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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

July 14, 2026

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

Supervisors Absent: None

Ex officio Members: Daniel Palic, NRCS

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 Room.

Update to Mileage Calendar:

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

Approval of Agenda:

There were no additions or corrections to the agenda. Supervisor Richards moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Shaw and carried unanimously.

NRCS Report:

Daniel Palic presented the NRCS report. He provided updates on current CRP contracts and reported that there are no active CSP contracts at this time. For the Targeted Conservation Program (TCP), fourteen (14) applications were received, with eight (8) receiving preliminary approval.

Mr. Palic also reported that the NRCS is currently advertising a Rangeland Management position and plans to readvertise the Resource Team Lead (RTL) position. He noted that the NRCS fiscal year concludes at the end of September. Additionally, Mr. Palic stated that District Conservation Technician (DCT) Rafael Trejo is expected to become a certified conservation planner by early August.

Grants & Updates:

District Manager Fell gave updates on the following grants:

Bonny Grazing Project: District Manager Fell provided an update on the Bonny Grazing Project. Three grant applications have been secured to support the project at Bonny Reservoir, including the Demonstration Grant, the HPP Grant, and the Mule Deer Foundation Grant. Cooperator Darrell Smith has fitted the cattle with the virtual fencing collars. Installation of the

water pipeline and livestock water tanks at Bonny Reservoir is scheduled to begin to provide a reliable water source for the grazing operation. The portable corrals are ready for use.

Additionally, the Conservation District has received funding from Colorado Parks and Wildlife to conduct biomass monitoring as part of the grazing project to help evaluate vegetation response and project outcomes.

- **Restore Colorado Grant 2024 -NFWF:** The Conservation District was awarded a \$320,000 RESTORE Colorado Grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to support Rejuvra applications across Yuma County for the control of invasive annual grasses. The Conservation District received a project extension through December 31, 2026, to complete the remaining work. The Conservation District is currently working to utilize the remaining SAFE and cheatgrass program funds before project completion.
- **CSCB Supplemental Matching Grant 2025:** The Yuma Conservation District, under the administration of the Yuma County Conservation District, was awarded a \$50,000 grant to support tree restoration efforts. Reimbursement has been received from the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB), all grant obligations have been fulfilled, and the grant has been successfully completed and closed.
- **CSCB 50/50 Matching Grant 2026:** The Conservation District was awarded a \$50,000 CSCB 50/50 Matching Grant for 2026 to support the installation of water tanks, pipelines, solar pumps, and wireless tank monitoring devices benefiting producers in both the Yuma Conservation District and the Yuma County Conservation District. DCT Trejo gave a report on the progress of the grant. Projects for RLS Ranch, LLC and Gaylord Mekelburg have been completed. The MLJ Deterding project is substantially complete, with only the landowner's certification of completion signature remaining before the project can be finalized.
- **Demonstration Grant (Cheatgrass)-CACD/NRCS:** The Conservation District was awarded a grant in the amount of \$10,000 for Cheatgrass Control Test Plots. The project will be implemented with technical assistance from Alan Hopkins with ENVU. Herbicide applications are planned for the Hale Ponds area, and treatment protocols have been established.
- **Climate Resiliency Grant-Co. Dept of Ag:** The Conservation District was awarded a \$30,000 Climate Resiliency Grant through the Colorado Department of Agriculture for the installation of living snow fences. District Manager Fell contacted the Colorado Department of Transportation to explore potential assistance and coordination opportunities for the project. The goal is to complete tree planting in the fall of 2026.
- **Demonstration Grant (Virtual Fence) – CACD/NRCS:** The Conservation District was awarded a grant in the amount of \$10,000 for Virtual Fence, Portable Corral System & Water Structure at Bonny Reservoir.
- **Republican River Watershed Association (Cheatgrass) – Congresswoman Boebert:** The Yuma County Conservation District was awarded \$850,000 in funding to benefit producers in the Republican River Watershed Association in controlling and mitigating invasive annual grasses. District Manager Fell reported that a conference call was held earlier in the day with IMAGINE

to discuss their potential role in implementing the project. An IMAGINE representative is expected to attend the upcoming Republican River Watershed Association meeting to further discuss project implementation.

- **Habitat Partnership Program - CPW:** The Conservation District was awarded a grant in the amount of \$36,500 for virtual fence and water structure at Bonny Reservoir. The project report has been completed and submitted, along with the required reimbursement invoices.
- **Mule Deer Foundation:** The Conservation District was awarded \$17,160 for the water structure at Bonny Reservoir. The project report has been completed and submitted, along with the required reimbursement invoices.
- **NRCS Locally Led Targeted Conservation Project:** The Conservation District was awarded a \$500,000 NRCS Locally Led Targeted Conservation Project for Cheatgrass Control. This project will encompass Yuma County, Phillips County and Sedgwick County. Daniel Palic provided an update on the project during the NRCS report.

