

**Routt County Conservation District**  
**Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes**  
**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**  
**March 16, 2021 8 am**

**Attending:**

**Board Members:**

Lyn Halliday  
Cam Kuelthau  
Nadine Arroyo  
Kent Sandstedt  
Jeremy Kline

**Partners and Public:**

Baili Foster, NRCS  
Patrick Stanko, Community Ag Alliance  
Todd Hagenbuch, CSU Extension ex-officio  
Billy Mitzelfeld

**I. Call to Order:**

- The meeting was called to order at 8:04 am by Lyn and a quorum established.
- The meeting was noticed as required by the Sunshine Law on RCCD's website and sent to the email distribution list which included instructions for the public to join the meeting virtually due to the current pandemic.
- Lyn welcomed everyone and thanked them for joining.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

The February 16, 2021 RCCD Board Meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Nadine and second by Jeremy.

**III. Board Member Reports and Updates**

**President**

Lyn reported as follows:

1. Lyn continues to meet with the STAR Committees and provided an update. The producer to participate in the pre-pilot this spring/summer will be Colby Townsend of Two Elk Ranch in Hayden. Lyn met with Clinton to review the draft field forms for Hay and Pasture that will be used in the STAR consultation and scoring program.
2. Lyn submitted the Taylor Grazing Act grant application to the County Weed folks requesting funds to purchase the weed sprayer as previously agreed upon by the Board. Should we receive funding, the question of next steps (i.e. whether it could be rented out this summer) was discussed. Board members felt it would be premature and to set the goal for fall in order to get the process and paperwork in place. It was suggested that education would be important.

3. Lyn called for a discussion to “debrief” the Annual Landowners Meeting held last month, plusses, minuses and what was learned. She has received quite a bit of unsolicited positive feedback from attendees and speakers. She has posted the video recording of the event on our website. The Board members agreed that the panel of speakers went well and the meeting was “high quality” and very informative. Nadine had joined via phone and was impressed that the meeting came over well. One thing we could improve upon is better outreach ahead of the meeting.
4. Todd, Lyn and Andy Rossi met with the CSU Ag/Water Department manager who is planning to hire an intern this summer and do ag-related water quality sampling and other tasks in the Upper Yampa. Everyone agreed to coordinate.
5. Lyn had a phone conversation with Kristy Winser, Routt County Planning Director, and learned that the County Master Plan update will resume soon and we will have a voice.
6. Lyn learned more about the fate of equipment previously purchased/leased by the RCCD from the previous district manager. Apparently many of these fell into disrepair and were ultimately auctioned off at a low price. Jeremy indicated this was before his time when he was responsible for equipment maintenance.

#### Treasurer

1. Cam reported on the current financials. We have received the City Community Support grant check which he deposited
2. Cam prepared the Exempt from Audit paperwork due at the end of the month.

#### Kent

Kent reported that Ag Week begins next Sunday and a Weed Advisory Board this Thursday. Also there is a drought update later today. The plethora of virtual events over the past few months led to a lengthy discussion regarding how best to keep up with everything. It was proposed that the RCCD host a “clearing house” calendar on our website that would capture all upcoming events in one place. It was felt this would be a great service to our constituents. This would be a great job for a RCCD District Manager in the future. Patrick indicated he tries to do this for the basin roundtable and it is extremely time consuming. Todd presented an idea that all agencies be responsible for populating the calendar to alleviate responsibility of just RCCD. This idea to be developed further.

#### **IV. Business**

1. The Exemption from Audit forms and resolution were sent out previously. Lyn asked if there were any comments or questions. There being none, the Board approved the documents and agreed to sign both and submit by the deadline of March 31<sup>st</sup>.
2. The STAR pre-pilot Scope of Work was sent out previously. Lyn asked if there were any questions or comments and there were none.
3. RCCD Board has been asked to consider sending a letter of support for House Bill 21-1181. Max Neumeyer from Colorado Collaborative for Healthy Soils joined the meeting to briefly outline the intent, which would be to set up a new office and advisory committee along with funding for a state-wide soil health program under the Department of Agriculture. A lengthy discussion ensued. Cam indicated a concern that Conservation Districts not be usurped and other Board members agreed. Alyssa Clarida from CSCB will be consulted as to whether CSCB

favors the Bill and how many Conservation Districts are in support. If there is high level support, the Board felt comfortable with providing a letter of support, since the overall goal is great but the best way to achieve it is important to consider.

The Board engaged in a discussion on whether political advocacy is something we generally want to be involved with. The consensus was that it should be a case-by-case consideration and certainly not divide the Board if there is significant disagreement.

4. It was felt by two Board members that the discussion on Board candidate criteria needs to be continued as it has been a while since it was tabled. There is still a challenge to get related files from the RCCD office. Clinton to be asked to allow Nadine into the office for a ½ hour session.

5. The Cattlemen's association has requested as of yesterday that the RCCD Board join them in requesting that the public comment period be extended for the recently announced over-appropriation status of the Yampa River by the Division of Water Resources. After a lengthy discussion it was decided that the Board does not have adequate information to determine if the State Engineer will decide in favor of this recommendation and therefore whether the public comment period will take place, when it begins, and how long it will be.

#### **V. Projects, Events, Grants**

##### **1. Community Ag Alliance proposal for shared employee**

Clinton and Lyn met with Michele Meyer from CAA and had a very productive discussion regarding how the CAA and RCCD can work more closely together and potentially share a 2-year position that Michele is pursuing if grant funds come through. This would be a good transition to getting staff on board without a lot of the administrative commitment, as CAA might be able to pick up a lot of that component. Also discussed was a need for RCCD, CAA, CSU Extension, Cattlemen's, NRCS to get together periodically to share what each agency is doing and ensure compatibility and no duplication.

##### **2. Comprehensive Soil Sampling Project Continuation in 2021**

This project will continue this May and Lyn has already signed up one new rancher in addition to Harvey Goertz who has requested to continue in the program. She requested that the other ranchers who have signed up through Kent and Cam be contacted and scheduled for a field visit and soil sampling the first week of May. At Clinton's recommendation, we will switch to a different lab – Midwest – for soil analysis. The cost is about the same as Woods End.

#### **VI. NRCS update**

1. Baili went over the survey results from this year's Annual Landowners Meeting/Local Working Group. There were 13 respondents. The top resource concerns were 1) inefficient water use, 2) weed management, and 3) wildfire hazards. Other write-ins included soil moisture and high winds. Regarding the question of where funding is most needed, irrigation was 1<sup>st</sup>, grazing lands and soil health 2<sup>nd</sup>, and stream bank and erosion 3<sup>rd</sup>. Forestry was last. There was much interest in working on soil health programs. Field days and workshops were top priorities for education.

There is approximately \$330,000 allocated to our region this year through NRCS. Responses regarding challenges with obtaining NRCS funding were: cost, too much time to complete paperwork; no seed money; and issues related to working with government.

## **VII. Public Portion**

Lyn opened the meeting to the public. Billy voiced his thoughts on a response to the Cattlemen's request relative to the over-appropriation designation.

The Board agreed to cancel the April regular meeting. The next regular RCCD Board Meeting May 18th, 2021 @ 8am.

**Adjournment** -The meeting was adjourned at 10:30am on a motion by Nadine and second from Cam.