



Colorado State Conservation Board
February 22, 2012
Aurora, CO
Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order 10:08 am.

Board members present:

Mary Sue Liss, President – Upper South Platte River Watershed
Carol Dunn, Upper Arkansas River Watershed
Margaret Lenz, Member-At-Large
Larry Sweeney, Colorado River, Gunnison-Dolores River Watersheds
Harold Unwin, Lower Arkansas River Watershed
Jim Amick, North Platte, White, Yampa Watershed
Vernon Lurette, San Juan Basin Watershed
Bud Mekelburg, Republican, Lower South Platte Watershed

MEMBERS EXCUSED ABSENT:

Brendon Rockey, Secretary/Treasurer - Rio Grande Watershed

Staff members present:

Cindy Lair, State Conservation Board Program Manager
Mark Cronquist, Conservation Specialist
Pam King, Conservation Specialist
Nicole Reed, Conservation Specialist
Ashley Ross, Conservation Specialist
Jim Currier, Conservation Specialist

Other attendees:

Lee Sommers, Colorado State University Research Extension
Gary Moyer, Colorado Association of Conservation Districts

AGENDA:

Under new business **Bud Mekelburg** would like to add Water Conservation Discussion. **Larry Sweeney** moved to approve the agenda with addition, **Harold Unwin** seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

MINUTES:

Vernon Lurette moved to approve November 14th meeting minutes after correcting the year from 2010, to 2011. **Harold Unwin** seconded, all in favor. Motion carried.

PARTNER UPDATES:

CSU:

Lee Sommers updated the board on the research centers across the state, since the one in Durango had to close due to funding. The others, he gave a brief description of each location and projects they are



working on. In addition, the Colorado Agricultural Leadership Program is starting to rebuild (use to be CARL). **Jerry Sonnenburg** is Chairman, with others such as **Commissioner John Salazar**, **Tim Macklin**, and others. **Lou Swanson** is Extension Director and VP of Engagement; they are currently focused on filling positions in the extension office. Budget has been tight in that area, but they are doing what they can.

CACD:

Gary Moyer updated the board that **Jeanne Seagers** is the Executive Administrator and the role is different than the Executive Director they had before. They are facing severe budget constraints, but are going to work hard to still be "out there". The board is going to take more of an active role in attending watershed and other conservation district meetings. **Gary Moyer** is the new President, **Brian Neufeld** is the new Vice President, **Tom Hartnett** is the Secretary/Treasurer and **Brian Starkebaum** is Chair of the Legislative Committee. **Tom Hartnett** has been working on the technology committee and is working on using Sharepoint to help improve communications. The 2012 Annual Meeting will be held in Vail, at the Vail Marriott.

Bud Mekelburg brought up private landowners issues with state and federal lands not being properly managed and that CACD and CSCB should work together to approach Colorado Parks and Recreation. **Gary Moyer** believes that CACD does have policy on this, but will also visit with **Harley Ernst** about this issue in that area of the State.

Mary Sue Liss suggested that maybe the Annual Meeting could have a workshop or tour with oil and gas, **Gary Moyer** agreed, along with water issues. **Vernon Lurette** asked to include CO2 in topics for the Annual Meeting.

Gary Moyer also discussed the input sessions: NRCS contracted with CACD for them to help host meetings in the watersheds to prioritize natural resource concerns/projects and list the solutions needed to help accomplish those goals.

CDA:

Cindy Lair reviewed that in terms of budget, CSCB should be ok this next year, but we should watch the Severance Tax Dollars. There are two tiers, we are currently listed in tier 2 (Matching Grants Program) and expect around \$220,000, but we may not get all of it. If we don't, the new CDA Chief Financial Officer and Ag Commissioner will backfill the dollars from Ag Management Funds this year. We need to work with Department of Natural Resources to raise CDA to tier 1, which is a legislative process. **Bud Mekelburg** asked where to start? **Cindy Lair** suggested a discussion with the Commissioner and **Jim Miller**, maybe ask for their attendance at the upcoming summer meeting.

