



Colorado State Conservation Board
September 5th-6th, 2013
Palisade, CO

Meeting called to order: 1:05 pm

ROLL CALL:

Vernon Lurette, San Juan Basin Watershed
Margaret Lenz, Member-At-Large
Larry Sweeney, Colorado River, Gunnison-Dolores River Watersheds
Harold Unwin, Lower Arkansas River Watershed
Karen Salapich, Upper Arkansas River Watershed
Karin Utterback-Normann, North Platte, White, Yampa Watershed

EXCUSED ABSENCE:

Bud Mekelburg, Republican, Lower South Platte Watershed
Danny Neufeld, Rio Grande Watershed
Mary Sue Liss, Upper South Platte River Watershed

OTHER ATTENDEES:

Randy Randall, NRCS Representative
Dawn Jackson, NRCS Representative
Gary Moyer, Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
Cindy Lair, State Conservation Board Program Manager
Nicole Reed, Conservation Specialist
Ashley Ross, Conservation Specialist
Jim Currier, Conservation Specialist
Natalie Macsalka, Conservation Specialist
Tammra Straub, Conservation Specialist
Mark Cronquist, Conservation Specialist
Linda Ransanici, Western Slope CSCB

Introductions and Roll Call were completed. **Harold Unwin moved to excuse Bud Mekelburg, Danny Neufeld and Mary Sue Liss from the meeting. Karen Salapich seconded, all in favor, motion passed.**

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Larry Sweeney included the addition of an update on the Certification process and the Nomination Committee to the agenda for today at 4:30. **Karin Utterback-Normann moved to approve, Harold Unwin seconded. All in favor, motion passed.**

APPROVAL OF JUNE MEETING MINUTES:

Corrections were noted: page 3 change "soil health movement" to "awareness", add **Mark Cronquist** to attendee list, and in the bylaws section change "**Karen Salapich**" to "**Karin Utterback-Normann**". **Harold Unwin** moved to approve as amended, **Karen Salapich** seconded. Discussion: at the November meeting

the board will confirm that **Mary Sue Liss** is still willing and able to be the representative on the Mined Land Reclamation Board. **All in favor, minutes are approved.**

CACD REPORT:

Gary Moyer updated the board that CACD is really working on the formation of the Natural Resource Committees for the annual meeting. The goal is to have a representative from each watershed on each of the committees (5). The actual resolution meetings will be more of a formal process. **Harold Unwin** asked for clarification on the committees if a resolution is brought to the big general session. **Gary Moyer** stated that if the resolution gets through committee, then it goes through to the general session. If it is killed in committee, then a district in good standing can bring it to the final general session.

CACD is working on a contract with NRCS to work with CSCB staff for field office training and clarification of roles. The job description for this position will be a contract person who will conduct the training (going out soon) and who will spend approximately one week in each field office (total project is about 20 weeks).

CACD is watching very closely on water issues at the legislature and specifically on the USFS requiring permittees to give USFS their private water rights and exactly what that will entail.

NACD regional meeting for the Pacific and Southwest regions will be in Durango, CO starting September 30th. The 1st of October is when meetings start, with speakers and a live auction. The 2nd is a trip on the Durango/Silverton train and on the 3rd there are more speakers scheduled. If any CSCB member wants to attend contact **Cindy Lair** or **Larry Sweeney**.

CACD Annual meeting will be in Colorado Springs, November 11th-14th, at the DoubleTree by Hilton. **Ray Archuleta** will be a keynote speaker.

Camp Rocky had a successful summer session with the attendance slightly decreased due to the cancellation from fires last year. CACD appreciates CSCB staff help with this.

CACD board is transitioning through some board member changes:

Anthony Lobato is replacing **Brian Neufeld's** at the end of the year.

Jim Cecil is filling **Harley Ernst's** position.

Tom Hartnett has stepped down from the San Juan River Watershed and there is still no representative from the Colorado River Watershed.

The board has transitioned from more of an advisory role to an active role for the directors.

NRCS REPORT:

Randy Randall and **Dawn Jackson** provided some updates for the group. The budget this year is solvent and, unfortunately, cut backs this year were staff positions that were not filled (15-18), they did not purchase any vehicles and there were no awards for employees. This leaves the program with 255 permanent employees (down 100 staff in the past 5 years) while the dollars going out to farmers/ranchers has increased. There are also challenges in FY14 and if the budget level stays the same they could lose 10-12 staff.

Other than the hope for rain, tools are running low in the drought areas across the state to mitigate the severe drought impacts. The hope is for a 90% resolution on the Farm Bill, but that is completely unknown.

