

CORRECTED MINUTES
(Correction noted in **red text**)
COLORADO STATE CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING (CSCB)
July 13-15, 2009
Meeker, Colorado

JULY 13, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

President **Jack Burk** called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Board members present:

Jack Burk, President – San Juan Basin River Watershed
Mary Sue Liss, Vice President – Upper South Platte River Watershed (via teleconference)
Mel Rettig, Secretary – Colorado River, Gunnison-Dolores River Watersheds
Jim (JD) Amick, White–Yampa and North Platte River Watersheds
Leroy Brase – Lower Arkansas River Watershed
Pat Meakins – Member-At-Large (via teleconference)
Danny Neufeld – Rio Grande River Watershed
Jack Swennes – Upper Arkansas River Watershed

Board members absent:

Bud Mekelburg – Republican River, Lower S. Platte River Watersheds

Staff members present:

Mark Cronquist, Conservation Specialist
Jim Currier, Conservation Specialist
Callie Hendrickson, Conservation Specialist
Pam King, Conservation Specialist
Cindy Lair, State Conservation Board Program Manager
Scott Shirola, Conservation Specialist
Janette Terry, Conservation Specialist

Partners Present:

Jennifer Cook, NRCS/CSU Extension Small Acreage Management Coordinator
J.B. Martin, NRCS Deputy State Conservationist

AGENDA APPROVAL

President **Jack Burk** added an agenda item, discussion on Colorado Department of Agriculture's budget reduction and feedback to the Commissioner. **Mel Rettig** made a motion to approve the amended agenda. The motion was seconded by **Jack Swennes** and all were in favor.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 2009 MINUTES

Danny Neufeld made a motion to approve the minutes as distributed. The motion was seconded by **J.D. Amick**. Motion carried unanimously.

DIRECT ASSISTANCE (DA) ALLOCATION TO CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Four distribution scenarios with districts identified only by number were presented to the board for discussion by **Cindy Lair**. She explained that District #54 did not submit an application by the deadline for the second consecutive year. All of the scenarios proposed awarding this district \$1500. Two of the scenarios proposed equal increments for districts based on rankings built upon two different base funding amounts. The other two were tier scenarios: a 3-tier and a 5-tier distribution. All of the scenarios are based on the same \$391,714 budget allocation as the previous fiscal year.

However, **Cindy** explained that the state's fiscal situation will require additional general fund budget cuts in order for the state to balance the budget this fiscal year as the Colorado Constitution requires. Direct Assistance is a line item on CDA's general fund budget. Most of the programs in the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) are cash funded from industry fees and registrations. The Department is currently working to develop a response to the Governor's call for a budget

reduction plan and information on how the Direct Assistance Fund will be affected is not available at this point. There is a possibility that the Ag Management Fund can offset a General Fund reduction in the Direct Assistance Allocation and the Matching Grants Allocation. The board discussed the funding options from the Ag Management Fund at length. The Fund is administered at the discretion of the Commissioner of Agriculture. There was strong support and consensus for **President Jack Burk** to communicate to the Commissioner the following General Fund priorities: (1) maintain staff (2) fully fund the DA Allocation of \$391,714 (3) fund Matching Grants Allocation.

Mel Rettig reiterated the importance of, first and foremost, staff to assist districts. Secondly, fully funding Direct Assistance takes priority over funding the Matching Grants Program. The group strongly felt that Direct Assistance is crucial to the basic survival and function of districts on an on-going basis. Without DA, in many cases, there is no mechanism to use Matching Grants. The Board directed **Jack Burk** to make it clear that if budget cuts are necessary, CSCB strongly supports cutting Direct Assistance before cutting staff and cutting Matching Grants before cutting Direct Assistance. There has been a misconception that funding from districts was cut to fund staff. The budget line items funding Direct Assistance and Matching Grants have never been reduced to fund staff positions.

Discussion resumed on consideration of the two types of proposed DA distribution: tiers or increments. The general consensus of the Board was that it was not a good time to change the type of distribution during the middle of the evaluation year. **Mel Rettig** stated that he received positive comments during the Gunnison- Dolores Watershed Meeting regarding an incremental system. The Board voiced strong support for the possibility of incorporating incremental distribution with the new DA Evaluation process currently being formulated for adoption in the future. After a lengthy discussion, **Danny Neufeld** moved that the board approve a tier distribution. **Leroy Brase** seconded the motion. The motion was passed with **Mel Rettig** voting in opposition.

