

**Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
September 11th, 2019, at 9:00 AM via Face-to-Face
Colorado Department of Agriculture-Broomfield, CO**

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
Charlie Carnahan, Director - Upper South Platte Watershed
George Fosha, Director - Upper Arkansas River Watershed
Nick Charchalis, Director - North Platte/White/Yampa River 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:

Nancy Berges, Director - Lower South Platte Watershed
Steve McEndree, Director – Lower Arkansas River Watershed

Guests:

Donna Rasmussen, NRCS
Cindy Lair, CSCB
Les Owen, CDA
Mark Cronquist, CSCB
Steve Silverman, Deputy Commissioner, CDA

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by President Scott Jones at 9:11 AM after establishing a quorum. President Scott Jones asked for introductions around the room. After introductions 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 August 2019 minutes. **CACD Gary Thrash** made the motion to approve and **Director Jim Cecil** gave the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the CACD BOD's August 2019 Minutes passed unanimously.

Legislative Update- Brett Moore:

Brett attended the second meeting of the Collaborative for Healthy soils. The group is very large with not as many landowners at the table. CACD's concern is to be able to confirm CSCB's intent on keeping the program in-house. The Interim Water Committee had their meeting August 21st and are meeting again September 11-12. Brett will attend and represent CACD on the 12th. They will have their final meetings later in the fall. Since we last met, we had a legislative call to further discuss pending action on 2018 resolutions. Brett reviewed discussions on each resolution from the previous legislative call.

The two CRP resolutions were discussed in detail. CACD Director Nick Charchalis talked to the board about the CRP conversation that took place with one of the supervisors/landowners in SE Colorado. CACD will be at the table for the CRP General Signup/2018 USDA Farm Bill Informational Meeting to be held November 13th in Las Animas. This

meeting is being organized by Cathy Garcia from the office of Senator Cory Gardner at the request of stakeholders in the Lower Arkansas watershed. Presenters will include Clarice Navarro-Ratzlaff, Executive Director for FSA, Cindy Vukasin, CRP Director FSA, Clint Evans, State Conservationist, NRCS. CACD representatives will be in attendance. The board agreed this is a high priority. Directors George Fosha and Jim Cecil gave some history on CRP in Colorado. Discussions took place about the NRCS state advisory committee and that CACD needs to be at the table like we were several years back.

Brett represented CACD at the Ag Commissioners luncheon during the Pueblo State Fair. Brett gave a recap of the 2019 Legislative session. CACD tracked 34 bills concerning natural resources, conservation, private property rights, and water issues this year. The CACD Legislative Committee bases its decisions on what bills to track based on the CACD policy book, which is composed of policies pushed up to the state association through the resolution process. CACD supported the following bills:

-House Bill 19-1006: Wildfire Mitigation Wildland-urban Interface Areas

-House Bill 19-1082: Water Rights Easements

-Senate Bill 19-040: Establish Colorado Fire Commission

-Senate Bill 19-207: FY 2019-20 Long Bill

All 4 of these bills were signed by the governor. We supported the Long Bill, the state budget for 2019-2020 fiscal year, containing direct district funding and grant funds, which was signed by the Governor on April 18th. Additionally, we supported 2 wildfire bills; HB-1006 and SB-40 in collaboration with the Jefferson Conservation District, with the approval of our legislative committee, and on behalf of other districts across the state with forest and wildland interface lands.

House Bill 1082 was born out of CACD's November 2017 annual meeting, where the districts approved a resolution seeking clarification of state statute regarding ditch easements and the right to improve or maintain a ditch. As a result of this resolution, CACD presented the issue to the 2018 interim legislative Water Resources Review Committee, and subsequently worked with Representatives Marc Catlin (R-Montrose) and Donald Valdez (D-La Jara), and Senator Don Coram (R-Montrose) to craft and run House Bill 1082. The bill clarifies a ditch right-of-way to include the right to maintain, repair, and improve the ditch. Prior to this legislation, it was not clear if and when improvements were allowed, creating confusion and leading to litigation. The bill was signed into law by Governor Polis on March 28, 2019.

