

**Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
July 17th, 2019, at 7:30 AM Teleconference**

Attendees:

*Scott Jones, CACD President - Colorado River Watershed
Gary Thrash, Director - San Juan Basin Watershed /CO Representative to NACD
Charlie Carnahan, Director - Upper South Platte Watershed
George Fosha, Director - Upper Arkansas River Watershed
Steve McEndree, Director – Lower Arkansas 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:

*Nick Charchalis, Director - North Platte/White/Yampa River Watershed
Jim Cecil, Director - Republican River Watershed
Mike Cleary, CACD Vice President - Gunnison/Dolores River Watershed
Cindy Lair, CSCB*

Guests:

*Les Owen, CDA
Randy Randall, NRCS
Mark Cronquist, CSCB
Nikki Brinson, CSCB*

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. With no additional requests, the board moved on with the agenda.

Prior Meeting Minutes:

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

CDA Update-Les Owen:

Several topics are open for official comment on the federal lands side of things. The GMUG forest plan revision is having a series of public meetings around the state over in that area to talk about that forest plan and they are taking comments right now. If you are a permittee or even in the watershed of the GMUG forest this is something for you to engage in. The Rio Grande National Forest will be coming out with their final forest plan any day now. They are at their final stages, Now is a good time to become aware and push back if needed, but it is toward the end of its run.

The Eastern Colorado BLM resource management plan amendment is out for public review with a draft plan and a draft EIS. The surface acres are the south-central part of the state and the whole eastern side for the minerals, so this is a large undertaking.

Specific to sheep, the Gunnison field office released an EIS that is looking at nine sheep grazing allotments over in that area. Mainly at the issue of Big Horn sheep and Domestic sheep interactions. This one will be the first one they have actually tried to finish in the last several years. The outcome of this one will be very telling for the fate of other sheep allotments in Colorado based on this issue. If it comes out with a bad finding this will be bad news for the sheep industry. CDA has been a cooperating agency on that one and has been able to get some good changes made. There are still a few they will need to comment on to see if they can get them improved.

Other topics are out for comment, and everyone saw where comments were being accepted for or against delisting the grey wolf and those just closed yesterday. It will be interesting to see how this turns out, especially in light of the initiatives going out in Colorado, it could kickstart a reintroduction program.

Director Gary Thrash asked about BLM moving their headquarters to Grand Junction. Les said yes, it has been all over the news and it sounds good, but if it ends up happening there is talk about 70 to 80 employees being moved to Grand Junction. There are concerns about things being further bogged down with this move. Gary stated it was announced to the employees that the two highest level positions would be moving to Grand Junction. Everyone agrees this is a big undertaking and looking for office space. There are doubts and concerns about funding for the full cost of the move. Everyone is hopeful it will turn out as a positive thing.

NRCS Update-Randy Randall:

Randy touched based on the three broad topics. The first one is going through and looking at staffing. The good news is they are hiring. They currently have 45 positions they are looking to go through and to be in the process of advertising. They include a wide variety of positions at the field level. All will be posted on USA jobs for only about a week, so anyone interested should keep monitoring this site. As mentioned in Clint's earlier messages, they currently sit at about 175 employees and the ceiling for Colorado is currently 218 employees. This is where you can see the 40 plus employees looking to hire, but to take a deeper dive into this, although they are going to be looking to hire, this also includes 55% or so that end up being employees that are currently in their system, a lot of internal movement, for actual gains ending being around 40%. At the end of the fiscal year, they will still be looking to bring people on board to fill positions.

Regarding programs, they are looking extremely well. The staff at the national office is in the process of developing the interim draft rules for the 2018 farm bill and they have not seen anything yet. The rules will be posted to the Federal Register for public comment sometime before the end of September. Randy will send notes out to Scott. EQIP as of June 17th; they have obligated 67% of their initial 36 million dollars in EQIP FAs. They are on track to have additional FA obligated to the state coming up by the end of this week. They have a second EQIP allocation of about 9.5 million dollars which they will be hitting. This will bring their total to 45.7 million dollars of FA received in the state this year. That puts them near the very top in the nation in regard to EQIP FA obligations and allocations.

