

**Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Embassy Suites Denver, CO
January 19, 2022, Face-to-Face**

Attendees:

*Jim Cecil, CACD President - Republican River Watershed
Scott Jones, Immediate Past President - Colorado River Watershed
Tyler Neely, CACD Vice President - Rio Grande River Watershed
Mike Cleary, Direct - Gunnison Dolores Watershed
Charlie Carnahan, CACD Director - Upper South Platte Watershed
George Fosha, CACD Director - Upper Arkansas River Watershed
Nick Charchalis, CACD Director – North-Platte/White-Yampa River Watershed
Bob Warner, CACD Alternate Director - CO NACD Representative - NCF Trustee
Brett Moore, CACD Legislative Liaison*

Absent:

*Charlie Carnahan, CACD Director - Upper South Platte Watershed
Gary Thrash, CACD Director - San Juan Basin - CO NACD Alternate Representative*

Guests:

*Les Owen, CDA
Cindy Lair, CSCB
Randy Randall, NRCS
Vanessa McCracken, BV/Longmont CDs DM*

Call to Order:

*The meeting was called to order by **President Jim Cecil** at 8:15 AM after establishing a quorum.
No additional agenda items.*

Prior Meeting Minutes:

President Jim Cecil** asked for a motion to approve the **December 2021** minutes. **Director George Fosha** made the motion to approve. **Vice President Tyler Neely** gave the second. **Motion Passes.

NRCS Update-Randy Randall:

Randy gave a brief overview of NRCS topics for discussion. Tim Macklin from Area 3 is acting for Clint Evans until February 1st. At this time Bronson Smart from Utah will be acting for Clint. Bronson's specialty is watershed management. NRCS has a replacement in-line for Francine Lheritier area 1. This person is transferring from Hawaii and will be introduced soon. NRCS 27.8 budget with 240 employees from 175 previously with room for 265 employees. NRCS is looking to reinvest in agreements with 1.7 available and 2.5 needed. Main need is more technicians. They are still under a continuing resolution until February 18th. DCT Tech program 75/25 match with 24 current technicians in CO. Weighing costs of direct hire positions vs. DCT positions.

This administration wants more entry level positions. NRCS continues to struggle hiring engineers. Forest health continues to deteriorate. Director Scott Jones no one knows what is going on. NRCS is looking at new agreement with American Forest Foundation. Colorado was selected as a pilot state. Agreements: Small Acreages-CSU, Metro Service Centers, Intermountain West. Cost Share Program: Pheasants Forever and Bird Conservancy. Trying to rewrite contracts for five years. Innovation type grants. Director Scott Jones asked questions about EQIP. He does not qualify because of the cap. This also poses a problem with soil health in his area because of dollars. Extensive discussions took place about EQIP.

Legislative Update:

The Colorado General Assembly convened January 12th at 10am to kick off the 2022 regular session. We saw 85 bills introduced this first day. There were 111 bills introduced just in the first week.

CACD is tracking 26 of the bills introduced. Information for each bill is updated in the CACD tracker through the course of the legislative session. CACD sweeps for newly introduced bills each week, though we can add/subtract/change positions on bills any time, at the direction of the CACD Legislative committee.

There seems to be wide consensus on returning to a regular-length session amongst legislators, the governor, and lobbyists alike after the 2019 and 2020 sessions were truncated/extended by Covid-19 emergency orders, with the session expected to run no longer than the constitutionally mandated 120 days, adjourning by May 11.

Additionally, we expect legislative leadership to release a memo extending the ability for interested parties to provide remote testimony in committee hearings for this session, and perhaps permanently. This would be a significant change in process and will allow those outside the Denver Metro area additional opportunities to participate in the Legislative process.

SB22-030-Expand Water Resources Review Committee to Include Agriculture is up in SENATE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE upon adjournment in the Old Supreme Court Chambers on Wednesday February 2.

CACD will have a Legislative Committee call that morning, but if any of you have any questions or concerns about the bill, please email them to bobbi@coloradoacd.org prior to the weekend if possible.