The 3 and 5-tier scenarios, ranked from highest score to lowest score, were discussed. **J.D. Amick** made a motion to approve a 4-tier system awarding the late district \$1500 and adjusting the amounts from the 3 and 5-tier systems to increase funding for the lower tier districts and decrease funding for the upper tier districts. The motion was seconded by **Pat Meakins** and was approved with **Mel Rettig** voting in opposition. **Cindy Lair** and **Janette Terry** were directed to come up with 2 new 4-tier scenarios to present to the Board on Wednesday for approval. One scenario beginning with a \$2000 base after late district receives \$1500 and another scenario with an increase to the \$2000 base after late district receives \$1500 will be presented for board consideration.

INTRODUCTION

Jennifer Cook, Small Acreage Management Coordinator for NRCS/CSU Extension was introduced. She will present a report to the group on Wednesday.

DIRECT ASSISTANCE APPLICATION REVISION COMMITTEE REPORT

Staff reported on the new DA application proposed by the committee. The committee is proposing submission of the current Annual Plan of Work (APW) with some adjustments as the DA application. The goal is to reduce the amount of time and work districts must complete to submit the application by submitting the APW to serve multiple needs. This APW will submit essentially the same information as the current application but will focus on natural resource concerns. The committee has identified three goals to accomplish with the new APW application: (1) combines required forms to reduce paperwork (2) focuses on identified natural resource concerns (3) promotes sound planning. The tentative time frame was discussed. The goal is to have on-going review, discussion and comments regarding the draft revised APW and DA 2 page application with districts at the watershed meetings prior to the Annual Meeting in November. Tentatively the State Board could approve the new form and process at the meeting in November for implementation in 2011 for evaluation of Calendar Year 2010. The board was in general agreement on the concept but stressed the need for discussion/comments period for districts prior to adoption of a new form and process. It was suggested that a sample application, instructions and scoring criteria be developed to give the Board and districts a clearer concept of the new application and process.

MATCHING GRANT REVIEW COMMITTEE

Pam King asked for another CSCB volunteer to serve on the committee. CSCB is represented by 2 members on the 10-member committee. **Pat Meakins** has volunteered to serve and **Pam** asked the group for a volunteer to serve as the second committee member. She will get back to the group later in the meeting to identify the second board member interested in serving on the committee.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:40 p.m. for travel to the White River Tree Farm tour and barbecue. The tree farm is owned by **Gary Moyer**, supervisor on the White River Conservation District and CACD representative for

the White-Yampa and North Platte River Watershed. The tour featured innovative and technology driven methods for growing trees using efficient conservation practices.

JULY 14, 2009

UPPER COLORADO ENVIRONMENTAL PLANT CENTER (UCEPC) TOUR

The UCEPC provided an interesting and informative tour for the group. The UCEPC is a nonprofit, legally incorporated organization, which is owned and operated by the Douglas Creek and White River Conservations Districts. It was established in 1975 as one of 26 Plant Material Centers in the national program. The 269-acre center is located 6 miles southeast of Meeker overlooking the White River Valley. The purpose of the UCEPC is to gather native species of grasses, forbs, and shrubs to test suitability for reclamation and conservation projects in Western Colorado, Eastern Utah, and Southern Wyoming. Many plant species and technologies have been developed for habitat improvement in wildlife areas, wet lands, mined land re-vegetation, and disturbed lands. The Center is working on projects that help stabilize mined areas and roadsides, improve grazing lands, restore riparian areas, and improve water quality on agricultural and industrial lands. The mission of UCEPC is to conserve or improve environmental conditions through the wise use of plants.

PICEANCE CREEK BASIN OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT TOUR

The Piceance Creek Basin in northwestern Colorado contains reserves of coal, natural gas, and oil shale. The Piceance Basin contains one of the richest oil shale deposits in the world and much oil shale research is being conducted. Oil resources can only be obtained from oil shale rock when heated to great temperatures. Development of oil shale has significant technological and environmental challenges and no economic extraction method is currently available in the U.S.