Regarding the easement side, they received nineteen easement applications requesting approximately 15 million dollars. Their initial allocation for the state was 9.2 million dollars so they are hoping to get supplemental monies to go through and pick up as many easements as they can. Those funds they are anticipating should be available by the end of July. Looking at the CSP side, the new CSP grassland initiative is currently in development and scheduled to be released by the end of this month, so stay tuned.

On the partnership side, they are in the process of amending a number of their partnership agreements. Many of the ones tied to their technicians have already been obligated and are funded through June 30, 2020. At the beginning of the year, they will go through and be looking at obligating additional funds for this and extending this agreement for another year.

Director George Fosha asked how it was going with the reorganization of the resource teams on a statewide level. Randy stated he feels more are coming receptive to it. A number of people are seeing the value of being able to go through and provide cross-county support to each other. Randy thinks people are more optimistic and having these resource team lead district conservationists is allowing for some of that administrative burden to be pulled off of the remaining DCs in the county, so they can go through and help the other field staff go through and get contracts implemented and go to the field for follow up and some of those pieces. So far so good, but right now everyone seems receptive and things seem to be moving forward.

George stated he is in area 15 and Deric has been to a couple of their meetings, so they are starting to figure it out. Randy stated they were receptive to any feedback if there is something they can go through and improve on please let them know but being a few months into this he feels folks are starting to get traction and understand their roles, but he always appreciates any feedback.

CSCB Update-Nikki Brinson:

Cindy is attending a soil health tour and could not be on. CSCB sent out a customer survey yesterday to help gauge staff, programs, website improvements, how they can better help the districts and also covered some standard stuff. They did this last year and with technology requests, they changed the format this year. Hoping to get some good response from this to strategize their plan. If you did not receive this, it is also accessible on the district operations website.

Cindy has been busy working with the new administration putting together a soil health coalition in a group of people interested in developing some sort of voluntary incentive-based program as the goal of it. How this actually implements into the state and the Department of Agriculture is what this program is working on. Cindy is currently attending a lot of meetings working out these details.

Matching grants are due this Friday. DTC applications are out and due by August 19th. Get in touch with Abbey if you had any questions. They also sent out a short-list of meeting highlights from their last board meetings to share discussions and any votes that took place. On the grants piece they have been collecting and working with other partners at the state and federal level, building a list of grants the districts could apply for as just an option of something to look at and use as a starting point and a resource of where and how to get started on a project needing funding.

The legislature approved an increase in the fee from \$30 to \$33.58 effective July 1st. They are advising districts that they should update their policy as to what amount of fees the districts are able to collect. Lastly, the field staff will require more notice if you have a need for them to be at an annual meeting or other meetings besides local workgroup and watershed meetings, so they are able to better prioritize their schedules.

Legislative Update- Brett Moore:

This is the time of the year between the legislative sessions, but as we have been hearing in the news, there has been some discussion about the Governor calling a special session to deal with measure CC, which is a measure that would basically start sweeping the tabor refunds moving forward. And we are set to have a refund this year. If measure CC were to pass, it would actually sweep all the refunds and basically knock-down that part of tabor to where the state would always be able to keep any excess revenues. You probably would still have to vote on any tax increases, but really another big hit to the protection that TABOR gives to

the taxpayer. This is not looking very good on the ballot, so the governor has been working with some Republican members to try to come up with a compromise to take CC off the ballot and figure out another way to work around this. They would have to call a special session to run a bill to do that. They were coming to a head and ready to call it last week, and they ended up not doing that. As it stands, they will have from now until it is time to print the ballot for CC which will be probably 90 days out from the election. They have a little bit more time to call that special session to deal with that kind of fiscal implication. Brett does not think this is necessarily an issue that CACD will be weighing in on too heavily. Brett will cover the special session if it were to be called.

The Ag Council held their summer meeting on July 2nd. No one was able to attend from CACD. Brett does have the minutes from this meeting. There are some interesting things that stand out from this meeting that he will be doing some follow up on with various stakeholders on. Commissioner Greenberg laid out her three major goals. Three major areas housing these goals included: 1. Supporting the next generation of farmers and ranchers; 2. Scaling up high-value agriculture and diverse market opportunities; and 3. Promoting and incentivizing soil, water, and climate stewardship. At this meeting, they said that Cindy Lair will be the lead on some of the soil health projects. We should be well connected here.

