

**Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
February 15, 2023, Zoom Meeting**

Attendees:

*Jim Cecil, CACD President - Republican River Watershed
George Fosha, CACD Director - Upper Arkansas River Watershed
Nick Charchalis, CACD Director – North-Platte/White-Yampa River Watershed
Dale Parker, CACD Director - Lower South Platte Watershed
Gary Thrash, CACD Director - San Juan Basin - CO NACD Alternate Representative
Tyler Neely, CACD Vice President - Rio Grande River Watershed
Bobbi Ketels, Executive Director (Emergency)
Brett Moore, CACD Legislative Liaison*

Absent:

*Bob Warner, CACD Alternate Director - CO NACD Representative - NCF Trustee
Mike Cleary, CACD Secretary/Treasurer - Gunnison Dolores Watershed
Scott Jones, CACD Director - Colorado River Watershed
Charlie Carnahan, CACD Director - Upper South Platte Watershed*

Guests:

Les Owen, CDA

Call to Order:

*The meeting was called to order by **President Jim Cecil** at 7:45 AM after establishing a quorum.*

Prior Meeting Minutes:

Prior to President Jim Cecil** asking for a motion to approve the January 2023 minutes, Bobbi asked that the minutes reflect that she did provide a financial packet for the January face-to-face meeting. She provided the Board with minutes showing a highlighted section noting her requested change. **Director George Fosha** moves to approve the January 2023 minutes with the noted addition per Bobbi's request reflecting that financials were provided. **Director Tyler Neely** gives the second. **Motion Passes.

Legislative Update – Brett Moore:

Legislative Committee met before this meeting.

NRCS Update:

No Report

CSCB Update-Les Owen:

Les Owen gave a brief update in Cindy's absence. Interviews have been held for the West Slope Regional Specialist position.

John Miller's salary has been approved and is part of the Climate Smart Commodities grant that will extend his position as well. It will also fund an additional 5 to 6 positions, which will include a marketing position. These positions will be for 4-year terms.

CDA Update – Les Owen:

***Les Owen** informed the Board that the State Wolf Plan is out, and they have been taking public comments. As Les understands it, at the next CPW meeting on Feb 22, they will solidify what they will be voting on in April or May when they formally adopt the plan. The public comment period is open until Feb. 22. There is still no comment on the 10J Rule nor the draft EIS. This has been extended several times.*

The new WOTUS proposed rule is out and has been challenged by several states and groups trying to get an injunction. It continues the significant nexus and associated uncertainty. It also confuses the prior converted cropland. If you want a prior converted cropland exclusion, the only way to get it is to have NRCS come out and do a wetlands delineation on your property. In Les's opinion, it has some issues beyond not fixing the uncertainties. In addition there is a Supreme Court case that will most likely have a decision in May or June, which may impact the rule and it may be rewritten based on the ruling. WOTUS is set to go into effect in May.

Les asked if the Board members in the SE part of the state have heard any talk about the lesser prairie chicken and the third-party grazing plan? The 4D Rule provides an exception for take due to livestock grazing but only if it's covered under a service approved grazing plan written and approved by a service approved third party. The original implementation day was Jan. 24, 2023 but has been delayed to March 27, 2023. Currently there are no approved third parties to write these plans. He asked that if anyone hears anything about this to contact him with any information.

He added that there are some proposed regulations from USFWS that have to do with safe harbor agreements and candidate conservation agreements with assurances. On the face of it, it looks like they are trying to simplify the process. It is out for comment now. There are several cooperating agreements out now like sage grouse, big game corridors, etc. They are 8 right now in various stages.

CDA does not have a contract from USDA on the Climate Smart Commodities grant, but things are moving along.

Director George Fosha asked Les to send more information to the Board on the third-party grazing plan. Les will send the website to everyone.

Les informed the Board that there will be a job announcement for a **Deputy Division Director** in the Conservation Division. Legislation was passed last year that created the office for climate preparedness. This position will be part of that legislation and oversee some of the management duties associated with CSCB, ACRE3, ADCRO, and Soil Health. **Director Jim Cecil** clarified that this will be a new position most likely hired by committee.

