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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

September 15, 2026

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
Guests Present: James DePue (Wray City Manager) and Henry Santiazo (Pheasants Forever)
Guests Present via Zoom: Aspen Grady (U.S. Congresswoman Lauren Boebert Northern Colorado Field Representative) – joined for the regular Board meeting

Wray Dams – City of Wray Work Session:

The Wray Dams – City of Wray Work Session began at 1:00 p.m. at the Wray NRCS Conference Room. James DePue, Wray City Manager, reviewed the City of Wray dam inundation maps with the Board. The Board identified several local businesses as critical infrastructure for inclusion in the Emergency Action Plan (EAP). James DePue will check on the next scheduled inspection date for the Wray dams.

The work session concluded at 2:03 p.m. No formal action was taken during the work session. James DePue departed following the conclusion of the work session.

Call to Order – Regular Board Meeting:

Following the conclusion of the work session, President Lenz called the regular meeting of the Yuma County Conservation District Board of Supervisors to order at 2:07 p.m. President Lenz declared a quorum present. Aspen Grady (U.S. Congresswoman Lauren Boebert's Northern Colorado Field Representative) joined the regular Board meeting via Zoom and gave a brief introduction of herself.

Update to Mileage Calendar:

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

Additions, Corrections & Approval of Agenda:

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

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

Supervisor Richards moved to approve the July 14, 2026, meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith. The motion carried.

The August 11, 2026, regular meeting was cancelled due to lack of quorum; therefore, no meeting minutes were presented for approval.

Treasurer's Report:

Financial Statement and Approval of Bills: District Manager Fell presented the monthly financial reports, including expenditures and recurring payments made in the normal course of District business. Detailed allocations of expenditures for each employee Visa card were provided to the Board for review.

Due to the cancellation of the August 11, 2026, regular meeting for lack of quorum, certain August bills were paid prior to the September meeting to meet payment obligations. The following bills were presented to the Board for ratification:

- July Employee Payroll
- August Employee Payroll
- CACD – 2026 Membership Dues
- Tree Source
- Sam Meisner – Peters Scholarship
- Chase Buoy – Peters Scholarship
- Kaitlyn Meisner – Peters Scholarship
- Daden Beauprez – Zwirn Scholarship

The following additional bills were presented for approval and payment:

- Cope Conservation District – RRWA Lunches
- Chad Richards – Bird Ladders
- Premier Accounting
- Tanya Fell - Mileage

Supervisor Shaw moved to accept the financial reports, ratify the bills previously paid, and approve payment of the current bills as presented. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards. The motion carried.

Past Due Customer Invoices:

Supervisors reviewed the past due customer invoices for Jamie Sauer and Carol Wood. Relatives of Carol Wood contacted the Conservation District on September 14, 2026, and informed the Conservation District that Carol had passed away on August 28, 2026. The outstanding balance on Carol Wood's account was written off as bad debt.

Report from Aspen Grady:

Aspen Grady, U.S. Congresswoman Lauren Boebert's Northern Colorado Field Representative, provided a brief update on the Congresswoman's work within the district.

Preliminary 2027 Budget-Project and Program Review:

Supervisors were provided with the 2026 year-end projected budget for review and discussion. The Board reviewed projected revenues and expenditures through the end of 2026. Anticipated programs, projects, grants, staffing, and other activities that may impact the 2027 budget will be reviewed at the October Board meeting as part of the continued development of the preliminary 2027 budget.

NRCS Report:

Daniel Palic was unable to attend the meeting but provided an email update. DCT Trejo's planner certification is pending approval of one remaining class. The readvertised Rangeland Management position received one applicant. Critical vacancies, including the Resource Team Leader (RTL) and Engineering Technician positions, are expected to be advertised soon, with the initial postings open to internal applicants only. All contracts have been obligated.