As far as the next generation of farmers and ranchers, we will probably see the concepts we discussed last year with the Young Farmers groups. When this comes back around with more momentum, we should be able to do some more outreach with them and see where they are at. We have to continue to stay in touch with everyone and keep apprised of the priorities. Otherwise this is the slow time of the year, particularly in an odd year where there are no elections, so we are not going around and meeting new candidates that may be in office next year, just meeting with existing legislators and tracking what issues may be coming up for the next session and following the water committee is ongoing at the moment. Director George Fosha asked Brett to send everyone a copy of the minutes.

NACD Update-Gary Thrash:

Gary wanted to remind everyone that August is the congressional recess from Washington DC to get out of the heat and humidity. NACD is encouraging folks from the districts to contact their representatives during this time to share some of the conservation concerns with their representatives. NACD has a grassroots advocacy webpage that provides some alerts, information, and policy papers for those who want to talk to their congressional reps. NACD would like a report of any contacts people may make with our delegation so they can keep track when they visit with them so when they come back to DC, NACD will know who was in contact with them.

There is a special promotional package with Cabela's in the NACD marketplace good through September 1st, to get some baseball caps where you can get your conservation district logo at no charge. You have to get a minimum package of 12 caps. This is something worth looking at to promote your district. Next year's NACD annual meeting is in Las Vegas, February 8-12. They are looking for ideas for break-out sessions. There will be more discussion during the NACD summer meeting coming up in a couple of weeks. Colorado is ahead of last year's contributions. Next year's conservation education is "Where would we be without pollinators?" NACD will have information out on the website for districts and teachers to utilize once completed.

Envirothon Update-Mark Cronquist:

Mark has been busy this last month working with Bobbi and the state champion team from Woodland Park High School, getting travel plans and budgeting for their travel worked out to North Carolina for the national contest. The bottom line for the travel this year to do that competition was \$7977.48, including the lodging, meals, travel prior to the event, including van rental and airline tickets for seven people, which were \$3,012.00. The National Envirothon registration was \$2,040.00. This is understandably a significant amount.

One of the things that we want to do is get a grip on establishing some protocols as far as what the state Envirothon organization will pay for and we have to be careful that we meet the national expectations that the winning teams do not do fundraising. That makes it difficult. This does not mean that we cannot go into where we come from and make requests that they suggest to us, but they do not want funds being raised in the name of Envirothon and used in some other way. Mark wanted to mention this to the board.

Mark has also been working on completing the topic expert panel. We have soil and land use, wildlife and the current issues topics taken care of. Aquatic Ecology and Forestry continue to be a bit of a challenge to find someone that enjoys working with young people and who is going to commit the time to work with us. He does have some leads, particularly in the Aquatic Ecology area, but if anyone else has anyone they would like to suggest, Mark would appreciate their suggestions. The Aquatic Ecology part has been the challenge for the last couple of years. We need someone who actually speaks to the Aquatic environment with all the critters in it, all the surrounding environment, that type of thing. It has not been very comprehensive the last couple of years and that is an issue for us moving forward.

Mark is contacting other Envirothon state organizations to get their tips on fundraising and policies they use in regard to the funds raised, also on the volunteer screening and youth protection protocol moving forward with the due diligence in protecting the young people during the state competition and being diligent in protecting the youth as they travel to Envirothon national. We want to make sure we support the state team, but also need to put in place to protect and to optimize the funding that we raise on their behalf. Mark is still making contacts to fill the roles of the subcommittees.

Another thing to mention is we had a significant and unpleasant venue surprise. We have been using the Arapahoe County Fairgrounds for the last few years and this has worked very well for us. Arapahoe County in the last few months instituted a fee policy for the fairgrounds. Prior to that West Arapahoe CD was providing \$500 in funding and there was a minimum payment made to Arapahoe County for the use of the facilities. However, for the year of 2020 they sent us a proposal for \$3,312.00 for two the days of the contest and this did not include the open-air livestock pavilion Mark wanted to use for outdoor training that the coaches thought would be very beneficial. Mark has been working with Katelyn Westendorf of Arapahoe County CD supervisor to see if we can get these fees significantly reduced. We had paid \$1600 to Douglas County in the past. But, the \$3K dollars does not seem to be the best use of funds that we raise for this program if we can get some in-kind help in some other places.

