

**Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2020, at 7:30 AM via Teleconference**

Attendees:

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

Absent:

Guests:

Randy Randall, NRCS
Donna Rasmussen, NRCS
Cindy Lair, CSCB
Noah McCord, 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. 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 **April 2020** minutes. **Director Charlie Carnahan** made the motion to approve the minutes and **Director Jim Cecil** gave the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the CACD BOD's **April 2020** minutes was **passed**.

Legislative Update – Brett Moore:

Brett Moore reported today, May 13, is the 60th day of the emergency recess of the Colorado General Assembly. Adjournment was Saturday March 13th and they have not been back since due to the covid emergency.

May 4th convened the Joint Budget Committee and started cuts to the state budget. May 11th the Executive Committee had an administrative meeting where they were to layout all the perimeters to restart the legislative session on May 18th but announced on May 9th that they will not be back until the week of May 25th. There is not a consensus on how they are going to manage the legislative session when they come back on the 25th.

There is talk about moving some legislatures up to the balcony to maintain the social distancing requirements. The balcony and lobby will be closed to the public. Lobbyists are looking at how they will communicate with legislators such as remote testimony and possibly texting.

Any bills with new money, including the **CACD Bill for Sales Tax Exemption for Fencing Material**, will not be considered. They were anticipating a \$3.3B shortfall for this budget. The state budget has been increasing about \$1B

per year. It appears that the House is only considering bills that are fast (not contentious), friendly (bipartisan) and free (no costs associated with the bill). Of the 375 bills left at this point, few meet the above criteria. There will be additional bills dealing with the covid disaster. No other new bills are anticipated. It will be interesting to see how the bills left will be handled. All bills must have a committee of reference hearing and it is not clear how this will be handled.

Brett is not aware of any budget cuts to the Conservation funds requested. CDA has not been asked to make as deep of cuts as other State departments. Brett will continue to stay in touch with the Joint Budget Committee staff to protect the Conservation Districts state general funding.

Brett reported that the CACD Policy Committee, and specifically the Policy Book Committee, have been working hard to put together redrafts for the Policy Book. Brett thanked the people serving on that committee. The policy book has duplicative wording, old action items and items that need non-substantive changes. The Book is going to be cleaned up and brought up to date. Each section of the policy book, which reflects the resource committees, will be broken up by those sections. Each section will become its own resolution presented by CACD.

Once edits are presented, we will be able to finalize the resolutions and send out to the Districts and Watersheds for review. They will then be resolutions at the CACD annual meeting. This should give CACD a clean, concise policy book moving forward. We are starting to track our resolution progress more carefully. Brett sent an email with a link to a doc entitled "CACD Resolution Progress 2017 to 2020".

That document has all the resolutions passed at the annual meeting and whether they were policy to be placed in policy book or action items for this Board to act on. It shows where the resolutions came from with a goal of keeping better track of where we are on the resolutions and if they need action or not. Brett feels this will make CACD more effective moving forward.

CDA Update-Les Owen: No Report

CSCB Update:

Cindy Lair reflected on Brett Moore's Legislative report and stated that CSCB's options for new initiatives they have asked for will not happen. She then introduced Noah McCord. Noah gave the Board his background which included working in WA State with public lands and private landowners mostly on recreation issues and how that supports private landowners as well. He also worked with conservation districts on specific projects. He has been involved in volunteer and community services that have all focused on customer service, technical assistance, education, and training. He has been with the American Red Cross since 2012 which included training and community outreach to youth. He has worked with youth in summer camps both private and public.

In addition to Envirothon and Camp Rocky; he is planning to spend time developing resources that Districts can use for youth education and community outreach. He plans to do that by listening to the priorities coming out of individual Districts. He has had some good conversation with Board members and District managers already, but he wants to continue as things open. He hopes to help Districts increase their visibility within their own communities. One of his goals and priorities is to increase participation in Envirothon.

Noah plans to compile a list of outside grant sources for Districts to help enhance their education and outreach programs. He will be the Regional Field Specialist for the Conservation Districts east of I-25 except for some by El Paso County that Rachel will continue to support. He will be available to all state districts for assistance with education and outreach.

Cindy thanked **Director Jim Cecil** for his assistance in the interview process for Noah's position and reminded Jim to submit his reimbursement form for mileage.

Cindy told the Board that considering the covid restrictions, the CSCB meeting in June will be held virtually on the afternoon of June 2nd.

