

**Colorado Association of Conservation Districts  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
April 10th, 2019, at 7:30 AM Teleconference**

**Attendees:**

Scott Jones, CACD President - Colorado River Watershed  
Mike Cleary, CACD Vice President - Gunnison/Dolores River Watershed  
Gary Thrash, Director - San Juan Basin Watershed /CO Representative to NACD  
Jim Cecil, Director - Republican River Watershed  
George Fosha, Director - Upper Arkansas River Watershed  
Nick Charchalis, Director - North Platte/White/Yampa 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:**

Charlie Carnahan, Director - Upper South Platte Watershed  
Steve McEndree, Director – Lower Arkansas River Watershed

**Guests:**

Cindy Lair, CSCB  
Les Owen, CDA

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by President, Scott Jones at 7:35 AM after establishing a quorum. President Scott Jones asked for any additional agenda items. With no additional requests, the board moved on with the agenda.

**Prior Meeting Minutes:**

**President Scott Jones** asked for a motion to approve the March 2019 minutes. **Director Gary Thrash** asked for an amendment to comments on the Wild and Scenic River eligibility and that it is not limited to the GMUG area designation for analysis and not limited to this forest. **Director George Fosha** and **Director Nick Charchalis** made further comments to the Lower Yampa and other areas. They both agreed with **Director Gary Thrash**. **Bobbi** stated she would follow up with **Les Owen** for proper clarification to his update. **CACD Director George Fosha** made the motion to approve the minutes with that clarification change and **Director Jim Cecil** gave the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the CACD BOD's March 2019 Minutes with the clarification change was passed unanimously.

**Legislative Update- Brett Moore:**

**Brett Moore** stated there are 23 days left in the legislative session. The House finished their debate of the Long Bill last Friday. The Long Bill has now passed out of the Senate with amendments. The House strips those off and adds their amendments on. It then goes back to the conference committee, which is the Joint Budget Committee. Those six people will strip off all the amendments and then basically have a choice to work from what is similar to the original bill they sent across the street, the Senate version and the House

version, where they try to get the different priorities taken care of between those suggestions. Both the Senate and the House put additional monies on for transportation. We think there will be a minimum of \$70 million additional dollars for transportation that they will need to find somewhere, so we are going continue to watch to make sure that our general funding stays intact and that it is not part of any of the monies that are swept for those additional priorities. We should be in good shape, but we should know here within the next couple of days and we will continue to watch that. Additionally, a couple weeks ago we had our HB-1082 which was a bill that CACD originated on the ditch easements was signed into law by the Governor. They only let us know about a day ahead of time, so we did not have time to get anyone down to the Capitol, but **Representative Catlin** asked Brett to come into the room with him and was able to get a couple of pictures to send along. We were talking on the legislative call this morning that Custer County CD originated the original resolution nearly two years ago and worked with Fremont County CD to submit the final resolution up to the watershed and then along to the 2017 CACD Annual Meeting where it passed. CACD has been doing the work on it since then. It goes to show that the progress is incremental and slower than we like to see at times but shows that the resolution process really does work does help us get meaningful change from the districts up to the state government and back down.

Additionally, we were at the Capitol this week and did a presentation of our partnership with NRCS and CSCB to the House Rural Affairs Committee. We were able to go through what NRCS, CSCB and CACD do on behalf of private landowners and the districts and how those three groups work together. We were able to present a new graphic put together in front of the legislators. This is something we have been talking about and working on for some time and something that will be a great resource for us in the future. In addition, on a less positive note, we are waiting the Governor's signature on SB-181 the anti-oil and gas bill that CACD opposed based on current policy in the CACD policy book. We are waiting to see what happens there. With CACD and many others in opposition, the industry was able to claw back some of the worst provisions of this bill and provide some legal protection for landowners and producers, but it is still a bad bill and just a start of putting the squeeze on the energy sector here in the state.