NACD Update – Gary Thrash:

Director Gary Thrash informed the Board that the CACD Resolution regarding the CREP, will have the wording changed in the existing policy on CRP policy to include CREP. It is moving forward. Bobbi, with input from the CACD Board, agreed with NACD's suggested changes. Gary feels it will go on their consent agenda with the suggested changes.

Urban Ag grants for Districts is open and applications are due March 10. They have two stages. One is a planning grant, and the other is an implementation grant.

The March Fly-In will be on the 22nd-23rd. Gary will not be attending. Margaret might be interested in attending since she is filing Gary's roll until June. Bob, Cindy, and Clint (with some of his management team) might attend as well.

CACD Programs – Bobbi Ketels:

ED Bobbi Ketels noted that Lily, who helped at the Annual Meeting, Noah, and Mary most likely will be available for the CACD as contract labor. Their help will leave the Board in good shape when Bobbi leaves.

2024 Annual Meeting:

The dates Dec. 4 and 5, 2023 have been locked in with the hotel. The CACD Board will check in on the 3rd. She has emailed the Employee Association to see if there will be a 2nd year of the Leadership Training and if they are tying

it to the Annual Meeting. She will continue to fine tune the contact and wait to see if the NRCS funds come through. If the funds do not come through, she suggests that the Board vote to take the meeting virtual due to the cost. She also suggests that the General meeting be held at night so people stay for the meeting. She asked the Board to vote on a motion to continue with her plans. **Director Tyler Neely** moves to keep the business meeting on Monday night with the special dinner with awards given in the middle of the day at lunch. **Director George Fosha** gives the second. **Motion Passes.**

Operations Manual Update:

Bobbi envisions having two sections to the operation manual. One is a monthly red flag task list for the ED. The second would be a checklist for each event that CACD participates in with details. What has been presented to the Board so far is an overview of the two sections.

Camp Rocky:

Camp Director Noah McCord reported that registration has not been fully opened yet. There will possibly be an increase in fees. Districts are ready to start advertising scholarships. He is getting the Camp Rocky marketing package ready to go out. The draft budget was shown to the Board. He is hoping for at least 40 kids but that will depend on more beds being available at the Camp. The budget presented is based on 40 campers. He plans to have 4 staff on any given day and 7 adult overnight staff. He is planning for junior leaders as well. CSU Ed school contacted him about sending some volunteer junior leaders, so a small stipend is in the budget along with funds for paying folks to bring up animals. The total cost for 40 campers and staff is \$21,000 for the year. This does not include any funding assistance. At fees charged in 2022, the income would be \$14,000. This would increase by 20% if fees were increased for each camper. He is hoping that CSCB will contribute the same as last year which was \$3,500.00. and that some of the Junior Leaders will be sponsored by their home Conservation District. The Camp will be about \$1,400 short without raising fees. He will provide a more comprehensive budget once he has confirmation of the number of beds that will be available.

Noah asked for the Board's approval for him to have conversations about sponsorship donations with CSCB. Bobbi has the contract ready for Jim to sign. It currently does not match the cabins that Noah and Mary discussed with Corbin at the Camp. Noah will confirm with Corbin. Corbin has asked that CACD provide a nurse to cover the program in case he is unable to have one available. Discussion about cabin availability continued between Bobbi and Noah.

Noah provided an overview of new the Camp Rocky website that he is putting together. If a person clicks on Camp Rocky on the CACD website, it will take them to a more specific site for Camp Rocky with additional information including sponsorship opportunities.

Bobbi thanked Noah for all his assistance in organizing Camp Rocky and helping with the Envirothon.

Envirothon:

Program Manager Mark Platten, CSU, gave an update on Envirothon. He has been meeting with the College of Ag representatives. There are scholarships in place for the winning team, \$1,000 for each of the five students if they sign up for CSU and take one of the degrees in the College of Ag. He is still working with Warner College to see if they will come on board. He has also met with several other College of Ag Science staff and there is an opportunity to partner with them. They have a weeklong intensive program and they will cover the entire cost of staying on campus, which is a \$5,000 cost. It will be all about learning about ag from the science view such as technology and water. They currently have 20 slots available. This will happen in June. He would like to get five slots in the program to entice teams to compete in Envirothon.