CACD opposed one bill: **Senate Bill 19-181: Protect Public Welfare Oil and Gas Operations**. CACD has policy supporting all-of-the-above energy development as well as policy protecting private property rights, which SB-181 endangered on both counts, leading to an opposed stance. The governor signed this bill into law on April 16th.

Brett explained the legislative ranking spreadsheet and how it works. The board listened to the state legislator rankings presented, discussions took place for each to determine Legislator of the Year. Director Jim Cecil made the motion to choose (3), House Representative (D) B. Buentello, Senator (R) P. Lundeen, Senator (D) R. Fields. Director George Fosha gave the second. Motion passes.

The board discussed having an internal mechanism of realistically prioritizing approved resolutions, considering time it takes to work resolutions and run legislation and run a bill. We need to take all approved resolutions and review in December, announcing in January the plan and ranking of the resolutions and plan of moving forward through-out the year. We are limited on funds and time.

Discussions took place about the need to have a day at the capitol during the session where we invite the districts with a plan and list of our resolutions and who the legislators are that can help with our resolutions. We could do a CACD breakfast separate from Ag Day at the Capitol. Further discussions took place on how to get the districts involved at the local and state level to help CACD carry out the vote of resolutions through membership. Discussions took place about sponsoring this breakfast at the capitol right before the stock show. The downside to this timing versus the Ag day is not having all the bills yet. The board discussed an appropriate time that would

work best for the CACD board. The consensus is January is the best time, but the downside again is not having the list of all bills coming out. Discussions took place on the scheduling of the stock show. Everyone agreed this should be done as a general invite to all legislators. Some felt it would be best to do this the day after the stock show. Brett said he will work on this and work a plan to invite districts to be involved. The idea is to build on the time we are at the stock show and capitol for this January face to face. The board reviewed fall watershed meetings that have taken place and those that have been scheduled, discussing possible resolutions coming forth.

Bob Warner had to leave the meeting for a while. Before he left, he wanted to remind everyone about the NACD/Cabela's cap order special that was extended. Bobbi confirmed that the CACD cap order had been placed for the CACD annual meeting. Bob stated that this should be promoted to all the districts.

CSCB Update:

Cindy gave the update for CSCB. She stated that there has been so much going on and that there has been a lot of work being put into developing a soil health program. She discussed updates on meetings with the Colorado Collaborative for Healthy Soils. She wanted to make sure that everyone understood that this group is not through the Department of Agriculture. She discussed the vision of the soil health program through the department and she wanted to clarify that any future legislation is not intended to create more regulation.

The program could be under the umbrella of the state conservation board, with funding that comes from the state. The department is looking at this carefully. Cindy brought up the 2018 resolution regarding a state soil health program that was voted through by CACD membership and reminded everyone of another resolution coming forth in 2019 in regard to further action take place for a state soil health program.

Drought issues were discussed. Cindy encouraged everyone to please bring up their comments and concerns regarding a state-run program. Gary asked how this works with the NACD soil health program. Cindy discussed conversations that have taken place about this and said that this is something being looked at where further conversations need to take place. Discussions took place about how many players were at the table in this coalition, as well as the state conservation board. It was mentioned that CACD should also remain at the table.

Deputy Commissioner Steve Silverman commented that Commissioner Kate Greenberg stated if this was not good for stakeholders and if it not going to help producers then it should not happen. He mentioned that some states have made this mistake. CDA is taking a different approach; taking their time and talking to a lot of stakeholders. CACD VP Mike Cleary made comments about the importance of taking into consideration the quality of the water and how it is important when talking about quality of the soil and in the testing and collection of data. Deputy Commissioner Steve Silverman addressed Mike's comments and concerns. Cindy stated again that she encourages more conversations in upcoming board meetings.

Cindy brought up that the state of Colorado was invited to participate in a statewide partnership webinar where she, Clint Evans and Scott Jones participated and where Colorado was featured for their successful state partner working relationships. Cindy reminded everyone about the positions that would be coming open on the CSCB board.

