



## Routt County Conservation District

### Annual Landowners Meeting

*Location: Steamboat Springs Community Center*

*Date: 2/27/2020*



**RCCD Board Members:** Lyn Halliday (President), Tyler Snyder (Vice President), Kent Sandstedt (Secretary), Cam Kuelthau (Treasurer), Nadine Arroyo (Supervisor)

**NRCS:** Clinton Whitten, Team Lead, Baili Foster; **CSCB:** Alyssa Clarida, Conservation Specialist

Attendees: Laurie Kuelthau, Kaitlyn Vaux, Jen Perkins, Kirk Wolff, Scott Hummer, Jerry Albers, Barry Castagnasso, Ken Brenner, Chuck Perry, Marissa Perry, Kate Martindale, Douglas Smith, Mandy Griffey, Riasmus Juhl, Harvey Guertz, Billy Mitzelfield, Ruddy Camilletti, Ed Camilletti, Karin Utterback-Normann, Drew Langel, Crista Kline, Kathy Deepe, Albert Deepe, Jeremy Kline, Michele Meyer, Patrick Stanko, Steve Williams, Holly Kirkpatrick, Jay Gallagher, Curran Trick, Tara Umphries

#### 1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Lyn welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming tonight. She also thanked Sharon's for catering the dinner and the City of Steamboat Springs for providing the venue.

Lyn introduced the RCCD Board members and the NRCS and CSCB (CO State Conservation Board) staff. She asked everyone to introduce themselves, what they do and where they are from. It was deemed a very diverse crowd with representation from all over the District. Everyone was requested to make sure they sign in with email addresses.

## 2. About Tonight

Lyn went over the agenda:

- Soil Demonstration
- NRCS Programs
- Funding Opportunities
- Who Is RCCD today?
- Annual Update
- Long Range Plan
- Value to Landowners
- Soil Health Initiative
- Need to amend Bylaws
- Roundtable discussion on what is important to YOU!

## 3. Soil Demonstration

Baili demonstrated a flake test, i.e. how precipitation percolates through healthy soil with a clear water outcome versus how poor quality soil results in runoff laden with sedimentation.

## 4. NRCS Programs

Clinton reviewed NRCS programs and funding and how NRCS works closely with the RCCD. Programs currently include:

- a. EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentive Program: payments to implement conservation practices
- b. CSP - Conservation Stewardship Program: Annual payment to maintain high level of operational conservation
- c. ACEP – Agricultural Conservation Easement Program: easements like Cattlemen’s Land Trust
  - i. ALE – Agricultural Land Easement – permanent easement to maintain land in ag
  - ii. WRE – Wetland Reserve Easement – 30 year or permanent wetland easement
- d. Local Working Group Meeting – provides landowners the ability to provide input in how NRCS money should be spent
- e. 2019 EQIP funding breakdown
  - i. RT2 total (Routt and Jackson) - \$323,589.87
  - ii. Routt was \$239,127.70  
Top items were:
    1. Irrigation
    2. Rangeland Improvements
  - iii. All applications were funded

f. Irrigation infrastructure improvements

Partnering with Upper Yampa Water Conservation District (UYWCD) with funds from the Y/W/G Basin Roundtable

Holly discussed how the UYWCD grant program works relative to diversion infrastructure and measuring devices. Tier 1 grants will provide up to \$5k to install measuring devices

Tier 2 projects partnering with NRCS using EIP and UY... (just received another \$100k – total pool of \$200k for improvements and measuring devices

g. Forestry – Work with CSFS, USFS, Wildfire Mitigation Council and others

1. Implement forest health and fuel mitigation practices of private land in a strategic way with partner help

h. Wildlife – CPW, TU, CSFS, Bird Conservancy, HPP and others

2. Habitat improvements, stream restoration, riparian restoration, etc.



3.

**5. Who is RCCD Today and what has your Board been up to?**

Kent provided an overview of the past 11 months.

- a. RCCD dates back to 1942 and was recently dormant
- b. The new Board was appointed in April 2019
- c. Our mission remains: To encourage stewardship of our natural resources which will ensure the preservation and sustainability of working landscapes through education, financial and technical assistance.
- d. The Board has been catching up on neglected requirements
- e. We are reconnecting with local, regional and State partners
- f. The District has experienced droughts and major growth showing a greater need for water, land and resource management
- g. The Board recently adopted a three-year plan
- h. A new soil health initiative has been launched and a small grant received
- i. Currently the district has no employees. The district plans to continue partnering with other entities and seeking additional funding going forward