Snow survey sites are being evaluated as to what level they can continue their mission at. **BJ Schoup** is holding two (2) meetings (one in Denver, the other in Durango) with key water users to discuss on how to move forward.

All other agreements are moving forward (DCT, CACD, NACD, etc.). On the revised 3-way Agreement with districts, NRCS, and CSCB there will be renewed information on office space, vehicle use, and security on personal/identifiable information.

Dawn Jackson noted the financial reimbursement schedule is almost at 2 yrs. worth of reimbursement to be paid in 1 year. NRCS is wondering about doing an agreement with CSCB to increase employees in Salinity as one year "projects" since they cannot guarantee any further employment.

There was board discussion on whether or not there are "other" options for districts to obtain further funding or if after the one year those employees could be switched over to the Farm Bill Tech/DCT Program. **Jim Currier** will initiate conversations with those districts to see if they would be interested.

CDA REPORT:

Cindy Lair noted that partnerships are vital and that CSCB determines where the matching grant and district conservation technician (DCT) program dollars are distributed.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture is moving all Denver area office locations to one centralized office in Broomfield. Also, the State Fair just finished another year and this was the first "cashless" system year for the fair.

There is a conference on October 7th in Colorado Springs (at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort) to focus on policy makers and their understanding of agricultural water in Colorado.

AG CERTAINTY PROGRAM:

Cindy Lair provided background information on the program and noted the importance of teaming with NRCS and conservation districts. Currently, the program is developing a business plan and working on the details as to how the program will look/work. The board asked several questions and discussed. At the November meeting **Cindy Lair** will have a pro/con list of "sister" programs in other states as far as structure vs. how CDA is looking at setting up the program (ACTION ITEM).

MATCHING GRANTS

Tammra Straub reviewed the handout on the review committee's recommendations for funding the applicants. There was board discussion on provisional applications and the controversy on funding category "x". It was noted that there was the \$25,000 limit on applying, but districts were able to partner or one district could relinquish their \$25,000 available for a partner district project. There was also clarification that the guidelines/instructions do allow for education projects as well as on the ground conservation. **Vernon Lurette moved to approve funding from Douglas County down to Burlington per the review committee recommendations. Margaret Lenz** seconded. Discussion on education and continuity of applicants relying on this grant for projects year after year. **All in favor, motion passed.**

The other 4 applications were discussed and the review committees' recommendations were accepted.

Harold Unwin suggested a workshop on budget section for applicants. **Tammra Straub** clarified that this year, in addition to the guidelines/instructions/examples, there was also a recorded webinar that was posted online.

Harold Unwin moved to allow an amended application with the provisions listed for both Kiowa County and Jefferson with a deadline of 30 days. Karen Salapich seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

Margaret Lenz moved to place Middle Park higher up on the list and move Kiowa County down, due to points and funding category. **Karin Utterback-Normann** seconded. There was a lot of discussion then a call for the question. **Harold Unwin, Vernon Lurette** and **Karen Salapich** voted nay, **Karin Utterback-Normann** and **Margaret Lenz** voted aye – motion defeated.

Harold Unwin moved to accept the Matching Grants Committee’s recommendations for all grant distributions, as presented. Vernon Lurette seconded. There was further discussion about “provisional” acceptance of projects being funded if the district agrees to change their proposal to adhere to state rules/policies. Margaret Lenz amended “provisional” acceptance to address some of the concerns that were discussed. Vernon Lurette seconded amendment, all in favor, amendment is approved.

All in favor of original motion with amendment, motion passed.

DIRECT ASSISTANCE:

Nicole Reed reported that the office received several complaints, this year, on the incremental funding and “ranking” awards. This is a good opportunity to really review the application and grading rubrics; **Harold Unwin** and **Karin Utterback-Normann** volunteered to help **Nicole Reed**. There will also be a reviewer workshop incorporated into the January/February meeting.

There will be a matching grant review “workshop” at the June meeting (or Jan/Feb) in 2014.

LEADERSHIP CLASS:

Nicole Reed clarified that as of today there were only three (3) applicants for this year’s class. **Larry Sweeney** said that the class will be cancelled and we will really need to push applicants at CACD and start next year, Nov. 2014. **Karin Utterback-Normann** mentioned that Colorado boards, in general, are dealing with “working” boards that just can’t get away to attend these types of classes. **Cindy Lair** mentioned that we could reach out to other states or send some people to Colorado Ag Leadership Class. **Larry Sweeney** stated that we should really recruit at CACD.