Guest Speaker Steve Silverman, CDA:

Deputy Commissioner Steve Silverman introduced himself to the group. He stated he has spent most of his career with USDA. He shared that he was not a farmer or a rancher, but that he grew up in Iowa around the farming and ranching society most of his life and feels this is why he became involved with USDA midway through his career. He has had many positions with USDA. He has a lot of background in government administration. The administration is a big part of what makes an organization function. Mr. Silverman is also a lawyer who began his career with the Department of Justice in Washington DC. He moved to Colorado where he started with USDA and was in the Mountain region of USDA, co-located with the forest service. Steve moved back to the DC area where he was the acting deputy general counsel and then came back to USDA as the Director of the National Appeals Division. He was hired by the Commissioner in April of 2019. Steve gave more background about himself and what he has been working on since hired in April. His staffing update included information about their new legislative liaison. They

have brought this position in house. They also have a new CFO who has been brought on board. They now have a complete team that includes a new communications director.

Deputy Commissioner Silverman gave a recap of the 2019 state fair. He discussed the worry about the safety of the event and that they had full staff security. He discussed livestock disease issues that they were prepared for. He stated he felt the worst was over, and they came out in a good position as a team working together statewide. Mr. Silverman brought up that the department is also working on blockchain which is a fairly new technology most famously used with bitcoin. The legislature passed a bill last year that requires the Department of Ag to undertake a blockchain study and report by January 2020 on what the possible applications are in the Ag sector. They will be setting up an advisory committee.

The Deputy Commissioner discussed the CHAMP program which stands for Colorado Hemp Advancement Management Process. This is all about hemp. A lot of Colorado producers have been growing hemp under this pilot program and with the 2018 Farm Bill USDA and Congress by passing the farm bill has legalized hemp nationwide. The nationwide hemp program is to be administered by USDA. They are in the process of working on regulation for legal hemp. The CHAMP process is a big part of this with a large stakeholder group. They have 8 different stakeholder groups involved. He stated they want Colorado to be number one with all programs, including hemp.

Mr. Silverman did bring up the Governor's mention of the impossible burger. This was a surprise that has caused a lot of commotion across the state. The CDA is not promoting this program. They have many programs that promote the Colorado livestock industry. He covered the many ways they are involved in promoting the livestock industry and just wanted to make this clear. The one good thing that came out of this is the Governor and the industry are communicating better now. Commissioner Greenberg did a great job in the process of improving communications between the two. Deputy Commissioner Silverman encouraged everyone from all conservation organizations to reach out to him and that he wants to work together and build a strong collaboration.

CACD Director Nick Charchalis brought up the subject of agriculture and getting proper communications out to the public about the facts of production of the agricultural industry in Colorado. Mr. Silverman said they are in the business of promoting industries which include organic and the livestock industry. He agreed with the importance of creating a positive image of the farming and ranching industry. But he is concerned where the agency could get into policy debates and that the department must be careful, where they focus on the positive and have to be careful to stay out of the debate. Nick stated he agreed, but the truth has to be told to the public. CACD VP Mike Cleary stated that they must get their arms around the true meaning of sustainable. Mike further explained what he feels the issues are in this area and what needs to be done. He would like to see the Ag department take on this task of promoting what sustainable agriculture really is.

MR. Silverman made some comments about the department being an agricultural department, not a sustainable ag department and this is not their job to educate the difference. They have made it a priority to promote succession. This is a very big concern of the department. One of the most important goals of the department is providing for the next generation of farmers and ranchers of Colorado and succession planning. They are looking at complex succession planning issues in the state. They will not get involved in the debate of what is the meaning of sustainability, but they are getting involved on the ground, succession planning, the next generation of farmers, soil health, regenerative ag, promoting products and producers. He is not saying they will never do it, but they are not going to jump into the academic debate at this time. Mike stated he feels the department needs to support sustainable agriculture on a government level. Director Gary Thrash gave some history from his area and invited the Deputy Commissioner to take a further look into it. President Scott Jones thanked the Deputy Commissioner for his time.

