

**Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
February 13, 2019, at 7:30 AM Teleconference**

Attendees:

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

Absent:

Mike Cleary, CACD Vice President - Gunnison/Dolores River Watershed Director

Guests:

*Clint Evans, NRCS
Les Owen, CDA
Cindy Lair, CSCB
Abbey Grey, CSCB
Phil Brink, CCA AG Water Network Coordinator*

Call to Order:

*The meeting was called to order by President, **Scott Jones** at 7:40 AM after establishing a quorum. President **Scott Jones** asked for any agenda changes. A change in agenda allowed Charlie Carnahan to speak about an additional item for review.*

NRCS Update - Clint Evans:

***Clint Evans** started off by congratulating Bob Warner on earning the President's Award at the NACD conference in San Antonio last week. Clint reported that Congress is said to have the FY19 Bill ready to go to the house and senate for approval. It is still unknown if the President will sign it, but he did announce that he doesn't believe there will be a government shutdown, which is reassuring. Clint did receive a staffing update, and the ability to advertise 10 vacancies at this time. This will be reevaluated on a monthly basis moving forward. Clint was happy to be able to start looking to fill some important roles in the state, such as state archeologist, and the state biologist positions as well as others. He stated that we currently have 3-4 critical vacancies in Colorado. He also announced that NRCS was able to fill internally positions in both Delta and Cortez, as well as hiring out of state for the soil conservationist position in both Ray and Rocky Ford. NRCS is currently working to delegate the FY19 enhancement activities. They have also started the ranking and evaluation process for the EQIP applications. Clint stated that the initial application for EQIP was around \$32 million, they have requested an additional \$10 million for Colorado applications. Clint stated that this*

additional money will help with NRCS staffing and/or expanding CSCB partnership and the Department of Agriculture's partnership. He also stated that he would like to have on call staff with CACD at some point. This money will also help with signs to promote the 60-90-day AG Conservation Easement program with NRCS. Clint has been in the San Louis Valley meeting with local conservation districts, Ducks Unlimited and others to discuss water quantity. One of the topics that has been discussed is pollution of the aquifer. The study looking at the pollution of the aquifer is into its 8th year of a 20-year horizon. Unfortunately, so far, we have seen the aquifer drop 2,000-acre feet below its original starting point. Clint expressed the need to look into different irrigation options and was hoping to find land owners willing to switch from above ground sprinkler systems to drip irrigation systems. Another topic that has been discussed is looking to improve mitigation for bird habitat, while working with local land owners. **Scott Jones** asked if there were any questions for Clint, there were none at this time.

CDA Update – Les Owen:

Les Owen informed the group that the most recent proposal from Waters of US legislation hit the federal regulation this week. The original draft was put out in December 2018. Les stated that it looks pretty favorable and provides clarity to federal jurisdiction. The now used 2008 guidance considers streams within federal jurisdiction and the new proposal does not. He also stated that it is important to weigh in that CDPHE is not in support of this new proposal. Les stated that the Rio Grande National Forrest is being sued for domestic sheep grazing within their land. This suit particularly deals with sheep grazing in areas known to house big horn sheep. He stated that the impact of this suit if the Forrest Service is to lose would be of concern for any sheep producers grazing federal lands in areas known to have big horn sheep. He also stated that the Forrest Service is working on a plan revision for the Grand Mesa and Gunnison areas (GMUG). They are looking into areas potentially affected by the Wild Scenic River Act. This act states that the water in these rivers and streams cannot be redirected and does not allow for changes to the river. He encouraged everyone to look at a map of the area and make sure they do not see areas where known improvements are needed to the rivers and streams. Les stated that Congress is the only group with the authority to place a body of water under the Wild Scenic River Act, but the Forrest Service can implement regulations. **George Fosha** asked Les to reiterate what agency was in opposition of the Waters of the US legislation proposal. **Les Owen** responded with CDPHE and stated that the state agencies are working to collect opinions and create a unified response from the state to the proposal.