Cindy Lair also passed out a program report and listed the new partner meetings that she has been attending. In addition, on March 8th (Colorado Ag Day) there will be a Bone Marrow Donation Drive in honor of **Jim Isgar** who has leukemia. CSCB is also considering partnering with CACD with Sharepoint as our website is hard to get around and listing information can never be too redundant.

LONG RANGE PLANS:

Nicole Reed gave a very brief background on the process of reviewing the Long Range Plans and which districts were reviewed to approve, approve with revisions, or have not been reviewed or sent in yet.



Mark Cronquist discussed that a lot of districts have a hard time working on measurable goals to put on the plans. **Ashley Ross** suggested training and time to change the punitive frame of mind the districts have towards measurable goals. **Harold Unwin** moved to approve the plans that were advised by the reviewers for approval and ones for approval with revisions, **Jim Amick** seconded. All in favor, motion passes. **Nicole Reed** mentioned there will need to be another voting, due to plans that are not yet turned in or have not finished being reviewed. She will email out a voting sheet to each board member when those comments are compiled. (Note: plans approved are: Big Thompson, Burlington, Center, Double El, East Adams, Flagler, Fremont, Gunnison, High Plains, Prairie, and Upper Huerfano.)

NOMINATION COMMITTEE:

Larry Sweeney, as head of the Nomination Committee slated that **Mary Sue Liss** continue as President, **Caro Dunn** as Vice President and **Brendon Rockey** as Secretary. He entertained nominations. Seeing none, **Larry Sweeney** moved to go with the nomination committee recommendations, **Harold Unwin** seconded. All in favor, motion passed. Furthermore, the committee asked for clarification in the terms and role of the Secretary position.

BOOTSTRAP PROGRAM UPDATE:

Ashley Ross updated the board that Upper Arkansas did have a stall out but have since really been making progress. **Mark Cronquist** updated on West Adams and Platte Valley. West Adams has been making great strides and has received their first payment. Platte Valley's statement of work should be done this week and they have four new appointed board members. **Jim Currier** updated on San Miguel, they too are going to be finalizing their statements of work. **Cindy Lair** and **Nicole Reed** mentioned that there may still be leftover dollars, how would the board like to proceed? **Larry Sweeney** suggested a scholarship into the leadership program as an idea. **Mary Sue Liss** mentioned prepaying registrations for the Annual Meeting this fall. There was group discussion. **Caro Dunn** moved to use whatever amount is left over on scholarships to the CACD Annual Meeting for bottom tier districts. **Mary Sue Liss** amended that staff see how much money is actually available and each district decides which supervisor (not District Manager) to send. **Larry Sweeney** seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

WHITE PAPER: TRENDS IN CONSERVATION:

Cindy Lair reviewed the email and document that she had sent out to the board. (Hard copy was also handed out.) The board was asked for their ideas or suggestions on the topics. **Larry Sweeney** suggested changing the title to "Confronting Conservation Districts". **Mary Sue Liss** asked about adding a topic for Forest Management. **Harold Unwin** suggested Tamarisk and bugs, **Cindy Lair** mentioned biocontrol methods are in there, but we can make a note to include those specifics. **Margaret Lenz** asked about including how government land is managed (noxious weeds, animal, etc.) under maybe "Partner with State and Federal Agencies to Manage Public Lands". **Margaret Lenz** also mentioned this would be very good to get to legislature. **Mary Sue Liss** said it would be good for Conservation Districts, Supervisors, County Commissioners, and everyone; also to add renewable energy. **Larry Sweeney** suggested Hydro and Geothermal. **Cindy Lair** said she will keep working on it and will have it at the next meeting to look at, publish it in the next fiscal year.

SALINITY UPDATE:



Jim Currier updated the board on the status of the contract, that we are stilling waiting for it from Bureau of Reclamation. This entire process has taken two years, so we are hoping for an end soon. **Larry Sweeney** mentioned that the program is damaged by perspective of the districts and landowners to the point districts are extremely upset and that they are no longer promoting the program. **Cindy Lair** recommended that the Commissioner could be brought up to the date about this issue from the board, as well as we will have to work on how to help districts with the program image in the eyes of landowners.