The Basin has long been known to contain natural gas however for many years drilling for gas extraction was not financially feasible. Advances in hydraulic fracturing within the past decade, along with higher gas prices, have made drilling to extract gas economical in the area and the Basin has experienced widespread drilling. The conservation districts have been working with local landowners to assist with issues affecting the natural resources due to drilling wells and installing pipelines. **Neil Brennan**, White River Conservation District supervisor, guided the group to various sites in the Basin to see firsthand some of the problems where pipe lines and gas wells have been installed as well as practices used to address natural resource concerns in the area. Local landowner, **Ms. Chris Uphoff**, provided guided information on noxious weed infestations resulting from pipeline and gas well installations. The group saw the Enterprise Gas Processing Plant, a large gas processing complex currently operating in the area. The Plant separates natural gas liquids from other products, such as propane and butane for producers including EnCana and Exxon Mobil. Currently natural gas extraction activities in the area have slowed down due to the drop in gas prices as compared to a year ago.

STAFF REPORTS DURING TOUR

Written reports for CSCB staff were distributed prior to the meeting and tour. Staff reported on important highlights and accomplishments during the lunch break on the tour. Of particular concern was the report from **Pam King** regarding updated insurance requirements for district staff using NRCS vehicles. Following an accident involving a district staff member driving an NRCS vehicle, NRCS reviewed the insurance requirement for vehicle accidents and district staff usage. As a result of the review, a new local NRCS agreement was distributed for signature by districts for use of NRCS vehicles by district staff. The review clarified that district board members are not allowed to drive NRCS vehicles.

These agreements stipulate a new requirement that the district provides third-party personal and property injury coverage for any auto accident that occurs. NRCS risk management covers damage to the NRCS vehicle providing it is not caused by wanton or willful behavior. District workers compensation covers injury to the district staff. However, districts attempting to obtain the necessary insurance have experienced problems. The problems are finding coverage in instances where the district does not own a vehicle itself and so has no auto policy. In this case, coverage requires the addition of hired/non-owned auto riders to a general liability insurance policy. CSCB has been working with insurance providers to ensure districts have the information to ensure proper coverage, and to find providers willing to offer such coverage.

Some districts have also had considerable difficulty in obtaining affordable insurance coverage. CSCB staff believes that some districts are not aware of the level of insurance required to protect overall district operational liabilities. Staff has suggested insurance policies that are made to measure for conservation districts might be the best solution for districts to ensure adequate but not excessive coverage for their risks and liabilities. Research with insurance providers continues to solve this issue so that districts can proceed with getting the work completed out in the field with assurance that they are properly insured to cover NRCS requirements and district needs.

RECONVENE – JULY 15, 2009

President **Jack Burk** called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m. The same CSCB members, staff, and partners were in attendance as listed on July 13 with the following additions: **Bud Mekelburg** - CSCB member (via teleconference), **Jim**

Currier - CSCB staff member, and **Larry Sweeney** – Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) Colorado River Watershed Representative.

PARTNER REPORTS

J.B. Martin, NRCS Deputy State Conservationist

J.B. reported that NRCS did not receive a budget for the current fiscal year until nearly half of the budget year had elapsed. The administrative staff at the State Office lost eight employees but after hiring is now nearly fully staffed.

The agency is currently \$2.8 million in the red and has instituted budget reduction measures including cutting expenditures on travel, training, supplies and relocations allowances to move new staff to the state by hiring in-state individuals. Approximately 20 permanent staff positions have been lost due to budget cuts mostly through retirements. Another area that has been cut is the Ultima Contract Employees Program. The program began with an original budget of \$500,000 but through the years had grown to \$1 million. The Area Conservationists made the decision on the positions to cut based on work load in field offices in each area. Personnel hired under the Ultima Program were primarily hired to assist with Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts. However, through the passage of time, the work load had evolved to include work being completed that was not associated with EQIP contracts. The future of this program is uncertain at this time. It was mentioned to **J.B.** that some years ago district managers were hired to complete administrative duties similar to duties being completed by Ultima personnel via the working agreement with NRCS local field offices and districts. CSCB submitted a proposal to administer the same contract employees program that was ultimately awarded to Ultima. A request was made to **J.B.** to research the possibility for future contract employee services to be administered using district employees rather than temporary contract employees through a private company such as Ultima.

Colorado is one of 20 states receiving funds as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 for watershed assistance. Funding will be provided to improve water quality, increase water supply, decrease soil erosion, and improve fish and wildlife habitat in five watersheds. NRCS is currently working with the State Engineer to implement these projects.

Watershed workgroup sessions are being scheduled using a new format for 2010. The watershed presidents are being asked to host proposed watershed meetings with stakeholders not associated with the traditional watershed association meetings. **Cindy Lair** commented she is working with **Petra Barnes** on a teleconference with watershed presidents to schedule these meeting and will also involve CSCB watershed representatives and staff in these meetings.