CSCB Update- Cindy Lair:

Cindy Lair stated that CSCB and CDA are still in a transition period with the new commissioner joining the department. She stated that Commissioner Greenberg and Governor Polis have outlined their 3 main priorities for the Department of Agriculture. Those being 1. Supporting the next generation of young farmers, 2. Support of high revenue markets, and 3. Sustainability. Cindy stated sustainability as the area our team has the most influence over. She also informed the group that the 'Powering Up Your Watershed' registration links were up and running she would be sending out an email today to start the registration process. She went on to explain that they have budgeted for 5 people from each watershed to attend. That being said they will not turn anyone away, the more participation in these events the better. Cindy stated that if more than 50 people register from the districts, they may be asked to pay their own lodging, but they will be welcome to attend. She went on to say that it is her sincere hope that they are able to get 5 people from each watershed to attend these events. Cindy is excited about the partnerships and the subsequent collaboration for watershed and stream planning that this training will offer the watersheds. The registration link will be accepting both credit cards and checks as forms of payment. Cindy also explained that CSCB was undergoing some staffing changes. As Glenn Ehlert has taken an accounting role with the City of Boulder and will be leaving this week. **Abbey Grey**, who started in December as the Administrative Assistant, will be taking over the role Glenn has been serving, so there should not be a lapse in service. The Administrative Assistant position will be filled from the last hiring pool. Cindy attended the Water Quality Control Service meeting in La Junta yesterday, where they were looking at the Lower Arkansas River. They found that the selenium levels

are above the range, currently exceeding the allowable measure of 4.5 micrograms per liter. They met with local landowners to discuss potential solutions to this problem. Cindy explained that the TMDL is pointed at point source pollutants, usually caused by local municipalities wastewater treatment facilities. She stated that this poses an opportunity for pollutant trading, which allows a landowner to be paid by a municipality to perform voluntary BMPs to decrease these pollutant levels. Cindy sees this as a good opportunity for landowners to fund voluntary conservation practices. The next topic Cindy discussed was the lingering questions of how to partner with CACD. Most recently from the Colorado Watershed Assembly about a partnership with CACD. She stated that her response has been, "What role do you wish for CACD to play in such a partnership?" as she believes it is very important for them to know this prior to approaching a potential partnership. Her thoughts being maybe CACD could help encourage district involvement to speak up as local leaders and to speak to their landowners, most especially their irrigators to be more involved in AG water discussions and bring awareness to AG's role in Colorado water discussions. Other thoughts Cindy had included conservation district supervisors serving as the liaison for landowners or building partnerships with other organizations to approach the subject from a united front. Cindy also mentioned the idea of hand-picking leaders from the districts, and/or landowners to attend training opportunities with the AG Water Network. **Gary Thrash** stated that the Mancos Conservation District has been looking into the issue of water and reaching out to local landowners with Phil Brink's survey already. He stated that they may be able to serve as a leader in this conversation.

Legislative Update- Brett Moore:

Brett Moore gave an update on current legislation by stating the committee consisting of 6 of the 10 board members was currently monitoring 16 bills. Bill 1082 concerning ditch usage will be presented to the senate at 1pm tomorrow. This bill is looking like it should get passed; although it does still need to meet senate a second and third time as well as go back to the house for approval after an amendment is made. Brett reminded everyone that AG Day at the Capital is scheduled for March 20th. He encouraged anyone that will be in the area that day to attend. Brett briefly mentioned that we are reviewing with the Jefferson Conservation District with the Wildland Fire Bill and their potential for conservation districts to partner on this. He also stated that they are providing feedback to The Young Farmer's Coalition regarding the Acre Bill. Brett reported that the budget for the Department of Agriculture for 2020 is in good shape at this time. He discussed again the potential for having our partner presentation at the Capital, to increase exposure for what the conservation organizations provide for our state and landowners. This presentation would include CACD, NRCS and CSCB. Clint Evans asked that a date for such a presentation be determined as soon as possible for his scheduling purposes. Brett Moore said that he would get some dates together as soon as possible. Brett state that we are right in the height of the legislative session. Brett also reminded everyone that this evening at 5:30p there is a reception for Commissioner Greenberg downtown if anyone is interested in attending to let him know.

Cindy Lair stated that NACD is the best opportunity to learn new ideas from other states and programs to implement. She was talking to a counterpart from Kansas, who informed her that their state does not give any money to the conservation districts unless the county provides a match. She stated that with this process they could help the conservation districts improve their writing to make more compelling reports, something we have already seen a need for. This would help to promote the value that the conservation districts bring their counties. There are more counties often than not, that do not help support their conservation districts.