DISTRICT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM:

Cindy Lair gave a background of the program and that it is meant to certify supervisors across the state of their duties and responsibilities as well as the role of their districts. **Ashley Ross** gave a presentation of some of the modules she has been working on. **Mary Sue Liss** would like to review some questions at the summer meeting. **Larry Sweeney** brought up the idea that if the majority of supervisors on a board were certified then the district would be certified. **Ashley Ross** answered questions on the fact that the test can be done from home (if you have the disk) or at a board meeting. The certificates would be printed right then, at completion, and then sent in (place to be determined). **Mary Sue Liss** suggested a subcommittee from CSCB and CACD to review every few modules for input, volunteers were **Carol Dunn** and **Larry Sweeney**. **Gary Moyer** mentioned himself and probably **Brian Neufeld** and **Tom Hartnett** would help (he will confirm this later).

CACD LIASION:

Larry Sweeney volunteered to be the liaison with CACD, representing CSCB. **Harold Unwin** moved to appoint **Larry Sweeney** as liaison, **Vernon Lerette** seconded, all in favor. Motion passed.

DISTRICT CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN UPDATE:

Pam King gave a PowerPoint presentation on how the program is doing and where it has been going. There is funding left and Ft. Collins Conservation District is going to hire a technician.

MATCHING GRANTS PROGRAM:

Pam King presented the last 6 years of where the program has been and gone. There was much discussion by the board on how to adjust the scoring or review process. **Mary Sue Liss** suggested points given to landowners that have active conservation plans. There was also discussion on the EQIP piece (to take it out of the requirements, but have districts deal with it, which would cover #1 and #3 of **Pam King's** suggestions). **Larry Sweeney** moved to allow staff to decide allocation above the cap with extra funds. **Margaret Lenz** seconded, all in favor. Motion passed.

LEADERSHIP CLASS:

Larry Sweeney asked if the board thought there should be a 2012-2013 class, because they typically start in August. **Cindy Lair** reminded the board that this year CSCB would take it on. **Larry Sweeney** asked for the board's permission to bring it up at the next CACD meeting. The board agreed unanimously. **Mary Sue Liss** suggested **Larry Sweeney** work on a budget and timeframe for the class. Discussion tabled until the next meeting.

NUTRIENT STANDARDS:



Cindy Lair brought the board up to date on the Water Quality Control Division in CDPHE and the opportunity for districts to promote BMP and be ahead of the program by providing data and monitoring information. **Gary Moyer** said CACD really appreciated **Cindy Lair's** help with getting them involved in the program.

LESSER PRAIRIE CHICKEN:

Cindy Lair mentioned the sign up is in April, she has information about it for anyone who is interested.

WATERSHED INPUT SESSIONS:

Cindy Lair added a bit more information about how NRCS is gathering information on projects (to help with distribution in tough budget times) from the watershed levels. **Gary Moyer** mentioned that they are on a tight schedule and Jeanne is sending out the information. He will have her send it to CSCB staff to get to our board. The Upper Arkansas is scheduled for March 6th, Rio Grande is March 7th, and San Juan is March 8th.

WATER SUB COMMITTEE:

This will be a joint committee with CACD, volunteers were **Mary Sue Liss**, **Margaret Lenz**, and **Larry Sweeney**.

DIRECT ASSISTANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE:

Nicole Reed provided some background on how the process works and recruiting review committee members. It would be nice to have 3 from CSCB and 2 from CACD. **Larry Sweeney**, **Vernon Lurette** and **Mary Sue Liss** volunteered from CSCB. **Gary Moyer** said he will ask for volunteers from CACD.

JOINT CAMPAIGN:

Mary Sue Liss suggested that a joint campaign would be nice for both (CACD and CSCB) to focus on for the next year. An idea of "Fill the board" or "Mentoring" campaigns came up. Due to time, this will be tabled until the next meeting.

NEXT BOARD MEETING:

July 10-11th in Silt, Co. The September meeting will be a conference call and then the November Annual meeting will be the second face to face meeting in the new fiscal year.

STRIP TILL:

Bud Mekelburg gave background on strip tillage, if you would like more information please see him at the reception.

Larry Sweeney moved to adjourn, **Vernon Lurette** seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned 4:32 pm.