***Colorado Association of Conservation Districts***

***Board of Directors Meeting Minutes***

***July 19, 2017, at 7:30 AM via Teleconference***

***Attendees:***

Don McBee, CACD President

Anthony Lobato, CACD Vice President

Gary Moyer, North Platte/White/Yampa River Watershed Director

Mike Cleary, Gunnison/Dolores River Watershed Director

Gary Thrash, San Juan Basin Watershed Director/CO Representative Alternate to NACD

Charlie Carnahan, Upper South Platte Watershed Director

Jim Cecil, Republican River Watershed Director

Scott Jones, Colorado River Watershed Director

Bob Warner, CO Representative to NACD

Bobbi Ketels, CACD Executive Director

***Absent:***

Brett Moore, CACD Lobbyist

***Guests:***

Les Owen, CDA DOA Conservation Services Director

Randy Randall, CO NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Operations

Cindy Lair, CSCB Program Manager

Danny Neufeld, CSCB President

***Call to Order:***

The meeting was called to order by President, Don McBee at 7:35 AM after establishing a quorum. Don McBee then called for any additions to the agenda. With no further requests to add the board moved on with the agenda.

***Prior Meeting Minutes:***

President Don McBee asked for a motion to approve the June 2017 Minutes from the last meeting. Vice President Anthony Lobato asked for a correction to be added for Envirothon stating that Center will host again for 2018 and the event will be held at the Arapahoe County Fairgrounds. Director, Gary Thrash made the motion to approve the June 2017 Minutes with the correction, and Vice President, Anthony Lobato provided the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the CACD BOD’s June 2017 Minutes was passed unanimously.

***NRCS Update – Randy Randall:***

CACD agreement is signed and in place for a four year agreement. NRCS initially put two years of funding into it to get it funded. Randy stated the agreement was signed and executed on May 25th,.  CACD is now able to start billing against the agreement going back to June 15, 2017. The ratification was approved and CACD should see the deposit within the next couple of weeks for the $2500.00 balance. NRCS is on pace to have EQIP spent and obligated on time, in addition to the CSP funds. The conservation reserve program work needed to be finished up with Farm Services Agency and is now complete. NRCS is preparing to close out the year, with a few more easement contracts to finish, but they should be able to close out the year in good shape and prepped out for FY2018. Because of staffing shortages they have contracted out some engineering services to be delivered primarily on the Western Slope. NRCS is trying to utilize some of the same strategies with cultural resources and therefore contracted again with Alpine Archeological to help with the back log and to help keep the log cleared in order to allow landowners to get their services put on the ground as soon as possible. NRCS was given the approval to hire five new entry level field oriented positions for Colorado, with a total of 210 permanent employees. Don asked a question about spraying sage brush through EQIP based on a conversation with a local sprayer. Don was told this was not activated for Colorado. Randy was not sure and asked Don to forward the information in order to confirm.

***Legislative Update – Brett Moore:***

No Update – Brett Moore was not able to be on the call.

***CSCB Update:***

**Danny Neufeld:** The CSCB board met last week in Silt, CO. The Commissioner of Ag attended the meeting and all went well. Compliance is huge and some districts are not in compliance. This affects eligibility of direct assistance, matching grants and DTC funds. With some districts, it will be easy to get back into compliance, but with others where it involves an election situation it will not be as easy to get them back into compliance. There were five districts not in compliance and there are a lot of legalities that go on with the districts being legal. There are (15) matching grants to be evaluated soon. The direct assistance checks will be out sometime in August. The matching grants are the mini grants with a cap of $7K. Don asked if they ever replaced the person who processed the matching grants. Danny stated that Nancy has been doing this and there will not be a gap in the process.