Guest Speaker: Phil Brink-AG Water Network:

Phil Brink joined the call at 8:21 AM. **Bobbi Ketels** introduced Phil as the CCA AG Water Network Coordinator and informed the group that she had asked him to attend the call to share more information following discussions at the CACD Annual Meeting. **Phil Brink** started off the discussion by stating that the focus of the AG Water Network at this time is on watershed management planning and outreach to the Ag industry on that topic. He went on to say that they have been reaching out to landowners for their input on these issues.

They have also been given increased funding for watershed/stream management planning. Phil explained that one problem they have identified is that AG is not always a part of the initial planning and discussing of these plans and he finds this quite concerning. He stated that AG needs to be a part of these conversations. Phil explained that one of their objectives is to bring awareness to watershed management plans and how they bring value to farmers and landowners. He mentioned that one of the main funded projects funded through CWCB has three main areas of focus. The first is a distribution of a survey for all landowners/ AG producers; asking for input on their water priorities, what they would change in reference to these issues if they could, what knowledge they have about these management planning processes, and what role they would like to play in moving these initiatives forward. They are hoping that they will gain a broad reach of landowners with this survey. The results will be available in aggregate form, but no single landowner can be identified through these results. The survey is being circulated by CACD, CSCB and other sources. The survey will close mid-April. Phil also mentioned that they are giving away \$50-\$100 gift cards in random drawings as a thank you for participation. These gift cards are to Cabela's or Bass Pro Shop. Phil explained another objective of this focus is to provide training for watershed management and stream planning throughout the state. They will provide webinars, publications, and local training sessions. The trainings' curriculum would vary depending on local needs and interests. These trainings would be focused on areas that have people interested in serving as a representative, volunteer or paid representative hasn't been decided yet, for their local AG community. Phil explained that these individuals would have to have local endorsement and have knowledge or involvement within agriculture. Phil explained that following the initial training there would be follow up technical support and coordinating assistance provided to these individuals. He went on to say the hope would be for these people that have undergone training to engage locally with other water stakeholders and be a voice for the AG community in water planning discussions. Phil stated that one trend that the survey is showing thus far is a want for person to act as a Liaison for AG water. Phil also stated that this is one of the challenges facing AG when water planning discussions arise is the lack of available representation for owners and producers. Phil outlines some key benefits of watershed planning, including; analysis to secure funding for improvements, fire/flood mitigation, among others. **Scott Jones** asked if there were any questions for Phil. There were no questions at this time. **Bobbi Ketels** thanked Phil Brink for his time and stated that she would follow up with him at a later date.

NACD Update- Gary Thrash and Bob Warner:

Gary Thrash stated that Colorado was well represented at the NACD conference last week. He stated that Gretchen Rank Mancos Conservation District and the employees association held 2 breakout sessions and he found them to be on useful topics and to have gone well. One was on strategic marketing and you can go to the NACD website to get more details. In the poster contest a Colorado participant from the 5th grade placed 2nd, Gary stated. He also informed the group that the attendance for the conference reached 1,000 attendees. He felt the conversation with other state associations went well and was informative. Gary responded to Cindy Lair's previous mention of county contributions to matching grants but stating that this would be a difficult task to accomplish. Gary stated that NACD signed an MOU with Ducks Unlimited to look at cooperation of wildlife habitat on private lands. NACD also initiated a leadership training called "The Next Generation Leadership Institute", with the National Conservation Foundation, which Bob is on. They put together an endowment with the intention of the program being that upon successful completion one would develop leadership skills to take back to their conservation districts, communities and regions. Gary stated that Spring Fly-In is one month away in Washington DC on March 13th. The Summer meeting will be in Santa Fe, NM on August 2nd to 6th, along with the SW and Pacific regional meetings.

Bob Warner stated that he was not able to attend Spring Fly-In and asked if someone else might be available to do so. Bob went on to state that the National Conservation meetings and the NACD Board meetings were happening at the same time and so he was unable to attend both. He informed the group that a resolution passed in the southwest region regarding hauling of water and feed to wild horses and burros **ONLY** for the intent to trap and remove animals from the range to prevent further eco-system degradation to the range

lands. Bob stated that the National Envirothon will be taking place in Rawlings, NC this year. He was happy that they had a new representative speaking, Jake Tibbets, as he spoke loudly and clearly and easy to follow along. He also stated that next year's Annual Meeting will take place in Las Vegas, NV.

