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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

June 10, 2025

YCCD Supervisors Present: Margaret Lenz, Ron Richards, Sonya Shaw, Darrell Smith, & Chester Zwirn

Supervisors Absent: None

Ex officio Members: None

Staff Present: Tanya Fell, Shirley Deason, and Rafael Trejo

Call to Order:

President Lenz declared a quorum present and convened the meeting of the Yuma County Conservation District at 5:35 p.m. at the Wray NRCS Conference.

Update Mileage Calendar:

Updates were made by each board member to the mileage calendar.

Additions & Correction to Agenda:

There were no additions or corrections to the agenda. Approval of the agenda was made on a motion by Supervisor Shaw. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards and carried unanimously.

Approval of Previous Month's Minutes:

Supervisor Richards moved to approve the May 13, 2025, meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Shaw and carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report:

District Manager Fell presented the monthly financials. Supervisor Richards moved to accept the financial report and pay the June bills. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Zwirn and carried unanimously. The current bills paid are:

- Employee payroll
- Plains Communications
- Premier Accounting
- Quality Farm and Ranch
- Barlow Ag Sales
- Wish, Inc.
- Lincoln Oakes Nursery
- CACD – 2025 Dues
- East Yuma Co. Cemetery Dist.
- Nathan Amrine (CSHP)
- John Kettelson (CSHP)
- Brian Lengel (CSHP)

- Kalen McDonald (CSHP)
- Daniel/Beth Ray (CSHP)
- Sandhill Bloomers (CSHP)
- Darrell Smith (CSHP)
- Aaron Waitman (CSHP)
- Dustin Wise (CSHP)
- Sam Meisner (YCCD Scholarship)
- Jayden Witte (Zwirn Scholarship)
- Tate Towns (Zwirn Scholarship)
- Addyson Juhnke (Zwirn Scholarsh

OLD BUSINESS:

Grants & Updates:

District Manager Fell gave updates on the following grants:

- 50/50 Matching Grant 2025: District Conservation Technician (DCT) Trejo gave a report stating that Bridget with NRCS would be at the office tomorrow. They plan to review plans for two producers and have the producer sign the Cost-Share agreement. There are five producers that need to provide well tests (well tests are not needed if the producer is just replacing tanks).
- Bonny Demonstration Grant: Supervisor Smith gave a report on the effects of cattle grazing which had taken place in 2024. Area II looks very, very good after the heavy grazing. In Area I, brome grass was waist high and Supervisor Smith's opinion as a cattleman was that the area needed grazing again. The number of cattle the area could support depends on the number of acres available and the length of time the cattle could be in the area for grazing. Supervisor Smith also stated that the electrical wire is on the ground. District Manager Fell will check how/who will take care of this.

Supervisor Lenz reported on the steering committee meeting held on May 30, 2025. Duane Stegner with Colorado Parks and Wildlife will see about the possibility of getting water at Bonny. A grazing plan needs to be developed by NRCS/CSU. District Manager Fell will look for available grant funding opportunities. Additionally, a cooperator needs to be identified. The next meeting has been scheduled for July 10, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. A coordinated Resource Plan would be beneficial for all parties involved.

District Manager Fell stated that Daniel Palic, RTL with NRCS suggested that Andy Tapparo with NRCS or Gerald Gregory might be able to help with the grazing plan. Wells and pipe to get water to cattle are an area of concern for the project. "Halter", a virtual fencing company has stated that with 100 collars, they would provide a free tower. Possible avenues for grant funding for this project include the Colorado Habitat Partnership Program (HPP) and/or a CACD demonstration grant. Other possible grant funding opportunities were discussed.

Discussion then turned to a cooperator that understands the uniqueness of this project such as having cattle that are easy to handle and that grazing durations may need to be changed due to drought conditions. Darrell Smith had previously applied to be a cooperator in December 2022. After consideration of these qualifications, Supervisor Richards made a motion to appoint Darrell Smith as the grazing cooperator. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Zwirn and carried unanimously with Supervisor Smith abstaining due to conflict of interest.

- **NFWF Grant: \$320,000 grant request for Rejuvra for all of Yuma County:** The Conservation District has been informed that the reimbursement request for Don Brown has been approved and is awaiting payout. Noe (Marymore) Russo, Kelsea Mauk, Trent Verquer, District Manager Fell and DCT Trejo met at the Tamarack SWA check station on May 20th for cheatgrass training. Fiscal year end reports were submitted. Due to the lack of moisture, spraying will not commence again until the fall.
- **Rocky Mountain Mule Deer Grant:** The conservation district has \$10,000 remaining from the \$20,000 grant with an additional \$22,500 available for projects in 2025.
- **Colorado Soil Health Program:** The conservation district was notified that the Colorado Soil Health Program was terminated with a Notice of Stop Work Order dated April 16, 2025. All producer reimbursement requests have been submitted along with conservation districts capacity payment of \$ 4,500.00. Payments have been made to producers. John Miller will be retained in the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) Soil Health Program. The Soil Health Division will be searching for other grant opportunities. Liza Nguyen and Michelle Nelson will be transferred to the Ag Stewardship Tax Credit Division of the CDA.
- **CSCB Supplemental Matching Grant:** The Yuma Conservation District (with administration by the Yuma County Conservation District) for tree restoration in the amount of \$50,000 was discussed. District Manager Fell has reached out to the Colorado State Forestry Service for assistance in developing guidelines for damaged tree replacement.