We are tracking 30 bills on the CACD tracking sheet. Please review the tracking link when you get a moment and let us know if you hear any feedback from your districts and watersheds on any of these bills. Discussions took place about doing a news blast on the CACD bill to get the word out to districts and others, such as DARCA. **Vice President Mike Cleary** stated that the Clipper Ditch has another interesting challenge, involving ditches that co-mingle with natural drainage. People are saying the natural drainage is not part of the ditch because the drainage was there before the ditch was so therefore there is no easement. **Director George Fosha** stated this was discussed and they felt that it did not fit within the last resolution, but it is noted and maybe they can come up with some ideas for clarification on this as well. Mike said it is something that is coming up. Further discussions will take place as more details are gathered. Further discussions took place about bringing up the success of the CACD bill passed into law at the upcoming watershed meetings. **Director Jim Cecil** made a motion to put it in the minutes to send out the email announcement. **Director George Fosha** gave the second. Motion passes unanimously.

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

**Les Owen** gave an update on GMUG. He said they are a cooperating agency on that plan revision, and they will be sending out a preliminary draft plan for cooperating agency review and then a public review for comment. This is an added step and really good to do. This will be coming fairly soon and worth looking at. Senate Bill 186-Surface Water Monitoring went through Senate Ag and is on the schedule for the Senate Finance Committee. Currently unamended. Les believes there will be an amendment. As far as fee increases, they have to be approved by the Ag Commission and the amendment would state that they have to be approved by the Ag Commission in consultation with the Pesticide Advisory Committee that they have within the department. This is current practice. They are not opposed to this amendment.

*Waters of the United States; WOTUS Rule comments close on April 15<sup>th</sup>. The State of CO is submitting one set of comments that everyone tried to come to agreement on. They had to do a lot of compromising in it and Les is not pleased with the comments and he is hoping other agencies are not pleased as well. There were some pretty major points that they had to give on. They were able to come up with some language and everyone was in support of some proposed changes. This is a positive thing and it is good that all the state agencies are in support of this. They also included some language in a separate set of the regulations where they exempt normal farming and ranching activities from the permitting process. In the Clean Water Act and in the regs it mentions soil and water conservation activities, but the way the regs are currently written unless those activities have a definition they are not exempt, so they were able to work on some definition language and were able to do some good from this standpoint. Once the comments get finalized, Les will share with everyone. Les gave an update on the Bighorn Domestic Sheep working group. The charter for this has been finalized and going around to the various entities to get signatures. There is a lawsuit against the sheep allotment down on the Rio Grande National Forest and nothing has been talked about for quite some time since it was filed, so there is no update with this.*

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

*Cindy Lair expressed her excitement of the completion of a very successful watershed leadership class and gave a brief update. In Limon 43 people attended and in Glenwood Springs 36 people attended. There were quite a few NRCS people and it was very nice to have NRCS interest and support. It was great to have all partners involved. Cindy is in the process of compiling all notes for each watershed and sending out appropriately. She is looking forward to seeing these ideas and plans being implemented in the upcoming watershed meetings. She will also have a survey sent out to get feedback on the training experience for future planning.*

*The Colorado River Basin State Salinity Control program has been something that they have worked on that entails six conservation districts over on the Western Slope. This has been a program that conservation districts have participated in and given a lot of leadership. This has been a great opportunity for these districts over the years. Cindy was recently notified that CSCB would no longer be implementing any of these programs or projects as pass-throughs like they have historically done. It is kind of sad to have this era ending because it was meaningful for those districts to be participating at that level for pretty important projects. Right now the extent of the CSCB salinity program involvement is limited to having **Paul Kehmeier** on board who is working with local ditch companies to help them navigate the process of applications in applying for the funding opportunity announcements that the Bureau of Reclamation puts out and also helping people know where to find grant dollars to help supplement their budget package that they submit to Reclamation. Paul will be attending the salinity control meetings.*

*Cindy shared how they have been working on developing a soil health framework that could be implementable by the CO Dept of Ag for a program in the conservation services division. They have been looking at things the department could do that would lend to promoting more adoption of soil health practices in the state, but yet not taking over, not asserting that this has to be done, and not overlapping with other efforts already going on. They have been looking at what this would mean. The department is looking at being able to accommodate and to help coordinate soil health efforts statewide and integrate those soil health goals in federal, state and local planning efforts, tracking the active acres that are being improved through different soil health practices and trying to make this a confidential active inventory. Helping with soil testing, providing some state incentives through technical and financial assistance. The Water Conservation Board is very interested in what they are drafting right now. **Commissioner Greenberg** is very much behind this and has kind of taken this on as her first initiative within the department to make some additional program opportunities for the agricultural communities. **Commissioner Greenberg** spoke with Cattlemen's and they have been talking to Colorado Corn just to say let's get this out in front of the Ag Council just to see where Ag Council feels they could support this. At this point CSCB does not have any kind of*

legislation for it and thought they could probably put it together within their existing budgets and through some assistance from some of the other agencies within the state. She says there has been quite a bit of support from other agencies. Cindy said they are open to thoughts from CACD and if they would like to be included in and comment on. Cindy is happy to send out the framework draft they are working from.