CSCB has virtual training for District Operations on May 20th at 9:00 and then another training on May 27th that will showcase District partnerships. These meetings are open to supervisors as well as staff. She welcomes suggestions for other training ideas that could be presented by CSCB via Zoom. She also offered CSCB's assistance with virtual meetings, including Watershed meetings. This service would be provided to CACD and Districts at no cost.

Cindy also noted that CSCB matching grant opportunities are open now. CSCB does have full funding for the grants. She recommends that applications be submitted for this cycle because they do not know what the next funding round will look like. Deadline for applications is July 17, 2020.

CSCB is also in the process of negotiating their agreement with NRCS. It is going to be a bigger and better agreement. She will have more details as the agreement is firmed up.

She has been helping a group of water engineers called Linker technologies. They are interested in doing a study with the Western Sustainable Ag Research and Education Program. This study would take satellite and remote sensing information that is available to everyone. Currently you must purchase an expensive subscription through an Agra business to access this information. This information is in real time for things such as evapotranspiration and ground water that would make water management choices and decisions better.

Rather than having people purchase subscriptions Linker is creating a tool that would make this information available to everyone that has a phone app to download for free. They need producers to be partners with them and complete a survey on how decisions are made. Linker would make this satellite information available to them via an app. Should Linker receive the funding for this study the funds will not be available until mid 2021.

Cindy noted that Noah is very connected to youth education and he will be involved with the Envirothon and Camp Rocky. She suggested that Noah be a co-director of Camp Rocky to relieve some of Bobbi's workload. Bobbi would still be heavily involved and CACD would have direct control of the camp. Noah could work directly with Amy Gossman. CSCB will not be the responsible party for the finances. That would stay with CACD. This is an offer CSCB would like to make and it would be up to the CACD Board to make this decision.

Cindy sent CACD Board members an email inviting them to any of three Greenhouse Gas Reduction Road Map stakeholder discussion meetings. She has been appointed the official representative for the CDA on a team at the Capital where all state agencies are participating. This is to implement HB 1261 that mandates reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Agriculture is not constrained by this Bill. She has made it clear in these meetings that this is volunteer conservation not regulatory constraints. There may be opportunities for funding for conservation activities on private lands.

Cindy mentioned that CSCB is in the process of reprinting the reference manual that the CDs use for district operations. It had been switched to an on-line manual. They decided to keep it online and print copies for the offices.

NACD Updates – Gary Thrash & Bob Warner:

Director Gary Thrash reported that the NACD meetings in Bismarck, ND July 15-18, and Maui, HI Sept. 15- 17 have been canceled. The Feb. 2021 meeting in New Orleans has not been canceled yet.

He also reported that it is ok for Districts to apply for the latest round of TA funding with a deadline of June 1. Bobbi stated that they received renewal approval on five applications. Previously there had been eight. She stated the additional funding that was advertised to the CO Districts was withdrawn due to NRCS employee hiring.

Bob Barry from Utah, Chairman for the SW Region, is having conference call meetings to make sure everyone is keeping up on issues. He mentioned that he travels a lot and is funded by Utah. He asked if each state in the SW Region would be willing to contribute to his expenses. It would require \$200-\$500 from each state to support the regions activities. Arizona is able to manage that account. The CACD Board will need to act on this item. As a side

note; Gary added that Utah has gone to an appointed board instead of an elected board. This Board would be appointed by the Utah Ag Commissioner.

Gary stated that Jeff Burwell, NACD SW Representative, brought up the efforts of the Districts to get tree sales going. He said Jeff complimented CSCB and their efforts for being innovative on getting the trees from the nurseries to the Districts.

*Directors Gary Thrash and Bob Warner sit on the Stewardship and Education Committee and reported that the 2021 Poster Contest and Stewardship theme will be “**Healthy Forest, Healthy Communities.**” NACD has already developed a nice-looking logo.*

***Director Bob Warner** added that the February 2021 New Orleans meeting will be the 75th anniversary for NACD and that it will be a special meeting. He hopes the meeting is not cancelled.*

*Gary circled back to say that the 2020 Stewardship and Poster Contest theme for this year is “**Where Would We Bee Without Pollinators?**” He sent the information to the Nature Center in Colorado Springs. He received good feedback from them. Families can use this information for education opportunities for kids while at home during the covid outbreak.*

Bobbi reported that Mia Corey from Fremont CD was scheduled for NRCS Boot Camp in May. The Camp was canceled. Bobbi hopes that Mia able to be scheduled for the June camp. If that does not work, Bobbi will see if she can schedule her for a later date.