Gary Thrash stated that Jake Tibbets gave an update on the Land and Water Conservation Fund that expired last year. Congress is debating renewal. The House and Senate have passed a non-expiring Land and Water Conservation Fund bill. The concern for the conservation districts in the past is that it has led to the purchase of lands both federally and locally, and without maintenance funds on those. Since it is conservation funds, some of those monies could come toward the actual conservation efforts that conservation districts do on private land, not just the acquisition land. This did not get in the bill that passed but Gary mentioned that conservation districts would like to see if they can get an amendment to the proposed fund bill that would allocate money toward conservation practices. There is currently \$21 billion in this fund and it is growing at a rate of \$9000 per day.

Cindy Lair stated that it was nice to have Bobbi Ketels presence at the annual meeting this year. **Bobbi Ketels** thanked the board for supporting her attendance at the annual meeting. She also stated that the executive director round table meetings were very beneficial, producing good conversation, and networking opportunities. Bobbi also reported that the idea of an executive director quorum for everyone to have access to is still in the works. For now, they have an email available for a platform for organized conversations and collaboration. **Director George Fosha** and President **Scott Jones** congratulated Bob Warner on his President's award at the annual meeting.

Bobbi Ketels asked for the board's permission to send out Phil Brink's survey to landowners in their database. She also asked for permission to post the Survey on their Facebook page. There were no objections to the above actions.

Prior Meeting Minutes:

President Scott Jones asked for a motion to approve the January 2019 minutes. **CACD Director Charlie Carnahan** made the motion to approve and **Director Gary Thrash** gave the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the CACD BOD's January 2019 Minutes was passed unanimously.

Additional Items to Agenda:

Charlie Carnahan stated that he had a landowner in his district, out by the Denver airport, that is asking about the installation of a deep well that was said to be used to inject sewage down into the aquafer. The landowner is concerned about potential contamination to the aquafer. He was wondering if anyone had heard anything about this.

George Fosha replied to Charlie's inquiry stating that injection wells are usually a good thing for the health of an aquafer, but normally the reinjection material is not raw sewage but treated water. He told Charlie that he would contact him to discuss this further. **Scott Jones** added that he would also ask around and see if he could gather any more information about this proposed injection well.

Financial Update – Bobbi Ketels:

CACD FINANCIALS: 01-31-19

Ending/Cleared Balance in Checking as of January 31st, \$114,973.62

Checks/Payments Cleared - \$38,869.39, Deposits Cleared \$57,230.91

Total Uncleared Transactions (Checks/Payments Only-No Pending Deposits) -22,009.73

Ending Register Balance as of January 31st, \$92,963.89

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

NOI as of 01/31/19 \$66,888.74

Credit Card Ending Statement Balance as of 2/06/19 \$21,675.96
Total District Dues Paid 2019 \$13,000.00

UARRP Activity 2019 YTD: Total pass-through expenses \$17,893.00 - Total pass-through income \$17,893.00 -
*Pending to bill *Pending receipt of 2 additional invoices for January - Total CACD Income Earned YTD 2019
\$894.65 (Includes 5% Admin & Payroll Reimb)

George Fosha made a motion to accept the financials. **Charlie Carnahan** seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

Camp Rocky:

Bobbi Ketels is working on a corporate sponsorship for Camp Rocky, through Cabela's Outdoor Fund. She has been unable to get a person on the phone but did read that this sponsorship is only open to those invited to apply. Bobbi asked if there were any other ideas for corporate sponsors out there. They need a sponsorship for \$2,500-\$3,000. She also mentioned that their first committee meeting for Camp Rocky was taking place today. **Gary Thrash** responded to Bobbi's corporate sponsorship inquiry by stating that NACD has an ongoing relationship with Cabela's and suggested that Bobbi reach out to the national board for assistance.

Envirothon:

Bobbi Ketels stated that Anthony Lobato called yesterday to discuss Envirothon and that she would call him back today. She also stated that a meeting for Envirothon is scheduled to take place at the upcoming Rio Grande Watershed meeting next week. Bobbi has reached out to Mark Cronquist and Brenda to inquire about any changes that need to be made to the form before it is distributed. **Cindy Lair** stated that she sent out an email last week asking Brenda what communications have been sent to the schools at this time, as she has been receiving concerns from schools about a lack of communication and planning.