NRCS Update:

Donna Rasmussen attended the meeting to give the NRCS report on behalf of Clint Evans. She gave a statewide staffing report update. Currently at 175 positions in Colorado. Staffing ceiling is 218 and this shows how far below they are at their current staffing level. They are anticipating an increase in FY2020. Donna reviewed the position priorities and the positions that they will be advertising, including soil con positions. She reviewed where to look for

posted positions. Director George Fosha made comments on the reorganization and how it is working in their area. Donna gave a program update. They are implementing the 2018 Farm Bill programs and reviewing the existing 2014 Farm Bill rules and regulations. The national office is in the process of developing the draft rules for the 2018 Farm Bill. The rules will be posted to the Federal register for public comment sometime in September.

Donna reviewed NRCS programs FY 2019 to date and also reviewed some of the program changes. She then reviewed partnership agreements around the state, and additional funding extending into 2020. They currently support 58 conservation partnerships around Colorado. Donna gave a report on burn areas and recovery projects. Donna stated she would try to answer any questions but might have to defer back to Clint Evans for more in depth details. Some group discussions took place on various reclamation projects going on around the state.

CDA Update-Les Owen:

Les stated he wanted to give an update on a couple of things that have come up. Talking about water, water quality and Reg 85 with things going on here at CDA in this realm. Les reviewed the consideration for approval of the pesticide registration fee increase and the fertilizer sales increases. This funding is what will go toward the surface water outreach program at the department. The purpose of this bill is in response to reg 85. They will start to build the program with funding starting around December.

Surface water monitoring is a broad subject and they will be looking for input from groups such as CACD and others. The question from the research is if Reg 85 will stay voluntary or not. This will be determined in 2022. With water quality and soil health, you also have to look at air quality. The water conservation board reached out to the Department of Ag and the conservation districts should be a big part of this. Les made some comments about the Colorado water plan. He stated to make sure we and our conservation districts are at the table. Cindy stated that now is the time to get our input included through our roundtables.

Scott stated that it should be mandated that the roundtables involve the conservation districts. Cindy stated this could take legislation. There is nothing that says the CACD board couldn't try to appeal to the water conservation board. Scott says the problem is the roundtables have more money than the conservation districts and their meetings are held during the day when the stakeholders are working. Further discussions took place on the subject of the water plan, stream management plans, grant fundings and landowner rights in regard to current events and the future of Colorado water.

NACD Update-Gary Thrash:

74TH NACD ANNUAL MEETING REGISTRATION

NOW OPEN- Feb 8-12 limited number of first-time NACD annual meeting attendee scholarships available with the theme "Conservation Innovation: Working from the Roots Up," the 2020 NACD Annual Meeting will explore innovative techniques and how they help deliver conservation on the ground.

This year's tours include a visit to the Hoover Dam, Mountain Springs Park and the Eldorado Gold Mine. Accepting Breakout session proposals. Next Generation Leadership Institute (NGLI) Briefing and Q&A. Join us for a webinar this Friday, September 13, 2019 at 2:30 PM EDT

Envirothon Update-Mark Cronquist:

Envirothon is currently in a holding pattern while working on finding a new venue. The issue of the previous venue is the enormous increase in the venue cost. Mark is currently looking at the state fair grounds and how we could make this work for the separate breakout rooms needed and the sound system. He checked into several other venues and there were issues either with costs or dates due to testing times at schools. Mark discussed the plans for the oral presentations for 2020 and discussed how they are done at the national level. They are held up on website updates until they have a venue secured and all topic experts secured.

The theme this year is Water Resources Management: Local Control and Local Solutions. The national competition will be in Lincoln, NE July 26th, through August 1st. We will build our oral presentation around the national topic. Mark feels really good about the topic experts he has secured.

President Scott Jones asked for a motion to approve the following changes to the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts; CO Envirothon checking account as follows.