**Cindy Lair:** Before the CSCB meeting there was a Western Slope district manager training workshop in Grand Junction with good attendance of about 20 participants. It is a good working agreement for covering costs when the districts are able to pay their travel to the meeting and cover their salary during the workshop, while CSCB covers the cost of meals and lodging, as well as training materials. It is a great experience for district managers to have them in the same room together. They are able to collaborate and benefit from being able to hear each other’s questions and answers and to hear each other’s perspective. It is a very positive activity where they leave feeling invigorated from the experience and ready to go back and tackle their responsibilities with a different perspective. This is the third training session and CSCB will continue to do this, but will be changing it up to cover some more focused areas with more in-depth assistance. Cindy has had many come up to her at national meetings and say it would be nice to have someone from the Colorado Employees Association attend the National Employees meetings to represent Colorado. Cindy’s goal is to work more closely with Brenda and the CO Employee’s Association. Cindy threw out the idea to possibly make the training session a combination with the Employees Association to allow them to have meetings during or in conjunction with the workshops. The goal is to build up support and slow down the turn over seen by CSCB. Gary Moyer agreed with Cindy that it would be great to get the Employees Association involved at a higher level just because it exposes them to have a a better understanding of what their role is as an association and that they truly are a partner. Cindy mentioned that it was good to have the new Executive Director Bobbi Ketels attend the managers training workshop to get a better understanding of how much is required of a district manager. Cindy also discussed a possible CACD and CSCB endeavor for scholarships to possibly go toward helping district manager ability to get more involved at the CACD and NACD level. Cindy added to staffing updates from Danny, stating that Nikki’s position will be reclassified and that they will be hiring a new grants specialist. Nikki and Nancy did a great job keeping the grants program moving forward and the districts getting paid. Cindy will also be posting to fill Karen Wolf’s position for a Western Slope Field Specialist as soon as possible. Cindy mentioned to CACD’s lobbyist, Brett Moore that it was nice to get the update on the $174K severance tax funding and that these funds are helpful, even though this is not the full amount of $450K, every little bit helps. The state board has not had any kind of allocation in several years and the state board has been very conservative in how they have allocated any funding to the districts, keeping the programs alive, just cutting back on the amount of money they can distribute. This will give the state board more opportunities to get creative and find ways to put money in the pockets of the districts so they can put it to work on the ground. Anthony told Cindy he will have a discussion with Brenda about the Employee’s Association to get her thoughts on Cindy’s ideas. Gary asked Cindy to clarify her statement about not having any kind of funding allocation in several years and Cindy confirmed she was referring to the severance tax dollars and that they have continued to get the general fund appropriation of $225 plus the funding for operating dollars and direct assistance has been steady. Cindy stated it was nice to have Bobbi speak at the District manager’s training workshop. Bobbi was able to introduce herself and talk to the district managers about what CACD does and means to them and the districts. Cindy felt the message came across positive and that it was a good introduction.

**Les Owen:** Les covered the regulatory reform effort the current administration is pushing. The USDA is opening up their regulations in title 7 and title 9 of the CFR to allow people to comment for up to a year if folks feel anything needs to be modified, repealed, or replaced. This allows some time to look at the codes that include all of the USDA programs. Les stated now would be the time to address these topics. The Dept of the Interior is doing the same thing with an open ended request for comments. BLM has a short turn around, but is also wanting suggestions in how to improve the process . They put out a six question document that is open until around the 24th of this month. Les will send a notice of these items to Bobbi. Grand Mesa and Gunnison National Forest are hosting a series of public meetings to kick off their forest plan revision starting at the end of the month and running through August. Les will send these dates as well.

***NACD Update – Gary Moyer:***

Gary started off by saying that Bob Warner is the board member from Colorado and Gary Thrash is the alternate and wants to give them the opportunity to give their perspectives on updates from the Des Moines meeting as well. Gary brought up some of the big items going on with NACD including focus on the new Farm Bill and the Farm Bill Task Force. Gary Moyer serves on this task force. There are varying opinions. The districts that are well funded seem to like it more than the districts that are not well funded just in their ability to participate. The goal is to do landscape wide projects in regard to RCPP. Many of our districts felt left out of the process. There were tours on soil health and water that were very interesting to see how other parts of the country function with the different issues they deal with in comparison to ours. NACD sent out nine letters to various agencies since the first of the year implementing NACD policies as a reflection of when they bring resolutions to the national level how they implement trying to make those resolutions achieve their goals. Bob Warner added at the luncheon the Governor spoke and gave a good presentation. This was a combined meeting between the Iowa Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners and the NACD board meeting. Bob felt the soils tour was excellent and he was particularly interested in the livestock project. Bob stated they have more to gain by planting other crops in between crops, where we have to conserve water and they are trying to provide cover crops in between which helps them in the loss of their top soil and erosion of soil. Bob was pleased to see our South West representative Brent VanDyke as our National President. Bob feels he is doing a great job and will do well in representing us on a national level to serve as President. Bob feels we will be well represented with Gary coming on the Executive Board and various committees on a National level and feels we are fortunate with Gary putting out the extra time and effort, representing us well in our state and our region. Gary Moyer responded to Don’s question about the Trump Administration wanting to combine NRCS and FSA. Gary stated NACD’s official policy on the books is they support it remaining the way it is. If they do combine agencies they are very concerned about losing that local leadership and local input. No one is sure of the details and if the two agencies are combined who would be the lead. NACD is concerned if this happens the districts could be lost in the process. When talking to the head folks at Ag, they say there is no official discussion of combining these two agencies specifically, but there is talk of a more streamlined process. This issue is very much in the forefront of everyone’s concern. NACD policy is somewhat vague on this issue. Randy added that all they have been told on their end is to look at opportunities to remove literal walls in between offices. Randy feels these are key words to keep in mind. Mike Cleary asked if there was any movement at all on BLM perpetual easement for pipelines through BLM land that was voted on last year. Gary responded by saying that they have written a letter through the Natural Resources Committee, but everything in Washington DC right now is on hold. Gary stated they are very excited about what they are hearing regarding the potential new nominee to direct BLM. Gary Thrash stated with CACD budget issues and being the alternate NACD representative, he needed direction on attending the Tucson meeting in September. Gary Moyer stated as the Executive Board Member from the Southwest Region he feels that with Bob Warner being so generous in paying his own way as the state representative, this should free up the budget for the alternate to attend. Gary Moyer feels Gary Thrash should attend. Bob Warner would also like to see Gary attend. Don told Gary to plan on going to this meeting and plans will be finalized at the Face to Face in August.