HPP/50/50 Matching Grant/Demonstration Grant:

Additional grant opportunities and deadlines were discussed. Supervisor Smith made a motion that the conservation district apply for the 50/50 matching grant with the same criteria as the previous year provided that the Yuma Conservation District signs an MOU to that effect. The project would be for water tanks, pipelines, solar pumps, and wireless tank monitoring devices. Also, the conservation district will check to see if two demonstration grants are available with priority being for Invasive Species in a Riparian Area. Duane Stegner with Colorado Parks and Wildlife has agreed that the Bonny Reservoir could be used as a cheatgrass control demonstration area should the conservation district be awarded a demonstration grant. If the conservation district is allowed to apply for a second demonstration grant, it would be for

virtual fencing. A motion was made by Supervisor Zwirn to apply to HPP for a grant for virtual fencing. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards and carried unanimously.

Targeted Conservation Project Proposal:

A locally led Targeted Conservation Project Proposal for fiscal year 2026 was submitted by the Yuma County Conservation District for cheatgrass control, which would encompass Yuma County, Phillips County and Sedgwick County.

Agriculture Climate Resilience Grant Opportunity:

The conservation district applied for a climate resilience grant in the amount of \$30,000.00 for shelter belt tree restoration. Notification of grant awardees will be made in July 2025.

Potential Contract Labor/NFWF Conservation Partners Program:

The NFWF Conservation Partners Program proposals are due on July 15, 2025. With the assistance of Noe Russo with ENVU, the conservation district intends to apply for \$ 500,000.00. This grant would help with staff funding for an employee trained as a technical service provider.

Vehicle Purchase for District Business:

The conservation district has been approved to participate in the Federal Surplus Property Program. The conservation district has submitted a request for the purchase of a pickup. If the conservation district is successful in the bid process, full insurance coverage will be obtained. Office Assistant Deason will get proposals for different deductible amounts and also for the coverage limits.

Workshops:

Tentative summer/fall schedule of workshops and activities the conservation district is considering include hosting an estate/succession workshop, cover crops workshop, drone spraying workshop, and a farmers' market. District Manager Fell requested the conservation district join the Colorado Farmers Market Association at a cost of \$50.00. A motion was made by Supervisor Richards to approve joining the Colorado Farmer's Market Association. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Zwirn and carried unanimously.

Host CSCB Solar & Agrivoltaics Tour for the Northeast Region:

The board discussed hosting the Colorado State Conservation Board Agrivoltaics workshop for the Northeast region. District Manager Fell and Office Assistant held a meeting with Nikki Brinson to discuss dates for the tour. Possible workshop topics include regulations, bonding requirements, and what as a landowner you need to consider and look for in a contract. Besides producers, invites should be sent to county commissioners, planning and zoning commission members, and city planners/managers.

Discovery Farms in the Republican River Basin:

Discovery Farms in the Republican River Basin was tabled.

Republican River Watershed Meeting:

The Republican River Watershed Association meeting has been rescheduled to August 27, 2025. All supervisors are encouraged to attend. Resolutions the conservation district wishes to make should be presented at the Republican River Watershed Association meeting.

2025 Southwest and Pacific Joint Region Meeting:

The combined 2025 Southwest and Pacific Joint Regional Meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts will be held in Golden, CO on September 7-10, 2025. Supervisors are encouraged to attend.

Leadership Certificate:

District Manager Fell contacted Stephanie Scott to schedule Leadership training between November 2025 – January 2026 for the certificate that was purchased at auction during the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts annual meeting.

Candidates for Conservationist of the Year:

The Conservationist of the Year possible candidates were tabled until a future meeting.

Website and Document ADA Compliance:

The deadline for website and document ADA compliance is July 1st. Quotes from USERWAY were discussed. A motion was made by Supervisor Shaw to have District Manager Fell obtain the most cost-effective option. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith and carried unanimously.

Sale of Planting Equipment and Fabric Machine:

Kent Mekelburg purchased the old tree planting equipment and fabric machine for \$500.00. A bill of sale will be provided to Mr. Mekelburg.

Grasshopper Mitigation:

The conservation district has pamphlets to distribute for grasshopper mitigation.

Wind Towers/Solar Farms:

Jeff Wingfield, ex-officio and a member of the Yuma County Planning Commission, gave an update to District Manager Fell on wind towers/solar farms. A solar farm is coming between Kit Carson and Yuma Counties. Also, individuals have been attending the planning commission meetings requesting a change in setback on wind towers from 2 ½ times to 1 times the height of the tower.

Washington Leadership Conference Sponsorship Request:

Supervisor Shaw gave an update on the written request from Taelynn Rojas with the Liberty FFA requesting sponsorship to attend the Washington Leadership Conference. Supervisor Shaw informed Liberty FFA Advisor Tawni Combs that is not something the conservation district does.

NEW BUSINESS:

CSCB Board Meeting Report:

Margaret Lenz gave a report on the CSCB Board Meeting.

Contents Insurance Review:

Insurance coverage for the contents housed in the NRCS building was discussed. Supervisors decided that the coverage was sufficient at this time.

Press Releases:

The press release for Camp Rocky was reviewed.

Correspondence Review:

The letter from Tate Towns thanking District Manager Fell and the scholarship committee for the Chester and Marcia Zwirn scholarship was reviewed.

NRCS Report:

District Manager Fell then gave the report provided by Daniel Palic with NRCS.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Supervisor Richards to dispense with the executive session. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Shaw and carried unanimously.

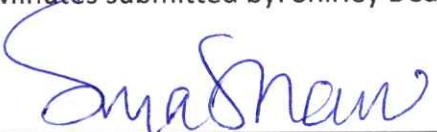
ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Supervisor Shaw to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards and carried unanimously with President Lenz adjourning the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Next Meeting:

The next YCCD meeting has been scheduled for July 8, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the NRCS conference room in Wray.

Minutes submitted by: Shirley Deason, Office Assistant



Sonya Shaw, Secretary/Treasurer


Date