Old Business:

Grants & Updates: District Manager Fell gave updates on the following grants:

Bonny Grazing Project: Three grant awards were secured to support the project at Bonny Reservoir, including the CACD Demonstration Grant, the Habitat Partnership Program (HPP) Grant, and the Mule Deer Foundation Grant. Final reports and reimbursement invoices for the HPP and Mule Deer Foundation grants have been submitted, reimbursement has been received, and both grants have been successfully completed and closed. Pre-grazing drone imagery has also been obtained to document baseline conditions and assist with evaluating project outcomes.

Supervisor Smith, as cooperator at the Bonny project, provided an update on current grazing conditions. He reported that the cattle have been difficult to locate in some areas due to kochia reaching approximately six feet in height. Smith also discussed the next quadrant planned for grazing and the need to determine a winter water source for the project.

- **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 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 provided an update on the progress of the grant and reported that project designs have been completed for all participating producers except Jory Drager. The remaining participating producers are working toward completion of their projects.
- **Demonstration Grant (Cheatgrass)-CACD/NRCS:** The Conservation District was awarded a \$10,000 grant for Cheatgrass Control Test Plots. The project will be implemented with technical assistance from Alan Hopkins with ENVU. District Manager Fell will contact CACD to determine whether the grant can be carried forward into 2027 or whether grant funds may be used to purchase herbicide in 2026 for application as part of the project in 2027.

- **Climate Resiliency Grant-Co. Dept of Agriculture:** 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 (CDOT) to explore potential assistance and coordination opportunities for the project. A meeting with CDOT is scheduled for September 21, 2026, to discuss the project. Yuma County Commissioner Mike Leerar and a representative from Yuma County Road & Bridge are also scheduled to attend. Supervisor Shaw plans to participate in the meeting.
- **Demonstration Grant (Virtual Fence) – CACD/NRCS:** The Conservation District was awarded a \$10,000 Demonstration Grant to support the virtual fencing, portable corral system, and water infrastructure components of the Bonny Grazing Project. The *Bonny Reservoir Virtual Fencing Demonstration for Rotational Grazing & Rangeland Recovery – Phase 2 Final Demonstration Grant Report* was submitted to the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts and reviewed by the Board. The Conservation District is awaiting payment for the project.
- **Republican River Watershed Association (Cheatgrass) – Congresswoman Boebert:** \$850,000 in federal funding has been designated for the invasive annual grass control and mitigation project within the Republican River Watershed (RRWA), with the Yuma County Conservation District serving as the lead administrative entity. Claire Visconti, Outreach Program Coordinator and Assistant Research Scientist with IMAGINE, attended the August 20, 2026, RRWA meeting via Zoom and helped facilitate the Steering Committee discussion on developing the framework for implementation of the project.
- **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.
- **CSCB 50/50 Matching Grant 2027:** The Conservation District received a grant in the amount of \$25,000 to support water tanks, pipelines, solar pumps, and wireless tank monitoring devices. The 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 was informed that funding for the District Conservation Technician position for 2027 was approved.

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

- **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.
- **Natural Disaster Mitigation Enterprise Grant – Homeland Security & Emergency Management:** The Yuma County Conservation District, as the lead entity on behalf of the Republican River Watershed Association, submitted a grant application requesting \$900,000 for

the *Invasive Annual Grass Mitigation Project – Reducing Drought and Wildfire Risk Across Five Eastern Colorado Counties*.

- **NFWF RESTORE 2027:** The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has launched the 2027 RESTORE Colorado Request for Proposals. The 2027 RESTORE Colorado program will provide funding to projects focusing on the following habitats and statewide priorities: watershed resilience, eastern Colorado grasslands, sagebrush rangelands, big game winter range and migration corridors, and urban areas. Proposals are due by November 12, 2026, with award decisions expected to be announced in March 2027. The Conservation District intends to submit a proposal requesting funding for the Bonny Project.