Harold Unwin moved to cancel the class this year, Margaret Lenz seconded All in favor, motion passed.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS:

Larry Sweeney asked the Board to start completing the tests and to become certified. **Nicole Reed** clarified that if a board is taking the test during a board meeting/together then they only need to submit ONE certificate of completion form (with all signatures of those completing that certification) AND ONE test (along with meeting minutes). This can be either emailed or regular mail; that is up to the Board.

LONG RANGE PLANS:

Larry Sweeney and Cindy Lair will write a letter to clarify that the CSCB has decided that they will “review” the LRPs, not “approve or disapprove” them.**BOARD SUMMARY:**

Margaret Lenz suggested a “newsletter” sent after each meeting. **Larry Sweeney** stated that the items to include would be discussed at the end of the meeting. **Nicole Reed** mentioned this could go out as a “meeting highlights” e-newsletter, email, or letter.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE:

The volunteers for the nomination committee are **Harold Unwin, Karen Salapich, and Margaret Lenz.**

Meeting recessed at 5:00pm until Friday, September 6th, 2013 8:00am.

8:06 am MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

AG CERTAINTY PROGRAM (CONT'D):

Cindy Lair reviewed the history of this and asked for questions. **Larry Sweeney** asked what it does do for the landowner? **Cindy Lair** explained that those details are not finalized, but it could include a branding piece, sign on the property to indicate that the participating land owner is working to protect water and air quality. **Dawn Jackson** provided some input on the positive aspects of the certainty program because it allows long term certainty where EQIP/etc. are a shorter timeframe.

Cindy Lair mentioned that if it does go through, then at a certain point there will be legislation to create the funding and staff positions to implement the program. The time frame is at least two years from now. **Larry Sweeney** mentioned that it would be good to review everything at the November meeting so the board can make a better informed decision. **Cindy Lair** clarified the voiced concerns on this becoming mandatory at some point. The Department of Agriculture does not want to proceed with this if the Ag community does not want it. There should be no more additional regulation with this proposed program.

CAMP ROCKY:

The week of October 15th there will be a work session to develop a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). **Cindy Lair** explained that it is important to attract some other partnerships/funding opportunities and that we really need to look at where we want the future program to go. **Larry Sweeney** stated that CSCB will review the SWOT and time necessary for staff involvement so CSCB can provide an informed decision to CDA.

Staff will send out the SWOT *before* the November meeting so the board has time to review and decide at the November meeting (ACTION ITEM).

Cindy Lair asked for a board volunteer to help with the SWOT for Tuesday, October 15th. **Larry Sweeney** will contact **Danny Neufeld** to see if he can go and **Harold Unwin** will also check his calendar.

The board had a general consensus that they support the Camp and staff time working on this task.

WALTON FOUNDATION:

Cindy Lair and **Randy Randall** provided some background information that the Walton Foundation was originally looking at putting money into water projects on the Colorado River Basin. Now they are looking at doing projects, statewide. The Foundation really wants more agricultural landowners in the discussion now before the State Water Plan is adopted. There is a meeting October 7th on the value of agriculture water. They also offered financial contributions for a facilitator for CACD annual meeting on this water topic. **Randy Randall** will send the background information/presentation he has to **Cindy Lair** and she will distribute to the board for review.

3 WAY AGREEMENTS (CONT'D):

Cindy Lair discussed most of this yesterday. There is a piece that is important for districts to remember and that is they still need to do a local operating agreement for the specific details of their offices with partners (such as NRCS, etc.). **Cindy Lair** and NRCS are going to work out the details for the 3-way agreements this fall and will let CSCB review them before November.

ENVIROTHON:

Mark Cronquist provided handouts and an overview of the program. They are putting together a steering committee this fall for Colorado and ask CSCB for support of the concept of Envirothon in Colorado. CSCB discussed a resolution or letter for its' general support of Youth Conservation Education that CSCB staff helps with (i.e. Camp Rocky and Envirothon).

There was general consensus that the State Board supports a variety of youth activities for conservation that conservation specialists work on.

BRIEF FIELD SPECIALIST UPDATE:

Jim Currier: Salinity update in meeting packet and provided some project specific updates

Natalie Macsalka: Working on watershed meetings and getting representation on both CSCB/CACD boards, LRP process/planning

Ashley Ross: District manager training program, watershed meetings

Mark Cronquist: Envirothon, bootstrap district support

Tammra Straub S: Matching grant discussion board already had and DCT financial update

Nicole Reed: CDA Technology, districts now submit ALL forms to state government through DOLA's electronic filing system

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS FOR COMMUNICATION:

- **LRP "Review"**
- **Leadership Class**
- **Support youth programs**
- **Matching Grant**
- **Direct assistance (call your local rep) review committee**

NEXT MEETING:

November at CACD, Colorado Springs.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 10:52 AM