At this point in time we are looking at other venues; Colorado State Fairground, National Western Stock show complex, regional complex in Greeley. We will certainly look at all options. To wrap up Mark's report, he asked the board to have approximately 20 minutes of time during one of the general sessions at the CACD Annual Meeting to make a video presentation of Envirothon to the entire group of attendees. He wants everyone to hear about Envirothon and the broad-based approach. Scott and George felt it was a great idea and that it would be penciled into the program during the AM planning committee call. Mark wants to make sure everyone understands the intent of this statewide event. Gary Thrash will follow-up with Mark on some forestry ideas.

CACD FINANCIALS: 06-30-19

Ending/Cleared Balance in Checking as of June 30th, \$103,208.48

Checks/Payments Cleared - \$16,661.35, Deposits Cleared \$33,462.79

Total Uncleared Transactions (Checks/Payments Only-No Pending Deposits) -\$1,970.66

Ending Register Balance as of June 30th, \$101,237.82

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 06/30/19 \$65,162.67

New Transactions

Expenses -\$8,343.30
Deposits \$0
Total New Transactions -\$8,343.30
Current Register Balance \$92,894.52
Current NOI \$56,819.37

Credit Card Ending Statement Balance as of 7/06/19 \$3,109.83 (Pending Reconciliation)
Total District Dues Deposited as of 6/30/2019 \$45,800.00 (deposits pending)

UARRP Activity 2019 YTD: Total pass-through expenses \$42,925.48 - Total pass-through income \$42,925.48 - Total CACD Income Earned YTD 2019 \$2,386.28 (Includes 5% Admin & Payroll Reimb)
Balance of Federal Funds Available \$351,935.73 (thru 5/31/19-June transactions not yet reflected)

Director Steve McEndree made a motion to approve the June Financials. **Director Charlie Carnahan** gave the second. Motion passes.

Camp Rocky:

We just got back from Camp Rocky this past weekend. We were at the same numbers as last year, but we ended up losing seven campers during the week prior to check-in, due to miscellaneous family and personal issues. Camp went well, conservation instruction, planning, and the workday went very well, building on last year's conservation work completed. There was only one incident where one of the campers did experience a concussion during free time on the basketball court. Bobbi took the camper to get checked out at the ER at the direction of the camp nurse for a full medical evaluation to be on the safe side. This camper returned back to camp and finished out the last day of camp. We were in contact with the camper's parents during the process.

The Camp Rocky committee also discussed if we could give a short presentation during the general assembly meeting to help get the word out and get our camper numbers up for next year. The exciting thing this year to point out is that two of our campers came from the Woodland Park Envirothon team and two from the FFA group that volunteers at Envirothon. Director George Fosha brought up one thought for the annual meeting; Follow suit with what some districts do and have the attending student speak at our annual meeting as well.

Corporate Fundraising:

To tie into last month's call there is funding that can be moved to Envirothon to cover some of the travel expenses. Bobbi has not had the opportunity to follow up with Mike on the status of approaching Cabela's from a different avenue, but still in discussions. In regard to Anadarko, Bobbi reminded the board that we still needed to have discussions on the Anadarko donation in regard to membership dues in 2019.

Annual Meeting:

No updates. An annual meeting call will be scheduled to take place within the next couple weeks. Following will be a site visit to Hotel Elegante sometime in August. Director Gary Thrash stated he would bring up the Cabela's contact again at the NACD summer meeting. No further discussion took place about the annual meeting.

Misc. Discussions:

President Scott Jones started discussions on the need to possibly move the summer face-to-face meeting and threw out some tentative dates. Further discussions took place. Bobbi stated she would send out a doodle poll to the board for the final decision on a new date. The venue at CDA in Broomfield will remain the same. Bobbi asked Nikki if she could help with reserving the conference room at CDA. The meeting will be all day with a catered lunch. Scott gave a brief update on the last CAWA meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:39 AM

Respectfully Submitted,

Bobbi Ketels
CACD Executive Director