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 Planning Workshop:** District Manager Fell reported a date has been confirmed with Jeffrey Tranel, CSU Extension, to host an Estate/Succession Planning Workshop on January 12, 2027.
- **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.
- **Bonny Grazing Project Field Day:** The Conservation District is working to coordinate a field day at Bonny Reservoir to showcase the virtual fencing and grazing project and share project results with partners, producers, and other interested participants.

Host CSCB Solar & Agrivoltaics Event for the Northeast Region:

The Conservation District has scheduled the Eastern Colorado Agrivoltaics Workshop for November 19, 2026, at the Burlington Community Center. A draft agenda for the workshop was presented to and reviewed by the Board. Planning and speaker coordination are ongoing.

Approve Policies & Procedures:

The Board reviewed and considered the following additional policies and forms from the proposed Policy and Procedure Manual:

Governance and Administration Policies

- Board Member Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy
- Board of Supervisors Conflict of Interest Policy
- Colorado Open Records Request Policy
- Records Retention and Destruction Policy

- Media Relations and Public Information Policy
- Website Accessibility Policy

Financial and Operational Policies

- Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy
- District Vehicle Use Policy
- Equipment Use and Care Policy

Appendix and Forms

- Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) Request Form
- Permission to Use Photographs Form

After correcting the policy name in the Resolution of Adoption, Supervisor Shaw moved to approve the Board Member Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards. The motion carried.

After correcting the policy name in the Resolution of Adoption, Supervisor Richards moved to approve the Board of Supervisors Conflict of Interest Policy. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Shaw. The motion carried.

After correcting the policy name in the Resolution of Adoption, Supervisor Shaw moved to approve the Colorado Open Records Request Policy and the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) Request Form. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith. The motion carried.

After correcting the policy name in the Resolution of Adoption, Supervisor Shaw moved to approve the Records Retention and Destruction Policy. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards. The motion carried.

A motion was made by Supervisor Shaw to approve the Media Relations and Public Information Policy and the Permission to Use Photographs Form. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Zwirn. The motion carried.

A motion was made by Supervisor Shaw to approve the Website Accessibility Policy. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith. The motion carried.

After correcting the policy name in the Resolution of Adoption, Supervisor Shaw moved to approve the Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards. The motion carried.

After correcting the policy name in the Resolution of Adoption and striking the words “unless specifically authorized” from the provision regarding smoking or vaping in district vehicles, Supervisor Shaw moved to approve the District Vehicle Use Policy as amended. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith. The motion carried.

After correcting the policy name in the Resolution of Adoption, Supervisor Richards moved to approve the Equipment Use and Care Policy. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Shaw. The motion carried.

The Board will continue the review of the remaining policies in the proposed Policy and Procedure Manual at the November Board meeting, with additional review at future meetings as necessary.

Camp Rocky 2026 Cancellation/2025 Scholarship – Consideration to Carry Forward to 2027:

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, scheduled for July 5–10 in Divide, Colorado, was cancelled due to fire safety concerns.

Ximena Granados was selected as the 2025 Yuma County Fair Camp Rocky Scholarship winner to attend Camp Rocky in 2026. Due to the cancellation of the 2026 camp, a motion was made by Supervisor Zwirn to carry forward Ximena Granados' scholarship to allow her to attend Camp Rocky in 2027. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards. The motion carried.

Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) Resource Committee Meetings:

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) will host virtual Resource Committee meetings at 6:30 p.m. during the week of October 19–23, 2026. Supervisors are encouraged to participate in the meetings; however, only designated watershed representatives are eligible to vote on resolutions presented to the committees. Supervisor Ron Richards will present the Yuma County Conservation District's resolution, *Resolution to Support Local Control of Land Use Planning in Agricultural and Rural Communities*, at the appropriate Resource Committee meeting.

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.

Aspen Grady departed the meeting via Zoom following this discussion.

New Business:

CSCB Report:

Margaret Lenz provided a report on the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) meeting held in September 2026. CSCB field tours were conducted on the afternoon of September 9, 2026, followed by the Board meeting on September 10, 2026, in Palisade, Colorado.