NRCS also received \$1.2 million for funding to work with organic agriculture production as part of EQIP. The Program will provide technical and financial assistance to organic agricultural producers. Applications were accepted from organic producers or transitional producers until the middle of June and only \$500,000 in sign-ups were received. The remainder of the funds was not obligated and will be returned to the coffers for general EQIP distribution.

J.B. expects the new administration to focus on alternative energy and climate change. Reviewing operational procedures and making recommendations to improve providing conservation services in the most efficient and effective methods under current budget constraints will be the focus of NRCS in the coming months. **J.D. Amick** requested that **J.B.** check into funding the NRCS Plant Material Center Specialist as operational budgets are reviewed.

Larry Sweeney, CACD Colorado River Watershed Representative

Larry reviewed the following activities for CACD:

- New CACD State Lobbyist, **Tracee Bentley** has 14 years of experience and is one of the most effective lobbyists on the Hill
- Active 2009 Opening Legislative Session
 - ✓ Tracked 11 House Bills and 9 Senate Bills & participated in discussions on other legislation
 - ✓ Worked closely with Joint Budget Committee & Joint Ag Council
 - ✓ Successful with passage of key bills/amendments and development of new, important relationships
- Partnered with Farm Bureau, Farmers Union, cattleman and others to sponsor Agriculture Day at the Capitol; supplied or drove tractors for legislators
- Planning Annual Meeting at Beaver Run Resort in Breckenridge on November 15-19 with emphasis on training, partner updates and more networking
- Teachers Workshop Trinchera Ranch- San Luis Valley (Rio Grande WS) \$50,000 in-kind donation from the ranch held June 15 – 19; 2 Credits issued from Adams State College; included 4 field trips in 3 days; full capacity at 50 teachers and a waiting list for 2010
- Camp Rocky held July 5th – 11th, extremely successful with over 80 registered including many returnees and conservation district scholarships
- Working on a funding request to Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)

- Currently no forestry management policy in CACD Policy Book so a policy dealing with issues such as recycling trees killed by the mountain pine beetle and forest thinning is being drafted for approval at the November Annual Meeting
- **Lanny Denham** from the Shavano Conservation District was appointed to the CACD board representing the Gunnison-Dolores Watershed.

Jennifer Cook, Small Acreage Management Coordinator for NRCS/CSU Extension

The coordinator position was created through a joint funding effort of NRCS and CSU Extension to primarily produce tools to educate small acreage landowners. **Jennifer** partnered with seven conservation districts to conduct a small acreage landowner survey in March. Small acreage landowners, owning 2 to 100 acres in the Front Range, were asked to complete a survey about land uses and interests. Surveys were handed out at conservation district tree seedling sale pick-ups in Adams, Boulder, Douglas, Elbert, Larimer, and Weld Counties. Some 100 surveys were returned and these landowners are most interested in information about weed management and alternative energy production. Most landowners are interested in receiving education and outreach through workshops and conferences. She has found that the key to successful educational workshops/conferences for small acreage concerns is to offer topics of general interest as a “hook” to get landowners to these activities. Additional surveys are planned for a more diversified sampling of Front Range small acreage landowners’ educational interests and needs.

Jennifer recently launched a new CSU Extension Small Acreage Management website. (<http://www.colostate.edu/sam>). Here landowners can find answers to questions about land management and learn more about a wide variety of topics such as weeds, composting, and trees. She has purchased equipment funded by a grant and is working on production of short (3 minute) educational videos for streaming live on the internet. She plans to offer equipment and technical assistance to CSU Extension Agents and others interested in production of short videos for their educational programs.

APPEAL BY MICHAEL DENNIS SCHMIDT AGAINST KIOWA CONSERVATION DISTRICT (CD)

Cindy Lair explained that the process for appeals to CSCB is stipulated in Colorado Revised Statutes. She conferred with the Department of Agriculture’s Attorney General and he stressed the importance of the separation of the roles that the staff plays in the appeal process. **Cindy** serves the interest of the State Board and must refrain from discussion with the district of the matter for CSCB to remain as objective as possible in the appeal process. Fortunately, Conservation Field Specialist, **Mark Cronquist**, is able to work closely with the District and if a need arises, he can communicate with **Cindy’s** supervisor, **Eric Lane**, without compromising the integrity of the process or creating a conflict for staff in the appeal process. The landowner has two potential meetings (today’s meeting and the September teleconference meeting) for the appeal to be heard by CSCB. Since the district and the landowner are currently negotiating to resolve the issue, the landowner declined to appear before the Board at this meeting but may still bring the appeal before the Board at the September teleconference meeting. CSCB members requested background and history at this meeting to become familiar with the issue if the appeal is presented to them at the September meeting.