Upcoming Grant Opportunities: District Manager Fell gave updates on the following grant opportunities:

- **Restore Colorado Grant – NFWF:** The application has been submitted in the amount of \$349,242.77 for a watershed wide grant for cheatgrass control. The Conservation District was informed that it was not awarded the grant.
- **Technical Assistance Grant- NACD:** This grant would fund a dedicated employee position to provide technical services on behalf of the district. The application has been submitted in the amount of \$121,037.50. Awards were expected to be announced in March 2026; however, no award announcement has been received to date.
- **CSCB 50/50 Matching Grant 2027:** The Conservation District submitted an application in the amount of \$25,000 to support water tanks, pipelines, solar pumps, and wireless tank monitoring devices. The proposed project will focus on drought mitigation by improving livestock and wildlife water distribution, increasing grazing flexibility, reducing pressure on overutilized pastures, and enhancing the ability of producers to manage limited water resources more efficiently during prolonged drought conditions.
- **DCT Application Renewal:** The Conservation District submitted an application for renewal of funding for the District Conservation Technician position. The application has been submitted.
- **Natural Disaster Mitigation Enterprise Grant – Homeland Security & Emergency Management:** The Board discussed the Natural Disaster Mitigation Enterprise Grant opportunity through the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The Yuma County Conservation District will serve as the lead entity on behalf of the Republican River Watershed Association. District Manager Fell and Noe Russo of ENVU are collaborating on the preparation of the application. Applications are due August 31, 2026.

Executive Session:

A motion was made by Supervisor Shaw to enter into Executive Session pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-6-

402(4)(f) to discuss annual employee performance evaluations and compensation considerations for Conservation District staff, including review of salary levels for compliance with Colorado exempt salary requirements. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith and carried unanimously.

Daniel Palic, NRCS District Conservationist, was present during a portion of the executive session at the request of the Board to review the accomplishments and performance of District Conservation Technician Rafael Trejo. Upon completing his report, Mr. Palic departed the meeting, and the Board continued its discussion regarding employee evaluations and compensation.

- The Board entered Executive Session at 6:19 p.m.
- The Board exited Executive Session and reconvened in regular session at 7:22 p.m.

Action Following Executive Session:

A motion was made by Supervisor Richards to approve an annual salary of \$59,000 for District Manager Tanya Fell, an hourly wage increase of \$3.00 per hour for District Conservation Technician Rafael Trejo, and an hourly wage increase of \$1.00 per hour for Office Assistant Shirley Deason, with all salary and wage adjustments effective July 1, 2026. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith and carried unanimously.

Approval of Previous Month's Minutes:

Supervisor Richards moved to approve the June 9, 2026, meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Shaw and carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report:

Financial Statement and Pay Bills: District Manager Fell presented the monthly financials. Supervisor Shaw moved to accept the financial statements and approve payment of the July bills. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards and carried unanimously. The following bills were presented for payment:

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| • Employee Payroll | • RLS Ranch, LLC – Matching Grant |
| • WISH | • Gaylord Mekelburg – Matching Grant |
| • Environmental Science US LLC – Rangeview | • MLJ Deterding Farms – Matching Grant |
| • Halter – Bonny | • Haydan Drullinger – Zwiern Scholarship |
| • Schaal Drilling LTD LLC – Bonny | • Bryson Lewis - Zwiern Scholarship |
| • Scott Wall – Supplemental Matching Grant | • Jayden Witte – Zwiern Scholarship |

Old Business:

Report on Grant Writing Workshop:

District Manager Fell provided a report on the grant writing workshop attended in Gillette, Wyoming on June 22-23, 2026. The training will provide additional skills and resources to strengthen the Conservation District's ability to pursue grant funding opportunities and support future conservation projects.

Leadership Training Reschedule:

Leadership training is being rescheduled. District Manager Fell will contact Stephanie Scott to discuss possible dates for the training.

Workshops:

- **Landowner Dam Easement Education Workshop:** The Conservation District continues to explore hosting a workshop for landowners with properties near dam easement areas to emphasize the importance of keeping easement areas clear of brush to ensure proper water flow during significant rain events. Plat maps will be used to identify landowners with easements in these areas.
- **Estate/Succession Plan Workshop:** District Manager Fell reported that planning continues for an estate and succession planning workshop targeted toward younger producers. District Manager Fell has contacted Jeffrey Tranel to inquire about potential dates in mid-November or early December.
- **Irrigation Workshop:** The Conservation District continues to explore the possibility of hosting an irrigation workshop to provide educational opportunities and resources for producers on irrigation management and water conservation practices.