Envirothon Update: Mark Cronquest

Mark was not able to attend this meeting. Bobbie provided the update stating the Noah and Mark have met and discussed Envirothon. Noah stated that they are in the process of transitioning over the information to Noah for continuity. Noah will be sending out information later this summer.

Bobbi asked that the Board vote Noah McCord be appointed as the Envirothon Program Manager. Also, she asked that the Board vote that Noah be named as a Camp Rocky Co-Director.

Director George Fosha** made the motion that Noah McCord be made the Envirothon Program Manager and a Camp Rocky Co-Director. **Director Tyler Neely** seconds the motion. There is no discussion. **Motion Passes

Bobbi will work with Noah on the financial aspect of the program.

NRCS Update-Randy Randall:

Randy Randall gave the NRCS update. This Monday Clint began his detail in Texas. Gene Backhaus is Acting State Conservationist until July 19. At that time Randy will transition into the Acting State Conservationist position.

As an agency; NRCS is still operating at a Level II during the covid pandemic. This means that employees are restricted to no more employees in the office than the appropriate social distance requirements. Field staff are allowed to visit producers but are asked to stand on the other side of the vehicle when having discussions. Employees are to take separate vehicles to the field. No more than one person per vehicle.

Team members continue to work EQIP and CSP applications, so those contracts get to a funding status starting in June. NRCS is working with Cindy Lair to make sure the DCT agreement is in place. Randy complimented the work Bobbi has been doing on the NRCS agreement with CACD. NRCS is flagged to put \$90,035.00 in this matching grant agreement for YR-4 amendment.

Donna Rasmussen gave the NRCS staffing update. As of today, and thru the end of May, NRCS will be at 184 staff in Colorado. The ceiling is 219. Thirty-four positions are waiting on a tentative job offer or final job offer. Added together that makes Colorado close to the 219 ceiling. They continue to prioritize positions as they move forward.

The current acceptance rate is about 70%. Some positions in the hopper are program support, soil conservationist, civil engineering, and soil con technician positions. There are some that are prioritized and will be in the system for advertising including a WGA position and an RTL in Grand Junction.

Randy asked for questions from the Board. There were none. Randy offered his cell phone number so Board members can reach out to him with questions or concerns.

Monthly Financial Update-Bobbi Ketels:

CACD FINANCIALS: 04-30-2020

Beginning Balance in checking on April 1, 2020, \$117,715.68

Checks/Payments Cleared -\$ 14,741.27, Deposits & Credits Cleared \$ 9,989.26
(Total Cleared Transactions -\$ 4,752.01)

Ending/Cleared Balance in Checking as of April 30th, \$ 112,963.67

Total Uncleared Transactions= -\$ 2,612.90 Checks/Payments - Deposits \$0

Ending Register Balance as of April 30th, \$ 110,350.77

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

Funds designated for Envirothon 2020/2021 \$9,868.81

NOI as of 04/30/2020 \$74,406.81

New Transactions as of 05/11/2020

Checks and Payments - 14 items -\$5,463.71

Deposits and Credits - 1 item \$11,257.50 (SDA PPP Pmt -CARES Act)

Total New Transactions \$5,793.79

Ending Register Balance as of 05-11-2020 \$116,144.56

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

Funds designated for Envirothon 2020/2021 \$9,868.81

NOI as of 05/11/2020 \$80,200.60

Credit Card Ending Statement Balance as of 05/06/2020 \$25.00

Total District Dues Paid as of 04/30/2020 \$38,150.00 (membership invoiced (75) \$90,000.00)

Total District Dues Paid as of 04/30/2019 \$42,200.00 (down by \$4050.00)

UARRP Activity 04-30-20 YTD: *No New Activity

Total pass-through income \$4,585.09

Total pass-through expenses -\$4,585.09

Total CACD Income Earned YTD 3-31-20 \$222.60 (Includes 5% Admin & Payroll Reimb)

Balance of Federal Funds Available \$145,862.75

NRCS Programs:

Education Outreach Workshops YTD 4-30-2020:

Workshop Approved, Pending Completion \$2500

Educational Video Approved, Pending Completion \$2500

Education Workshops Completed & Reimb to CD (2) \$5,000.00 - Pending NRCS Reimb to CACD \$5,556.30

Total CACD Income Earned YTD 3-31-20 \$500.00 (10% admin))

Speakership Programs YTD 4-30-2020:

Speakership Meetings Approved, Pending Completion \$0

Speakership Meetings Completed & Reimb to CD (1) \$1920.00 - Pending NRCS Reimb to CACD \$2,140.15

Total CACD Income Earned YTD 04-30-2020 \$192.00 (10% admin)

All NRCS open invoices (5) 2019 YR-End & 2020 YTD \$30,425.06 *All Reimb Reports Now Submitted to NRCS. Full amount should be received by 5-31-2020.

George and Nick asked that Bobbi send a list of 2019 paid dues.

Director George Fosha made a motion to approve the February financials. **Director Tyler Neely** gave the second. **Motion passes.**

Fundraising: No Report

Camp Rocky-Bobbi Ketels:

President Scott Jones asked the Board if they feel Camp Rocky should be held this year, 2020, or canceled due to the Covid virus risk. Bobbi added she has been on State calls about camp opportunities and what that looks like. As it stands now it is in a holding pattern. The Governor's office is waiting on more data before deciding. Bobbi has five campers that said they would attend for sure. Two of the five have submitted their paperwork. There are issues to consider such as physicals, background checks for leadership participants including fingerprints. A decision needs to be made as soon as possible so work can be continued or put on hold.

Bobbi stated that co-director Amy Gossman feels that the Camp should be canceled for this year. Noah feels the camp should be canceled as well and work should start on next year's camp. **Director George Fosha** feels the liability issues are too high and families might be reluctant to send their children to the camp.

Director Steve McEndree made the motion to cancel the 2020 Camp Rocky program. **Director George Fosha** gives the second. **Director Nick Charchalis** asked if the Camp can be rescheduled for later in the summer. Bobbi replied that this is difficult to answer, however it has been mentioned that it is highly unlikely that there would be any camps this year. Cindy added that the schools in CO are having a tough time on how the schools will be managed and operated this fall. NRCS funds for the Camp would not roll forward but would be written into the new agreement. The designated funds might be able to be repositioned into another need or category. **Motion passes**

CACD Programs:

Annual Meeting:

Bobbi has been in touch with Morgan at Direct Conferences. CACD will need to protect themselves with the contract and what the cancellation penalties might be. Bobbi will meet with Tracey in Colorado Springs. If the 2020 Conference moves forward, they are working with CACD on requirements for room stays and food and beverage requirements. Bobbi asked that she be allowed to contract the date for the 2021 meeting for November 14 thru 18, 2021. If CACD does not reschedule and sign a contract for next year there will be a penalty. She believes the penalty will be between \$5,000 and \$6,000 if the contract is canceled in June and do not reschedule for 2021. The penalty increases the later the contract is canceled. If CACD signs a contract for 2021, Bobbi believes that there will be no penalty for canceling the 2020 meeting.

Director Jim Cecil moves to allow Bobbi to enter into a contract for the 2021 meeting dates of November 14 thru 18, 2021. **Director Nick Charchalis** seconds the motion. Randy Randall suggested challenging the venue on what their plan is for the covid requirements. Cindy offered a Zoom conference for the annual meeting. It is not as good as face to face; however, she feels it can be presented under that type format. CACD could charge for attendance if they chose. **Motion Passes**

PPE Loan:

Bobbi reported that the PPE loan that CACD applied for was approved by SBA through US Bank. The funds are in the account. She is working on setting up the fund tracking in the accounting program. She can apply for loan forgiveness in eight weeks and she is reviewing how to prepare that paperwork. Sponsorship and fund raising will be down this year and there is a slight decrease in membership dues. That is the purpose of applying for this loan.

Bobbi also reported there has been an increase in the requests for the matching funds for speakership and education funds. She is ready to submit for reimbursement from NRCS. Additional information was given in the financial report.

President Misc. Discussion and Updates-Scott Jones:

President Scott Jones confirmed the next CACD BOD call will be **June 10, 7:30 AM**. There will be a Legislative Policy meeting June 3rd.

Meeting adjourned at 9:37 AM

Respectfully Submitted,

Bobbi Ketels
CACD Executive Director