Annual Meeting:

Bobbi Ketels stated that she is working on the Hotel Elegante contract and accommodations for the annual meeting. She has been reviewing the contract with Morgan and will release it to the board for review once she has the details finished up. Once the board approves the contract, Bobbi will schedule a second site meeting to go over all of the remaining details.

NACD Tech Assistance Grant :

Bobbi also explained that the NACD technical assistance grant program was in its 2nd year. Clint had ranked the applications and the program was rolled out in 8 districts. Bobbi has received 4 renewal applications at this time.

CACD Health Insurance Resolution:

Bobbi Ketels explained that she had been working with Bobby Frank from Wyoming on the employee benefits packages and board liability packages discussed at the annual meeting. She also mentioned a call she had received with a new "out of the box" idea presented from an outside source. She was going to discuss with Cindy Lair and Nikki Brinson before presenting it to the board.

CSCB Watershed Leadership Training Workshop:

Bobbi will follow up with Nikki and Abby about the watershed leadership conference registrations. She also asked the board's permission to attend the conference at both locations. **Gary Thrash** moved to have Bobbi Ketels attend the watershed leadership conference at both locations. **Jim Cecil** seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

CACD/NRCS Agreement:

Bobbi also stated that she is working on a breakdown of the remaining funds from 2018 for Randy with NRCS. As well as an amended budget by the end of the week for NRCS for FY19.

CACD GMAIL Account:

Bobbi also mentioned some IT issues she has experienced with their email account being spoofed, sending out emails that look like they are coming from her but actually contain a virus. She stated that 2 districts had receive a virus from these emails, and that she believes this will be a continuing problem for them moving forward. **Bobbi** proposed switching their email platform from google to outlook as she spoke with an IT representative that informed her the level of security with this upgrade would be improved. The cost of the annual subscription would be \$200-\$250. If the board would like to have separate email accounts for each board member the additional cost would be \$5 per account per month. **Bobbi** stated that their anti-virus protection could be updated through Mid-west for an annual cost of \$38 for ant-virus software and \$50 for remote monitoring. If a problem should occur, she informed the board that the cost of IT would be \$65/hour, which she felt is comparable to other IT services out there. **Scott Jones** stated that the annual cost of this switch would equate to about \$850/year. He also stated that he felt like this issue was an important one to consider in this day and age of technology. **Cindy Lair** stated that she thought google was a cheaper option for non-profit organizations. **Bobbi** stated that she was told by the Mid-west representative that google has more virus issues than outlook in general. But stated that it may be worth researching more. **Scott Jones** stated that he felt the board should opt for the Outlook program at this time. **Cindy Lair** responded by stating that just because it is more expensive does not mean that it will be fool proof in protecting them from viruses. **Jim Cecil** asked if any organizations offered grants for this type of expense. **Scott Jones** mentioned that the board is renegotiating their contract and suggested they discuss adding this cost to the new agreement.

Bobbi Ketels stated that she would be willing to reach out to Randy or Clint with NRCS but that she did not think this expense is currently covered in their contract and is doubtful that they will be able to negotiate terms that would include it. She also stated that they have been working on creative ways to bring on an assistant and wondered if these new contract negotiations would allow for further discussion and mentioned the idea of a combined role of assistant and the on-call position. **Bobbi** asked the board to allow for her to switch anti-virus software and continue discussions with CSCB about options for a new email platform.

Charlie Carnahan moved to pay for the new anti-virus software and Microsoft email accounts, encouraging board members to reimburse CACD for their own personal account costs but not requiring reimbursement. **Steve McEndree** seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

Ag Council:

Scott Jones stated that he would be attending the AG Council meeting in Denver on the 22nd. He also encouraged everyone that can to attend AG Day March 20th at the Capital, he stated that the event starts at 10am and consists of professional cooking using Colorado grown products. **Scott** asked that those who attend AG Day wear their name tags.

The next CACD BOD meeting is March 13th, via teleconference.

Meeting adjourned at 9:33 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Abbey Grey
Administrative Support