Host CSCB Solar & Agrivoltaics Event for the Northeast Region:

The Board discussed hosting the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) Solar and Agrivoltaics Tour for the Northeast Region. Joelle Holtman will assist with coordinating speakers and presentations for the event. A conference call is scheduled for July 20, 2026, to discuss planning and logistics.

Yuma County Town Hall Meetings:

A second Town Hall meeting regarding proposed wind turbine setbacks was held on June 23, 2026, at the Eckley Community Center in Eckley. The meeting was intended to provide residents with an opportunity to express concerns to the Yuma County Planning Commission regarding proposed wind turbine setbacks. No members of the Board attended the meeting.

Policy and Procedure Manual Approval:

Due to time constraints, the Board tabled the review and approval of the remaining Governance and Administration, Financial and Operational, and Appendix and Forms policies included in the Policy and Procedure Manual until a future meeting.

Republican River Watershed Association Fall Meeting:

The Republican River Watershed Association Fall meeting is scheduled for August 20, 2026.

The Board reviewed the new policy resolution titled "Resolution to Support Local Control of Land Use Planning in Agricultural and Rural Communities." A motion was made by Supervisor Zwirn to approve the resolution and forward it to the watershed association for consideration at the Fall meeting. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith and carried unanimously. Supervisor Richards volunteered to present the resolution at the watershed meeting.

The Board also reviewed the Conservation District's 2026 Conservationist of the Year award nominations, which were originally selected at the January 2026 Board meeting and recognized at the February 2026 Annual Meeting. A motion was made by Supervisor Shaw to reaffirm the Conservation District's 2026 Conservationist of the Year nominations and authorize submission of those nominations to the watershed association for regional consideration and subsequent forwarding to the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD). The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards and carried unanimously. The nominees are as follows:

- Education Program of the Year: Prairie Chicken Program – Wray Museum, East Yuma County Historical Society, and the Wray Chamber of Commerce
- Educator of the Year: Josh Melby
- Conservationist of the Year – Small Acreage: Sandhill Bloomers
- Conservationist of the Year – Farmer: Brad Wingfield
- Conservationist of the Year – Rancher: Nathan Andrews
- Outstanding Partner of the Year: CSU Extension – Travis Taylor

Camp Rocky:

Camp Rocky is a week-long residential camp for youth ages 14–17 that combines hands-on learning in natural resources, agriculture, and environmental science with a traditional summer camp experience in the Colorado Rockies. The 2026 camp was held July 5–10 in Divide, Colorado. At the time of the meeting, information regarding attendance by students from the Conservation District was not yet available.

New Business:

Request for Letter of Support – Pollinator Partnership:

The Board reviewed a request from Cody Wilson, Agricultural Manager for Pollinator Partnership, seeking a Letter of Support for Pollinator Partnership's application to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Conservation Partners Program. If funded, the grant would support a Grazing Lands Specialist to provide producers with free technical assistance to effectively and realistically incorporate pollinator habitat into their agricultural operations. Following discussion, the Board declined to provide a Letter of Support.

Wray Dams:

James DePue, Wray City Manager, requested a work session with the Board to review the Wray City dam inundation maps and identify critical infrastructure for inclusion in the Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Mr. DePue requested that the work session be scheduled in September or October 2026. The Board directed Office Assistant Deason to coordinate with Mr. DePue to schedule a late-afternoon work session in conjunction with a regularly scheduled YCCD Board meeting, preferably on the first or third Tuesday in September or the second Tuesday in October.

Local Workgroup Survey:

District Manager Fell reviewed the NRCS Colorado FY2026 Local Working Group Summary results with the Board. A total of eighty-four (84) survey responses were received. The final report will be submitted to the Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

CSCB Emerging Leaders in Conservation Program:

The Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) will be hosting a 14-month long in-depth leadership training program for Conservation District Supervisors, Conservation District Employees, and Partner Organizations. District Manager Fell, District Conservation Technician (DCT) Trejo, and Supervisor Margaret Lenz intend to submit applications to participate in the program.

Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) Annual Meeting:

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting will be held November 9–12, 2026, in Colorado Springs.

Acknowledgements:

The Board reviewed a thank-you card from Haydan Drullinger expressing appreciation for receiving the Zwirn Scholarship.

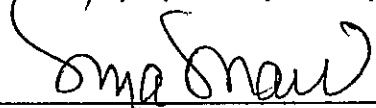
Adjournment:

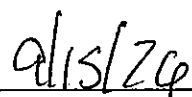
A motion was made by Supervisor Smith to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards and carried unanimously with President Lenz adjourning the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Next Meeting:

The next Yuma County Conservation District meeting is scheduled for August 11, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., and will be held at the NRCS conference room in Wray.

Minutes prepared by: Shirley Deason, Office Assistant


Sonya Shaw, Secretary/Treasurer


Date