- j. **We just launched our new website!** [www.routtcountycd.com](http://www.routtcountycd.com) A huge thanks to Stand Creative Studios, our web developer.
- k. One of tonight's goals is to seek your input on resource priorities
- l. We will be planning local events such as Hay Day to provide services to landowners

## 6. Long Range Plan 2020-2022

- a. Top three broad conservation resource issues identified:
  - i. Soil health
  - ii. Rangeland and forestry health
  - iii. Water quality and quantity

## 7. Soil Health Initiative

- a. The pillar of most districts. It is in alignment with State goals. Good soil health:
  - i. -Improves your bottom line
  - ii. -Increases resiliency to drought
  - iii. -Better pest resistance
  - iv. -Improved surface water infiltration
  - v. -Reduces erosion
  - vi. -Less sediment in surface water
  - vii. -Improved production

- b. RCCD has partnered with CSU Extension and NRCS. Steps to participate:

- Sign up for soil testing at Extension office or RCCD & request interpretation assistance
- RCCD with NRCS will provide a more comprehensive test (e.g. Haney) and analysis
- NRCS to provide technical assistance in developing management plans

## 8. Bylaws Amendment

Cam went over the need to amend the outdated RCCD bylaws.

- a. Prior bylaws were drafted in 1985
- b. Amended bylaws have been updated to comply with and incorporate current law
  - i. Many changes since 1985
- c. Amendments will include:
  - i. Colorado Soil Conservation Act and Colorado open meetings Act
  - ii. Increase board of supervisors expanded - up to 11 instead of 5
  - iii. Majority of board supervisors constitutes a quorum
- d. Necessary conditions to amend bylaws
  - i. RCCD created a petition signed by 50 landowners, published the notice in the local newspaper, and made new revisions available.

A vote was called by show of hands those in favor of amending the bylaws as presented. The matter was unanimously approved.

- e. *Question - What is your annual budget and what are your funding sources?* – We are restricted to direct assistance grants - \$5,000-6,000. We can act as administrators to other groups that are not 501c3s for larger grants. We have a very small budget at this time. A lot of the budget this year will go to getting back into compliance, outreach, creating a basis and visibilities to give potential to increase budget.

## 9. Real Life Examples

Nadine shared some success stories with the group.

- a. As a new board member, it can be challenging to get caught up with the current status as the Board has been active this past year in getting its 3 year plan developed.
- b. Her Backstory
  - i. A 4<sup>th</sup> generation family that came to Routt county in 1902
  - ii. The old homestead was recently split up to three children
  - iii. Aerial photos and maps provided by NRCS and FSA helped to show where croplands, grazing, water, etc. were to assist in splitting the land. The photos can help anyone get to know the land better
  - iv. Deeded 80 acres that was good for grazing but no water – Reached out to NRCS to assist with putting in stock water
    - 1. The process is very lengthy including several documents and signatures, so plan ahead.
    - 2. Overall the project was a success and very helpful for managing the ranch.

## 10. Setting Resource Priorities

A facilitated discussion was help to seek input from attendees.

Tyler and Alyssa provided a resource prioritizing handout and outlined the interactive exercise:

- a. Each table discussed resource priorities and concerns
- b. Attendees wrote their top three resource priorities/concerns on a sticky note
- c. Sticky notes were then placed on the appropriate category poster on the wall: Soil; Water; Rangeland/Forestry; Other in either the 1, 2 or 3 space
- d. Results were reviewed with the full group. The category with the most high priority votes was water quality and quantity, with rangeland and forest category a close second. Soil health also received significant votes (detailed voting and comments on sub-categories available upon request).
- e. This input will be used to ranking funding and projects in the upcoming year.

## 11. News and upcoming events

- a. RCCD Meetings - third Tuesday of the Month at 8am at the NRCS office. Anyone is welcome to attend
- b. Ag Week Soil Meeting - Thursday March, 26<sup>th</sup> Hayden Community Ag Alliance – featured on ag week calendar
- c. CO River District - April 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:00pm – big river Colorado and integrative water management plant
- d. CO River District - April 1<sup>st</sup> at 4:00pm Ag only meeting prior to that. From the Middle Colorado Conservation District and how integrated water management plan going
- e. If you are interested in having a soil health test done on your land, reach out to the Conservation District or NRCS
- f. The Routt County Master Plan Update Process – Updates to the Master Plan is occurring this year. Meetings are being held around the county and there is a survey on the county's website which everyone was encouraged to take.

## 12. Adjourn

Lyn thanked everyone for their valuable input and encouraged folks to keep in touch by following our website [www.routtcountycd.com](http://www.routtcountycd.com) or email us at [board@routtcountycd.com](mailto:board@routtcountycd.com)