Mark Cronquist presented background information and a time line to familiarize CSCB with the appeal. Kiowa and Douglas County Conservation Districts have responsibilities for easements on flood control dams on private property in the districts. These easements were written in the late 1950s and early 1960s spawned by flooding in the Cherry Creek Basin.

Kiowa Conservation District is responsibility for 65 watershed flood control dams along the Kiowa Creek drainage. The District Board decided the dams were a priority and applied for assistance through the Colorado State Conservation Board’s Matching Grants Program.

In September 2008 the District was awarded a 2009 Matching Grants award to assist with performing maintenance/repair on some of the 65 dams. The district had 42 of the 65 dams inspected and 23 were chosen for work based on need and available funds. The recommendation for the specific dam (1-A-10) that is the subject of the **Mr. Schmidt’s** appeal was to fence off the dam to prevent further overgrazing, which would lead to erosion and more costly maintenance or repair of the dam.

On Oct. 20, 2008 a letter was sent to landowners of property where any of these identified dams were located, informing them of possible activity on the dams related to the grant. The current property owner, **Michael Dennis Schmidt**, where Dam 1-A-10 is located, owned the property for approximately 18 months. Fencing of the dam would encompass about half of the property and limit the landowner’s use of the property. The owners have a horse riding business on the property.

In late April 2009 a letter was sent to the property owner notifying him that the work was going to begin on his property. The beginning of May, the district received a faxed letter from the **Mr. Schmidt** voicing his opposition to fencing on his property. The district responded on May 7, 2009 and invited him to meet with them at their monthly meeting in mid-May. On May 8, 2009, the district received a letter from the property owner’s attorney demanding the district abandon its plans to construct the fence or they would proceed with an appeal to the CSCB.

Mr. Schmidt and his wife met with the Board on May 20, 2009 and voiced their concerns regarding the proposed fencing and their belief that fencing would be in violation of the easement held by the District. After this discussion, both parties agreed to put the matter on hold, with no action being taken by either side until additional options were considered.

On May 26, 2009, the district received a letter from **Schmidt** stating that on recommendation of legal counsel, he was filing an appeal with the CSCB. The District also complied with a formal request from the owner to supply documents pertaining to the issue.

The first of June, the District received a copy of a letter from the owner's attorney to CSCB filing an appeal of the District board's decision. In mid-June **Schmidt** and his wife met with the District Board at its regular meeting. The possibility of conveying the easement to the owner via a quitclaim deed was discussed. It appeared that the owner had no interest in that option at the time and was still opposed to the fencing. Alternatives to the fencing were presented including having more frequent inspections to monitor the vegetation or realigning the fence to include only the dam embankment. The Board indicated they would like to continue to work with the landowner to find a workable solution. The landowner requested a signed statement from the Board that there would be no action for 60 days. The Board indicated they could not do that without consulting legal counsel and **Schmidt** indicated he would continue with his current course of action.

At the end of June the District Board invited **Mr. Schmidt** to meet on July 22 to discuss the grazing plan and other options. **Mr. Schmidt** was unsure if he would be available for this meeting until mid July. The Board is continuing to work with NRCS on proposed grazing guidelines for the dam.

Mark Cronquist encouraged the District Board to secure legal advice. He stressed that the District is focusing on cooperative efforts to keep communication open with the landowner to resolve the issue but must consider the District's responsibilities and liabilities under the easement when resolving the matter. The District Board has indicated they will consider options other than the original fencing proposal to present to the landowner to hopefully resolve the issue in a positive cooperative manner.

DECISION - DIRECT ASSISTANCE DISTRIBUTION

Two new 4-tier scenarios, as requested by the Board on Monday, were distributed for discussion. One scenario with a \$2000 base after late district receives \$1500 and a second scenario with a \$2500 base after late district receives \$1500 were discussed at length. **Danny Neufeld** made a motion to adjust the \$2500-base scenario with late district receiving \$1500 to add another Tier (designated as Tier 1) awarding \$2000 to the single district that received a score of less than 100. **J.D. Amick** seconded the motion. Upon further discussion, **J.D. Amick** made a motion to amend the motion to add the additional \$500 remaining from the original \$2500 award for the district scoring less than 100 to Tier 3. The amendment was seconded by **Jack Swennes** and it was approved without opposition.