CSCB is in the process of reviewing the last round of completed Annual Plans of Work that will be ranked as far as how Direct Assistance will be distributed this year. After this year Direct Assistance will not be dependent on a completed Annual Plan of Work. It will be more of a level distribution to all the districts and they will have an incentive with reports and trying to encourage the districts to put together an annual report that could be used to help tell their success stories in the work they do for their landowners locally and statewide.

CSCB is getting ready to send out the announcement for matching grants and this will be up to \$25K available for education and on the ground conservation. Also, the board voted last year to make available equipment grants, which historically has not been available. If you have the one to one match you can get up to \$25K for equipment that would be owned by the conservation district.

#### **NACD Update-Gary Thrash:**

**Gary Thrash** reported that he represented our state at the NACD Fly-In March 13-14th. **Clint Evans** was there with him and had several NRCS interns that Clint toured around DC to their national office as well as attending the meetings. **Jeff Burwell**, the NACD Western Issues Representative organized all the meetings for us and also attended. They met with two representative staffs. They also met with **Scott Tipton** personally. Included was the staff for **Doug Lamborn**. For both Senators, they had a good visit with the staff of **Bennett and Gardner**. They mainly highlighted the Farm Bill passage from last year. This was an important topic for us with them going into appropriations discussions, making sure they were on board.

From the 2018 Farm Bill we may want to highlight the Colorado resolution that made it through the Farm Bill regarding the use of natural disturbance processes on CRP contracts. This is something that we can highlight that came up through the national legislation. Other announcements coming up with NACD; They have an annual boot camp highlighted on their website for sign up. The deadline is coming up soon. April 28<sup>th</sup> through May 5<sup>th</sup> is Stewardship Week. NACD has information available for teachers, educators and districts. One in particular to mention is a free download that was developed with the Soil Health Institute called "Living Soils," which is a one-hour documentary.

Along this line is a contract with Cabela's for the NACD marketplace for apparel and other items available for purchase through NACD with the NACD logo. We can also get our logo or conservation districts logo. Cabela's through the end of the month has agreed to waive the cost of custom embroidery on the wearable items if districts wants to order.

**Bob Warner** thanked **Gary Thrash** for doing such a great job in going to the Fly-In. Bob said since Gary is doing such a great job as the NACD rep Bob would like the board to consider making Gary the CO NACD rep and Bob would like to continue on as the CO alternate rep to NACD. **Director George Fosha** made the motion and **Vice President Mike Cleary** made the second. Motion passed unanimously. **Gary Thrash** made another highlight; NACD just received a \$30K grant through the **David Rockefeller Foundation** for a pollinator conservation education program they will be working on. There will be materials available to the districts. **Cindy Lair** mentioned the NACD contract with Cabela's. She stated that years ago CACD had different things printed up or embroidered for their Annual Meeting. She thought CACD might want to get this going again for an incentive to get individuals to sign on as a CACD individual member. **Vice President Mike Cleary** wanted to expand on this from last year as trying to bring in the local Cabela's group into being present as an exhibitor and being a sponsor at the annual meeting. He stated that there was a lot of red tape involved and

realized we have to start earlier in the year. He is wondering if there is a way to piggyback on the connections that NACD has for CACD. He felt this might help to have them there to create more involvement with the live auction and more individual memberships. He is wondering if Gary could contact NACD to see if we could get in the door at the national level to be able to get in the door with Cabela's in Colorado. Gary said he could work on getting information on this. Gary brought up how the CO Ag Water Network had the Cabela's gift cards as an incentive to participate in their survey.