***Financial Update – Bobbi Ketels:***

The Farmers State CD has been cashed out and the total balance of $41,075.15 and has been deposited into the CACD general account. CACD operating income as of June 30th is $36,821.41. As of today, CACD reserve after paying Brett Moore $15,000.00 is $26,075.15. Total checks and expenses presented for payment in June totaled $25,718.66, which includes UARRP activity. Total deposits and credits presented $65,935.00, which includes UARRP reimbursements and FSB CD funds rolling into the account. Bobbi is still waiting to follow up with the CPA in regard to 2016 balances in the special classes that may need to be rolled over to 2017. The balance in the raffle account is $429.03. Bobbi stated that she sent an email to Sharon Pattee asking if she could sign the final check to be paid to NACD in order to close this account. Gary will follow up with Sharon in regard to signing this check. Membership adjustment was made to break out the district dues from the membership dues with total received $28,384.48. Don questioned the $5K donation from Bob Warner and feels this should not show under membership. Everyone agreed with the idea to show it under membership income but break out individual, district and corporate.

***Camp Rocky:***

Bobbi reported that the turn-out improved with (30) campers and (4) Jr. Leaders. Camp was a great success! Bobbi was able to attend the beginning and the end of camp. Everyone had a great time and both the instructors and volunteers worked exceptionally hard. Bobbi will work on a financial update to present at the August Face to Face. We were able to double our numbers from 2016. The goal is to increase the number of campers to 40 with all (4) disciplines in 2018.

***Conservator:***

The electronic version went out last night and on the website. Print copies have shipped and will be distributed when received. We ended up with four advertisers who will be given (10) copies each at no additional charge. At this time none of the advertisers have asked for additional copies. If they request additional copies there will be a charge of $2.00 each to help offset cost. Mike requested 40 copies to be sent to him. Bobbi asked for clarification as to how many copies should be sent to the districts. Gary Moyer stated previously we have sent 10 copies to each district. Bobbi asked if we are to charge the districts for copies and Gary Moyer said we could not charge. Everyone agreed to send more to the Western Slope and fewer to the other districts. Gary Moyer stated he was just mentioning what we did previously, but that we had dropped from 1500 in print distribution. Gary Thrash stated that many board members were asked and did not know what the Conservator was, so he felt it was important to get it out there and encourage everyone to look at the document. Don stated after we finish with the Q3 issue we can revisit how it is going by splitting out per region. No one had heard any negative feedback. Mike Cleary stated that we reach out to four advertisers you might get one response, so if we want to get six advertisers in the next issue we need to reach out to at least 20 advertisers to accomplish this. We also need to send a hard copy to the advertisers contacted who did not advertise in the previous issues to show them what we produce and to let them know we will contact them again next year. Mike asked Bobbi to contact Applegate Engineering for the Fall issue as they just missed their deadline to submit. Mike asked for someone to help with advertisers for the next issue. Don asked if anyone could be the lead person. Bob and Jim said their schedules would not allow time. Don stated that we would revisit the subject at the Face to Face in August. Don recognized Cindy’s team for all the help they have given CACD with the Conservator.

***Corporate Funding:***

Mike Cleary reached out to Tracy Bentley for ten oil companies and once he gets this list he will reach out to them with letters. He is also reaching out to A&B Bank and Farm Credit Bureau Bank. Mike asked for a list of banks from board members to add to this list. Don asked Mike if Farm Credit was an umbrella with all branches. Mike was not sure, but said they advertise with the Livestock Association and they are now in the farm loaning business again. Farm Credit does fund the Livestock Association and local county fairs, but he needs to find out what level of regional he needs to contact. Gary Moyer said he was checking on an additional contact for another fundraiser source for Mike to follow-up with. Don stated it was time to send out another membership dues statement. Don and Mike agreed the first letter was not enough and we should go ahead and send an actual invoice with a second letter explaining that the suggested donation was not mandatory.

***Annual Meeting:***

Don reviewed the committee members and confirmed Anthony Lobato will chair the committee. The committee will include Anthony L., Don M., Bob W., Gary M., Gary T., Scott J. , Harold U., Cindy L., Petra B., Mark C., and Rachel T. The board discussed setting the first meeting within the next couple of weeks. Bobbi stated she would get it arranged.

***Envirothon:***

Anthony stated that there was nothing additional to report except they are in the process of setting a date for a face to face meeting.

***Watershed Meetings:***

The board discussed the possibility of arranging watershed meetings back to back to make it easier for travel for those who want to attend. Mike stated that everyone should encourage trying to put two to three meetings together within the same week, and most especially in the remote areas. Don reminded everyone that the NRCS contract included some funds for speakers at the watershed meetings and to help get the word out for feedback.

***CACD Face to Face Board Meeting:***

The board discussed meeting and tour times. It was decided to split up the meetings starting at 1pm on the 16th and do the tour the morning of the 17th, with everyone staying only one night. Bobbi confirmed Greg agreed to help with some of the travel expenses.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bobbi Ketels

CACD Executive Director