The original motion as amended was approved unanimously for distribution as follows:

Adjusted 5-Tier DA Allocation for Fiscal Year 2010:

- Tier 5 Award: 6 districts receive \$7000
- Tier 4 Award: 24 districts receive \$5946.41
- Tier 3 Award: 35 districts receive \$5171.43
- Tier 2 Award: 9 districts receive \$2500
- Tier 1 Award: 1 district receives \$2000
- Late District: 1 district receives \$1500
- Total Distribution of \$391,713.89

Danny Neufeld moved that this motion supersede the 4-tier motion approved on Monday. **J.D. Amick** seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously. In closing, **President Jack Burk** stipulated that if the DA distribution is not fully funded at the \$391,714 amount then a special teleconference meeting will be held to re-visit the distribution.

DECISION – REPAYMENT OF STATE/FEDERAL FUNDS BY DELTA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Jim Currier reported that Delta Conservation District discovered at a board meeting on May 13, 2009 that they had no funds left in district bank account to pay staff or cover district operating costs. As a result, the district closed the office and had to lay off all of the district's employees. The Basin States Salinity Program funded district salinity technicians with quarterly payments from the program for the employees' salaries paid in advance. The salinity technicians' salaries had been paid in advance through June 30, 2009 however these funds allocated for payment of the salaries had been totally expended as of May 13. The amount in question for the Salinity employees is \$8719.20 for salaries from May 16-June 30, 2009.

The District also employed a District Conservation Technician (DCT) funded through an agreement with the State and NRCS. **Pam King** reported that the DCT Program paid an advance to cover the DCT's salary for the first quarter of 2009 and the remaining 3 quarters are paid on a reimbursement basis as required by the State Controller. **Pam** noted that the DCT funds earmarked for the technician's salary have been used in a non-traditional way including payment of employee bonuses. The district has been unable to provide sufficient payroll records to account for the payments of DCT Farm Bill

field work and salaries related to this work. NRCS has affirmed that as a part of the agreement, the DCT funds are required to be spent on employees doing DCT Farm Bill work in the field and must demonstrate that this work is being completed. Furthermore, if expenditure of these funds cannot be demonstrated as being spent properly, they need to be repaid to the Program. The District cannot demonstrate that a total of \$13,007 has been spent properly including \$11,207 of technical assistance workload not documented and \$1,800 in inappropriate employee bonuses.

Larry Sweeney spoke on behalf of **Jim Cazer**, supervisor for Delta Conservation District who was ill and could not be present. The District asked for CSCB's support and to come to an agreement on what the District owes and a repayment schedule. The District is currently having an audit completed and reassured CSCB that they will follow all the audit recommendations.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding the options and timing for repayment of the funds. **Mel Rettig** moved that the CSCB not proceed with a repayment schedule until a full accounting and audit are completed by Delta Conservation District. The motion was seconded by **Leroy Brase**. The vote was tied with 3 in favor and 3 opposed. **President Jack Burk** broke the tie by voting in opposition to the motion. The Board proceeded with discussion for repayment of the funds and decided by consensus that all funds for a total of \$21,726.20 must be repaid but considered each program repayment in separate action. These amounts may be adjusted based upon audit and additional documentation from the Delta Conservation District.

As a Salinity Program payback option for the \$8719.20, **Jim Currier** explained that salinity districts receive a 3% administrative fee for the total amount of completed salinity contracts processed by the districts for landowner payments. Currently Delta Conservation District has a balance owed for administrative reimbursement pay-back of \$1625 for contracts that were not completed. **Jim** suggested after payment of this amount, the district could pay off the debt by reserving all or a portion of this administrative fee for future landowner payments. **Pat Meakins** made a motion that after the \$1625 debt is repaid that 1½ % of the 3% administrative fee be reserved for payment of the \$8719.20 debt. The motion died for lack of a second.

Discussion continued and the point was made that it is the responsibility of the CSCB to maintain credibility with partners as they oversee the administration of any funds while still working with the district. **J.D. Amick** made a motion to require payment of the salinity program debt of \$8719.20 by reserving ~~1½%~~ one half of the 3% administrative funds for future completed landowner payments begin no later than July 1, 2010. **Danny Neufeld** seconded the motion and it was approved with **Mel Rettig** voting in opposition.