**NRCS Update:**

**There was no update from Clint or Randy as they were not able to be on the call.** Bobbi gave a brief update on some of the items CACD is working on with NRCS. Scott and Bobbi met with Clint and Randy after their visit at the Capitol to review the CACD/NRCS agreement in regard to the amended budget for year three. They felt the requested numbers were reasonable and waiting for approval. Clint felt this would happen sometime in May. Some of the remaining funds from 2018 will be used toward program expenses that will hit prior to May. This includes Envirothon, Camp Rocky, the Education/Outreach Workshop program and the Speakership program. Further discussions took place about the cooperative agreement, the workshop and speakership programs, the on-call program and a possible shared position between NRCS and CACD. Bobbi wants to lay this out and send to the board to get discussions going with the board to have a future vote, possibly on the next call. It was confirmed with NRCS that CACD was still on board in moving forward with the on-call program when NRCS was ready. Further discussions took place about clarifying some details if CACD marketing/media could work into the shared position. Logistics of this idea need further discussion.

**Financial Update – Bobbi Ketels:**

**CACD FINANCIALS: 03-31-19**

**Ending/Cleared Balance in Checking as of March 31st, \$113,351.03**

Checks/Payments Cleared - \$19,451.19, Deposits Cleared \$37,495.90

Total Uncleared Transactions (Checks/Payments Only-No Pending Deposits) -\$20,412.00

**Ending Register Balance as of March 31st, \$92,939.03**

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 03/31/19 \$56,863.88**

**New Transactions**

Expenses -\$3,346.07

Deposits \$2,219.00

Total New Transactions -\$1,127.07

Current Register Balance \$91,811.96

**Current NOI \$55,736.81**

**Credit Card Ending Statement Balance as of 4/05/19 \$3,396.72**

**Total District Dues Paid/Received as of 3/31/2019 \$33,700.00 \*Includes checks pending to be deposited**

**UARRP Activity 2019 YTD:** Total pass-through expenses \$40,779.90 - Total pass-through income \$40,779.90 - Total CACD Income Earned YTD 2019 \$2,219.00 (Includes 5% Admin & Payroll Reimb)

**Director Jim Cecil** made a motion to accept the financials. **Director George Fosha** gave the second. All in favor, motion passed.

**Corporate Fundraising:**

**Vice President Mike Cleary** will continue making contacts and follow-up on previous contacts within the next few weeks.

**Envirothon:**

Envirothon is coming up April 23-24<sup>th</sup>. We are working to finalize all details with **Mark Cronquist** from CSCB, **Brenda Anderson** and **Anthony Lobato**. Discussions took place about the new NACD Envirothon program manager and that she will be joining us this year to see how we run our competition. We are working to get through this year and will then regroup and revamp to get this program geared toward being a state level competition. **Director Tyler Neely** added that we need to use this opportunity of the NACD rep joining us as a learning opportunity.

**Camp Rocky:**

The committee is in full gear of working on all aspects of Camp Rocky, including, but not limited to presentations, speakers, sponsorships, and curriculum. We have received three applications to this point. Our second call will be on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Education Workshop & Speakership Programs:**

Bobbi is working on developing an official report that will eventually become part of the financials. Bobbi brought up a request from a district to use CACD's nonprofit to pull a liquor permit for a picnic workshop being held in a public park. The board discussed and was in agreement that this is not a good area for CACD to get involved with due to the requirements and liability that goes along with pulling this permit.

**Annual Meeting:**

Discussions took place on following up with **VP Mike Cleary** on when we should start our committee calls. Bobbi brought up inviting **Commissioner Greenberg**, **Secretary Purdue**, **Undersecretary Northey** and the new chief for NRCS to the 2019 Annual Meeting. **Ray Ledgerwood** is confirmed as a speaker. We just need to figure out his topic, adding a possible breakout and adding a possible follow-up to the watershed leadership training workshop.

**Misc. Discussions & Aq Council/CAWA:**

Discussions took place about location for the CACD summer Face to Face. **Cindy Lair** agreed we could have the meeting at the CDA building. The board was in agreement and as of right now everyone is in agreement with the date of August 14<sup>th</sup>. Everyone was also in agreement to send an invitation to **Commissioner Greenberg**. Discussions were started about having the summer meeting split over two days to allow for more time and to make travel easier for everyone. Further discussion to take place.

The next CACD BOD meeting is May 15<sup>th</sup>, via teleconference.

Meeting adjourned at 9:17 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bobbi Ketels  
CACD Executive Director