Mark met with the State Forest Service yesterday and the CSU Office of Engagement and Extension, of which he is a part. There may be funds available to students who come from rural environments for scholarships. They have had an advisory board committee meeting. He sent Tyler and Bobbi the recording and minutes of that meeting. Rose is going to be registering two teams by the end of the week. They also have FFA teams since they

changed the number required for a team. It is now a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5. This change was made after talking with other states and the Nation Envirothon. National Envirothon does require 5 team members but other teams with less can still compete however they are not eligible to win prizes and scholarships. He is creating some training videos and preparing promotional materials. The aquatics and forestry topic experts and test writers' positions are yet to be filled. Mark hopes to have ten teams this year. Registration will be open until two weeks before the competition. Bobbi is working on contacts, and everything should be ready today. She is also working on the website for Envirothon. There will be funds available but there are additional expenses to deduct, and she is also waiting on the NRCS to come through with program funds as well as funds from other private donors. The SPUR grant amount will not be known until after Envirothon since it will be a 2024 grant. Bobbi noted that the National competition will be in Canada this year. Mark added that he has a meeting tomorrow with Smithfield to discuss funding. Rose dropped off supply boxes and it appears that some paperwork is not there. Bobbi stated that the other boxes were taken to the CSCB office, and the missing paperwork might be in those boxes. Tyler will also look in the Rio Grande offices.

Director Nick Charchalis thanked Mark for his work on Envirothon and is looking forward to working with CSU Extension. They are all looking forward to the 2023 and 2024 competition and the building of relationships.

President Jim Cecil clarified that any monies spent prior to receiving the NRCS contract are not reimbursable. Bobbi stated that funds spent so far for Envirothon will be covered by funds that the CACD Board has already designated for the program. After discussion with Clint Evans, the total amount that CACD might receive is \$100,000 with \$7,500 of that going to Envirothon. Due to the National Envirothon being held in Canada, she would like to have \$15,000 go to Envirothon to cover the travel expenses.

CACD Financials:

Tabled

Other:

Bobbi mentioned that she has been working hard along with Noah, Suzie, and Mark with technical issues behind the scenes.

Bobbi was pleased to say that she has been able to log into eZGrants with her ID now being cleared and will be able to finish setting up the portal and then will be able to enter the reimbursement reports and other required reports. Any District that has requested reimbursement for programs will not be paid until NRCS has approved the reports. She is also working on the tax information for the CPA so they can finish the audit and tax return. She will be providing a QuickBooks tour for the board for transparency purposes.

President Jim Cecil suggested that Bobbi's contract be extended for another month with the possibility of extending her contract for an additional 30 days due to not having a new ED yet. Bobbi asked if she could make changes to her original letter of resignation since the original had not been signed. Jim said she could make changes to the date, to March 15. **Director George Fosha** moves to extend Bobbi's full-time employment for an additional 30 days to March 15, 2012. **Director Dale Parker** seconds the motion. **Motion Passes.**

Bobbi asked the Board, since they had previously approved a bonus and one week of severance pay to be paid at the end of her employment with CACD, if they would consider that she receive \$500.00 of the bonus now.

Director George Fosha moves to pay Bobbi \$500. of her annual bonus. **Director Tyler Neely** seconds the motion. After discussion, **Director George Fosha** amended the motion to pay Bobbi \$1,000.00 instead of the \$500. **Director Tyler Neely** seconds the motion. **Motion Passes.**

Bobbi gave the Board a short tour of the 2022 financials and explained the PayPal interaction with the checking account. She requested a meeting at the end of the month to change bank account signatures and she will give a final tour of financials at that time with details of the programs. Consensus was to have a meeting at the end of the month. George asked Bobbi to provide a memo with detailed information with suggested dates for the

meeting. George asked if CACD had received any applications for the ED position. No one knew the status. Jim will ask Mike to send out the current information.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:38 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

***Bobbi Ketels
CACD Executive Director***