Discussion was held on the DCT Program debt consisting of state and federal funds for \$11,207 of technical assistance workload not documented and \$1,800 in inappropriate employee bonuses for a total of \$13,207. **Leroy Brase** made a motion to request repayment of \$13,007 in DCT Funds assuming that figures are correct. **J.D. Amick** seconded the motion and all were in favor. The Board discussed working with Delta to give them time to develop a strategy to repay the funds. A motion followed by **J.D. Amick** that Delta Conservation District shall develop and submit a repayment plan and schedule prior to the January 2010 meeting to the Colorado State Conservation Board for their approval. The motion was seconded by **Leroy Brase** and was approved unanimously. **Pam King** added that the district may still submit a reimbursement payroll claim for DCT work from April 1, 2009 until the technician's termination date.

WATERSHED (WS) REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Danny Neufeld – Rio Grande River Watershed

- In June, for the first time, the WS offered a new concept for the Teachers Workshop, a two-week course. The first week focused on the teachers who attended the Teachers Workshop last year and wanted to continue their learning process with the hands-on classes initiated the previous year. Week two focused on teachers ready to begin a new learning process. The Rio Grande Watershed Education Specialist, **Judy Lopez** organized and managed the Workshop both this year and last year. **Judy's** experience and teaching skills were a big factor in the highly successful workshops. The WS plans to offer the same workshops next year.
- The Teachers Workshop was integrated into the Annual Water Festival. Teachers had the opportunity to present what they learned at the workshop during the Water Festival. Attendance was down this year but the Festival still presented an effective water conservation message for all who attended. The WS will continue to work hard making this one of the largest WS learning events.
- The Colorado Foundation for Water Education toured the Rio Grande Watershed this year at the same time the Teachers Workshop was being held. The WS naturally showcased the workshop for the Foundation tour. During the tour, the WS served a great meal to approximately 180 individuals and guests including senators, representatives, county commissioners and other important members of local communities.
- Another important WS event was the fourth annual "*Pound Your Ball Golf Tournament*". The golf course double booked tournaments on event day and this hurt the WS's bottom line. However about a \$1400 profit for the Special Education Account was earned.

- All five districts have noxious weed programs of some sort this year. Weeds are a top concern across the WS and districts continue to deliver workshops and education opportunities for all cooperators.
- Rio Grande Conservation District is trying to get involved with bio mass projects. They have applied for numerous grants, but have not had any luck yet.
- Costilla and Center districts received Grazing Land Conservation Initiative (GLCI) grants and will do workshops in the near future. Both districts did snow fence tree plantings this year.
- Conejos and Mosca-Hooper Conservation Districts are consolidated into one office now. Rio Grande and Center will consolidate into one office once a new building is built. Center CD has the bid for the new building to be constructed northwest of Center. Center and Rio Grande CDs will have a new District Conservationist in September.
- The watershed has the fewest districts in the state and a total of 27 supervisors with approximately 7-9 who are active in district, WS, state, and local projects and activities. This is an area of concern for the WS.
- This is the last report **Danny** will present as CSCB Rio Grande Watershed representative. He hopes a strong replacement for him on CSCB will step forward at the September annual meeting. He reported that he has really enjoyed his time on the CSCB; made a lot of really good friends; and regrets that CSCB terms are not 4 years rather than the current statutory 3 years.

Leroy Brase – Lower Arkansas River Watershed

- **Leroy** has taken a land manager position with Tri-State Generation
- Several districts are dealing with the loss of district managers including Prowers, Northeast Prowers and Bent Conservation Districts.
- The WS is still dealing with the water situation and new rules enforced by the State Engineer.
- Opposition to the expansion of the Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site continues.
- Proposal for a highway and railroad across the Eastern plains seems to have been dropped.

OTHER BUSINESS

Pam King again asked for a CSCB volunteer to serve on the Matching Grants Review Committee. **Jack Burk** volunteered to serve on the committee joining **Pat Meakins** as CSCB representatives.

NEXT MEETING

The next CSCB meeting will be held as a teleconference in mid-September.

ADJOURN

Danny Neufeld moved that the meeting be adjourned at 12:05 p.m. The motion was seconded, approved by all and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Cindy Lair
State Conservation Board Program Manager