NOTE: There is some concern among folks in the water community that this will dilute the only specific venue at the legislature that discusses water.

Discussions took place on the expiration of the funds for conservation districts. CACD has requested and Senator Donovan will run a bill to make this funding a permanent line item and for an increase in the total amount.

CACD is here to represent all 75 Conservation Districts and their local landowners. This must be a joint effort between CACD and the districts. Conservation Districts are welcome at any time to submit comments on bills being tracked and to request additional bills (not on our bill tracker) to be reviewed by the CACD Legislative Committee.

CDA Update – Les Owen:

Les reviewed details of “America The Beautiful” – 30x30 and public comment. WOTUS focuses on 30% land health. Droubt funds 8-1.5 million; range health and grazing. Four boards will be needed. NEPA; ongoing legislation. CSU; Droubt and Advisory program. Ten sites with soil moisture sensors. Post fire assessment; WAVE. Four districts participating. Les gave an update on the “Wolf Compensation” program. Extensive discussions took place on the CO Wolf re-introduction with all meeting participants.

CSCB Update - Cindy Lair:

Cindy Lair updated CACD on the CSCB Board Meeting. Margaret Lenz is the CSCB President. Anthony Lobato is the CSCB Vice President, and Marc Etchart is the CSCB Secretary. Cindy discussed the consolidation of the Fort Collins and Big Thompson CDs, now called the Larimer CD. Discussions took place about the double direct assistance to those districts that consolidate. Benefits vs. unintended consequences were discussed. No decision has been made. Cindy discussed CDA and CSCB Staffing and retirements. Cindy discussed SHAC. Margaret Lenz and Don McBee are the CSCB representatives to SHAC. Margaret Lenz is the Chair. The next CSCB/SHAC meeting is scheduled for June 22-23 in Greeley. The 3rd QTR meeting is being planned for September 7-8 near the Middle Park CD area. The ACRO position has been filled – Kristan Boison. Focusing on Natural Working Lands climate taskforce and ACRE 3. A draft plan has been created and out for review and public comment. Cindy gave updates

on the STAR Plus Soil Health program. There are 17 conservation districts signed up and 22 districts applied. There is 5 million in funding for the STAR program. Other entities signed up include Colorado Corn, Audubon, CO Ranching, and Delores. Discussions took place on the 2022 Partner Video Project. This year will focus on NRCS Partnerships. The budget for the project was discussed and the cost will come in around \$11,000.00. CACD and CSCB agreed to split the required 50% match through the CACD Education cooperative agreement with NRCS. This will be approximately \$3K for CACD and \$3K for CSCB. NRCS will cover \$5500.00.

NACD Update:

Alternate Director Bob Warner gave an update on the NACD Annual Meeting and all 2022 NACD meetings coming up.

CACD Programs:

ED Bobbi Ketels discussed NWSS last minute plans with BOD. Discussions took place on the venues for the 2022 Annual Meeting.

Guest Speakers:

Cindy Lair and Vanessa McCracken gave an updated presentation on the CCDEA Employee's Association Leadership Training plans for 2022. Vanessa McCracken gave a presentation on the Marshall Fire. Extensive discussions took place on the Open Lands in the urban, suburban, and rural areas. Discussions took place on open lands, grasslands, and the natural state fuel load issues. Director Nick Charchalis spoke on open space fuel loads. Vanessa spoke on city and county, not just grasslands, but the interface. Cindy Lair spoke on Public Policy drive discussions. Further talk included the topics of trails, wildlife, eco systems, open space entities, and Boulder grazing programs. President Jim Cecil brought up the private property proponent. Discussions took place on Boulder County GMO debate on open space, what is allowed, as they can now plant GMO on open space.

CACD Financials:

December 2022 bank statement reconciliation reported. Review and vote for 2022 year-end financials tabled.

Director George Fosha made the motion to adjourn the meeting. **Director Nick Charchalis** gave the second. **Meeting Adjourned at 3:40 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Bobbi Ketels
CACD Executive Director