2020 \$167.10

Total District Dues Paid as of 09/30/2020 **\$48,550.00** (membership invoiced (75) \$90,000.00)

Total District Dues Paid as of 09/30/2019 \$54,500.00 (down by \$5,950.00)

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

UARRP Activity 09-30-20 YTD: *No New Activity

Total pass-through income \$128,475.95

Total pass-through expenses **-\$128,475.95**

Total CACD Income Earned YTD 8-31-20 \$7,161.79

(Includes 5% Admin \$6,441.79 & Payroll Reimb \$720.00)

Balance of UARRP Federal Funds Available \$15,159.35

Mod #2 (additional funds \$120K) will be added in **September** 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, or in 2021. The original renewal contract was for \$500K. Renewal contract dates 9-1-2017 thru 12-31-2022

NRCS Programs:

Education Outreach Workshops YTD 9-30-2020: No New Activity in September

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 9-30-20 \$953.70 (10% admin & salary)

Total District Workshops YTD 9-30-2020 (4) \$8,974.00

Speakership Programs YTD 9-30-2020: *No New Activity in September

Speakership Meetings Approved, Pending Completion \$0

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

Total CACD Income Earned YTD 09-30-2020 \$220.15 (10% admin)

Total Speakership Meetings YTD 9-30-2020 (1) \$1,920.00

Watershed Speakership Meeting – ED Payroll \$112.59

OPEN INVOICES

UARRP (1) 2020 YTD **\$1,335.00**

Total \$1,335.00

P&L Sep 2020 **-\$7,369.15** – P&L YTD \$9,371.92 (minus reserve \$26,075.15= **-\$16,703.23 YTD**)

Balance Sheet = *Accts Receivable **\$1,335.00**– *Undeposited Funds **\$9,400.00**

(\$2K CSCB Partner Video Project, \$2400 District dues recorded, pending deposit (2) Checks & *\$5K Warner Ranch Journal entry adj needed)

\$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 update from 10/9/20.

Director Charlie Carnahan moves to approve the Financial Report. **Director Tyler Neeley** seconds the motion. **Motion passes.**

Bobbi noted that she sent the accountant's information for the annual tax return to **Director Mike Cleary** for review. Due to covid she just received them from the Accountant. Mike said he would look at the information tonight.

CACD Programs:

Annual Meeting Update: Bobbi reported there will be another committee meeting this morning at 10:00. The Conservator is at the printer for a final draft. The annual meeting program is just about done and ready to go to the printer for final draft review. Registration packets will be sent out to each group that registers. Noah and Nikki will help put those together. Deadline to mail them out is Oct. 30. Late registrations would receive the packets via email. An informational sheet with the Zoom log-in information will be sent to each person that registers. Registration is up and running on the website. Registration is slow right now. The speaker schedule is set and confirmed.

Resolution information will be sent out. There are 5 Resolutions from CACD and two that will be assigned to Soils. There has not been much activity with the Resource Committees. She has also been working on sponsorships, but it is not going well. We are at \$6,000 for sponsorships. She is waiting to hear from a few but does not expect much of an increase to the current \$6,000. Sponsors are being offered different levels of advertising.

There will be 2 giveaways from each session. Nikki is asking CSCB for a donations and Bobbi is asking CACD Board Members to look for donations. She will also ask a local business for a giveaway donation. They are leaning towards requiring the winner to be present at that session for the giveaway. There are 6 award winners this year. One for Conservationist of the Year, Farmer/Rancher, Small Acreage, Forestry, Educator and Hall of Fame. The awards will be handed out at the evening sessions.

The best way to handle the presentations is being discussed. NRCS will also have the Earth Team award. Award plaques will come from the same company as last year. Plaques will be sent directly to the Districts. Due to covid, she has asked the Districts to come up with their own way of presenting the award and send CACD pictures of the presentation.

Her goal is to have all the business meeting information sent out via email the week prior to the meeting. The Board will have a more detailed schedule. The Board meeting will be on the afternoon of the 9th. Bobbi will attend the daytime sessions with the CSCB and the Employees Association. There will be 4 evening sessions that Board members will need to attend.

Randy Randall said that Donna Goodsell will be doing the Earth Team presentation as she is the State Earth Team Coordinator.

President Scott Jones asked if there is a Legislator of the Year. Brett suggested Rep Marc Catlin and Rep. Barbara McLachlin be nominated for this award. **Director Tyler Neeley** moves that **Rep. Marc Catlin and Rep. Barbara McLachlan** be awarded the Legislator of the Year award. **Director Nick Charchalis** seconds the motion. **Motion passes.** Bobbi asked Brett to gather all the needed information by Monday.

After further review, Rep. Catlin was given the award in 2018. Brett would like to replace Rep. Catlin with **Senator Larry Crowder**. **Director George Fosha** moved to amend the motion of replace **Rep. Catlin** with **Senator Crowder**. **Director Mike Cleary** seconds the motion. **Motion passes.**

Director Nick Charchalis asked Bobbi what the Board members can do to help with getting more participation for the meeting. She informed Nick of the current efforts. She suggested reaching out to the Districts in their watersheds.

Other:

Bobbi mentioned that NACD is having weekly virtual meetings with different themes through October. Today the topic is looking at what Districts can do for fund raising activities. Envirothon will be one of the topics in October.

Bobbi reported she was on the Commission Hearing call yesterday. There were a lot of good agricultural presentations. She has screen shots of the presentations if anyone would like to see them.

Bobbi has also been working with Greg at CAWA, Andrew from the Ag Task Force and Phil Brink to do outreach. She continues to participate with the NRCS subcommittees when they hold meetings.

She would like to schedule the December Board meeting for the 16th. Board members agreed with her request.

President Misc. Discussion and Updates-Scott Jones:

President Scott Jones noted that the next CAWA meeting is the 13th of November, 1:00 – 4:00. It may be an in-person meeting.

The **Ag Council** meeting will be during the 1st of 2nd week of the CACD annual meeting. CCHS was going to present on that day as well.

President Scott Jones confirmed the joint board meeting, and the next CACD BOD meeting will be **Nov. 9, starting at 2 PM**. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM

Respectfully Submitted,

Bobbi Ketels
CACD Executive Director