Open a second checking account with US Bank for the CO Envirothon program:

Authorized Signer on account: CACD Director Tyler Neely

Authorized Signer on account: CACD Executive Director Bobbi Ketels

Close the CO Envirothon Checking Account in Center CO: CACD Director Tyler Neely is given full and sole authority to close out the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts; CO Envirothon checking account with Community Banks of Colorado; Account#2056432340.

Director Jim Cecil made the motion to approve and Director Nick Charchalis provided the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve all listed changes to the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts CO Envirothon checking account was passed unanimously.

Board discussions took place on how to settle up on reimbursements for mileage and time for Anthony Lobato, Brenda Anderson, Center and Rio Grande Conservation Districts. No further hour logs or mileage logs have been received. The board agreed to make a decision of an amount for settlement based on the minimal information they have from all parties and the Center and Rio Grande conservation districts.

After further board discussion, President Scott Jones asked for a motion to pay one check to one of the districts and leave it to the districts to decide how to split the funds and if any of these funds should be paid to Brenda will be between her and the districts. CACD will pay \$1000.00 total with \$750.00 to the districts and \$250 to Brenda for mileage reimbursement. Director George Fosha made the motion, Director Charlie Carnahan gave the second. Motion passes.

CACD FINANCIALS: 08-31-19

Ending/Cleared Balance in Checking as of August 31st, \$99,994.46

Checks/Payments Cleared - \$61,210.45, Deposits Cleared \$70,412.40

Total Uncleared Transactions (Checks/Payments Only-No Pending Deposits) -\$4,203.25

Ending Register Balance as of August 31st, \$95,791.21

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 08/31/19 \$59,716.06

New Transactions as of 9-7-19

Expenses -\$22,377.27

Deposits \$12,700.82

Total New Transactions -\$9,676.45

Current Register Balance \$86,114.76

Current NOI \$50,039.61

Credit Card Ending Statement Balance as of 09/06/19 \$482.71

Total District Dues Paid as of 9/7/2019 \$52,100.00

UARRP Activity 2019 YTD: Total pass-through expenses -\$158,292.92 - Total pass-through income \$166,502.53- **Total CACD Income Earned YTD 2019 \$8,209.61** (Includes 5% Admin & Payroll Reimb)
Balance of Federal Funds Available \$226,213.10 (as of 9-9-19)

Director Jim Cecil made a motion to approve the August Financials. **Director Charlie Carnahan** gave the second. Motion passes.

Annual Meeting:

Board discussions took place on times for daily meetings and other details of the agenda. Discussions took place on the live auction. The live auction will take place after the water panel banquet Tuesday night. The board made the decision not to cancel the live auction. Mancos staff will work registration again this year, as well as Larry Lempka from the employees association. CACD will reimburse their time and expenses similar to contract last year. Discussions took place on the joint board meeting being a session with Ray Ledgerwood working simultaneously with both boards. The mayor is no longer available, but the city will have one of the commissioners welcome our group. Hotel Elegante will host this reception. Mark gave an update on the newcomers meeting and announced that Rachel will be taking over this meeting. CACD President Scott Jones will welcome this group prior to the presentation.

The board ran through the remainder of the agenda and which speakers are still needing to be confirmed. The lineup will tentatively include the Commissioner of Ag, a representative from BLM, the State Land Board and someone from FSA or NRCS to speak on CRP, followed by a watershed leadership wrap up session moderated by Ray Ledgerwood. Further discussions took place about the water panel and what the board is wanting this to be. Discussions took place about reaching out to certain organizations to sponsor this dinner. Ray Ledgerwood will do a Supervisors at the Roundtable breakout and CSCB staff will do a district employee training session; only having two breakouts this year. Discussions took place on the awards nominees, who would be on the awards committee the awards luncheon and having the Envirothon presentation for the Tuesday luncheon. Follow up will take place on confirming all speakers and times on the agenda. The board discussed possible emergency resolutions and other issues that may come up in committees.

Misc. Discussions:

Scott gave an update on CAWA and gave information on their water symposium taking place December 2nd. Scott will try to attend. The next board call is October 9th, followed by the November Annual Meeting in CO Springs, November 17-21st.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Bobbi Ketels
CACD Executive Director