NCDEA Report:

District Manager Fell, serving as the Southwest Regional Director for the National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA), provided a report on the NCDEA meeting she attended August 31 – September 4, 2026, in Gulf Shores, Alabama.

Range Judging Sponsorship Request:

The Conservation District reviewed an email request from Ben Berlinger seeking support for the Northeast Colorado Regional FFA Range Management Event scheduled for September 23, 2026. Before considering a financial contribution, the Conservation District will request additional information regarding how donated funds will be accounted for and used. District employees may also provide assistance with the event as time allows.

Office Assistant Transition & Hiring:

Office Assistant Shirley Deason previously notified the Board in July of her intention to retire at the end of 2026. The Board discussed the upcoming vacancy and the timeline and process for recruiting and hiring a new Office Assistant, including advertising the position, accepting applications, conducting interviews, and allowing sufficient time for training and transition prior to Deason's retirement. The Board directed District Manager Fell to move forward with the recruitment process. Applications are due by October 1, 2026.

Wray Museum – Book Signing with Author Dr. Rachael Storm:

Ardith Hendrix, Wray Museum Director, requested assistance with planning an event to be held at the Wray Museum on October 29, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., in conjunction with a book signing for *Setting Colorado's Table* by author Dr. Rachael Storm. District Manager Fell and Supervisor Shaw volunteered to assist with the event. Supervisor Shaw moved to purchase two copies of the book, with one copy to be donated to the local library and one copy to the Wray Museum. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Zwirn. The motion carried.

Yuma County Fair 2026 Camp Rocky Winner – 2027 Camp Attendance:

The Yuma County Fair 2026 Camp Rocky scholarship winner was Wyatt Tracy. The Conservation District awards the winner a full scholarship to attend Camp Rocky the following year.

Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative Stewards Camp:

The Board discussed the Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative Stewards Camp as an educational opportunity for younger Yuma County youth who do not yet meet the age requirements to attend Camp Rocky. The Steward's Camp is a three-day, two-night residential program for youth ages 11–13 or students entering grades 6–8, held in the Rio Grande National Forest near South Fork, Colorado. The camp provides hands-on opportunities to learn about natural resource stewardship and conservation practices.

A motion was made by Supervisor Richards to provide a scholarship for Tucker Bailey to attend the 2027 Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative Stewards Camp. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Shaw. The motion carried.

CACD/NACD Poster Contest – *Soil. Where it all Begins.*

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) annual poster contest theme is *Soil. Where it all Begins*. Yuma County Conservation District staff will provide classroom presentations and contest information to sixth-grade students at Wray and fifth- and sixth-grade students at Liberty and Idalia, as well as eligible homeschool students within the Conservation District.

The Conservation District will conduct a local poster contest and award prizes to first-, second-, and third-place winners at each participating school, with homeschool entries considered as a separate local group. Additional prizes will be awarded to the overall Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion, who will advance to the CACD state poster contest. The submission deadline to CACD is October 15, 2026.

Press Release:

The Board reviewed the following press releases:

- YCCD Announces 2026 Raymond Peters Memorial Conservation Scholarship Recipient
- Chester & Marcia Zwirn Conservation Scholarship 2026 Award Winners Announced
- Wyatt Tracy Awarded 2026 Yuma County Conservation District Camp Rocky Scholarship
- Bonny Reservoir Adaptive Grazing Demonstration Project Enters Implementation Phase Across Nearly 5,000 Acres

Executive Session:

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

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Supervisor Shaw to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith. The motion carried. President Lenz adjourned the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Next Meeting:

The next Yuma County Conservation District meeting is scheduled for October 6, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., and will be held at the NRCS conference room in Wray. The November and December meetings are scheduled for November 3, 2026, and December 1, 2026, respectively.

Minutes prepared by: Shirley Deason, Office Assistant

Ron Richards

Sonya Shaw, Secretary/Treasurer

Ron Richards / Vice-President

10/6/2026

Date