

Routt County Conservation District
Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes
September 20, 2022 8:15 am

Attending:

Board Members:

Lyn Halliday
Cam Kuelthau
Kent Sandstedt
Nadine Arroyo
Stephen Evans
Tyler Snyder

Contractor/District Manager

Kristen Rockford

Partners and Public:

Clinton Whitten, NRCS
Todd Hagenbuch, CSU Extension
Patrick Stanko, Community Ag Alliance

I. Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 8:12 am by Lyn Halliday and a quorum established.
- The meeting was noticed as required by the Sunshine Law on RCCD's website.
- Lyn welcomed everyone and thanked them for joining.

II. Approval of Minutes

The August 16, 2022 RCCD Board Meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Nadine Arroyo and second by Stephan Evans with noted correction adding last names to first mention of attendees.

III. Board Member Reports and Updates

President

-Lyn Halliday updated the Board as follows:

1. Funds:

- YVCF grant announces awards this month
- Additional CSCB stimulus money \$2,000 forthcoming
- City of Steamboat Springs environmental program grant cycle now open, due Oct. 15. Discussion of ideas for an application took place. Ideas included continuing the RCCD soil health initiative, initiating a youth program, and a handout for new land purchasers relative to conservation.

2. Personnel

- District Conservation Technician position approved by NRCS and CSCB

3. Events / meetings attended this month:

- attended FSA meeting with Senator Bennett, very interesting
- attended Water Congress 8/23-25, Kent and Lyn presented on behalf of RCCD at the Local Water Roundtable tent
- Lyn & Kristen met with Yampa Valley Sustainable Council executive director and staff to discuss partnerships

4. Upcoming Events:

- Oct 4th Local Work Group meeting. Lyn Clinton and Kristen met with Chad from NRCS to get Chad's input on format and goals
- Yampa Rendezvous Sept. 23 - Kristen to present on behalf of RCCD

-Rio Blanco/White/Yampa Watershed Assn. meeting coming up in Craig Sept. 28. Lyn has suggested a name change to Northwest Colorado Conservation Coalition. She also brought up for discussion the need for additional capacity funding for CD's.

5. Watershed Group update:

-Erik Wardle and Christina Welsh from CSU Ag presented at the WG meeting on 9/7 discussing his edge-of-field water quality sampling program. Kristen introduced the Toolkit project.

6. . Admin

-DOLA filing 2021 Supervisor List on 8/17/22 (mandatory by Sept. 1) was approved
-3 year plan due Jan 1
-2023 budget due Jan 31st
-Reminder – please send Lyn your hours each month.

-Kent Sandstedt

-Kent reported on his attendance at CAA's Chamber mixer, this might be a good venue for RCCD
-He also attended the Land Stewardship 202 class where he presented RCCD updates and handouts.

-Stephen Evans

-Also attended the land stewardship class
-Wolf group was at his ranch. A discussion of what the State is doing regarding wolf reintroduction took place.

-Cam Kuelthau

-CSCB annual support received \$6,743
-STAR equipment grant received \$1,163
-Cam reminded the group that the 2023 budget needs to be voted on at the December Board meeting.

-Nadine Arroyo

-Nadine reported on her experience at the RC Fair where RCCD had a table in the exhibit hall. She did not think it was worthwhile as there were few folks who stopped by the table. Jeremy and Stephen also staffed the table.
-Nadine has observed that the District has an identify problem. A discussion ensued regarding how we can better get the word out. One idea was to publish the Resource Guide that Lyn prepared and is on the website but not a handout. Another was to have a welcome packet for new land purchasers that discusses resource conservation concerns and the need to educate new land owners on related topics.

V. Business

1. Local Work Group Meeting Oct. 4 – planning discussion

Lyn sent out a Save the Date piece and an Invitation asking folks to attend and think about what keeps them up at night. Kristen has secured the Steamboat Springs Community Center. The format was discussed. Clinton will provide a summary of the relationship between NRCS and RCCD. Having a facilitator was discussed, but needs to be a local person. Lyn will setup a planning meeting of a sub-group of Board members, Clinton and Kristen.

2. Meeting with County Commissioners

Routt County Commissioners meeting with RCCD Sept. 26th at 11am. A draft power point was distributed to and approved by Board, rehearsal at 10:30 at the Court house .

3. District Manager Contract renewal

Kristen Rockford's contract was renewed for one year with new terms as presented to the Board at last meeting.

4. District Conservation Technician draft hiring application & budget

A draft application, budget and job description package was presented and discussed for bringing on a part time DCT. This position would spend 80% of their time (and be funded by CSCB) on NRCS duties and 20% on RCCD duties as spelled out in the DCT guidelines. Cam has reviewed the budget and there are funds to cover the RCCD match this position for one year. The Board voiced no concerns regarding moving forward with this position other than the difficulty in finding qualified candidates.

Subsequent to the above position, Clinton Whitten just received a request from YVSC and has asked Lyn if bringing on two interns already at YVSC might fit into this program. YVSC would have to provide funds to subsidize the additional personnel. A legal agreement would be necessary. This could be a win-win since it would bring in qualified candidates and help Clinton with lack of staff, as well as provide additional capacity to RCCD. The Chair called for roundtable discussion for Board members to weigh in. Concerns included getting qualified people to apply and be able to live here and whether three bosses would be efficient/doable. Plusses included supporting Clinton, additional capacity to RCCD with relatively low risk, and adding a good partner. Clinton, Lyn and Michele to meet.

5. Strategic Planning Discussion – Part 2

Suggestions for inclusion in next 3-year plan in addition to ongoing programs (such as STAR, soil health, watershed group MOU):

- listening sessions throughout the year, possibly a quarterly “Conservation Community Talk” get together around the County
- RCCD newsletter
- Youth programs such as 4-H, rangeland judging, a contest for the “Welcome to the Routt County District” signs at County borders (Lyn saw our on SH 131 MM 22, which is still in good shape)
- Toolkit distribution/education
- Field day with barbeque, sponsors
- Scholarship program
- market Weed sprayer rental
- regular partner networking meetings
- preparation for Mill Levy ballot item.

6. Cancel October meeting

The RCCD October Board meeting was cancelled as Lyn will be out of town and no Board members volunteered to run the meeting. Next meeting November 15th.

VI. Projects, Events, Grants – Updates

1. STAR Plus and RCCD Soil Health Initiative update – Lyn

- Lyn put in for a STAR equipment grant for the purchase of 2 soil health test kits to loan out which has been approved.
- Lyn has been working with the STAR producers towards Best Management Practice implementation based on conservation recommendations made by the team and informed by the comprehensive soil test results. So far the Flanders Ranch is the only producer equipment grant application which was presented and approved by the Board.

VI. Staff Updates

-Kristen Rockford provided a summary and budget presentation to the Board for the GLIC Grazing Lands Innovation Conservation grant application that she is preparing. This grant was due Sept. 22 extended now to Oct. 6. The idea is to install virtual fencing in NW Routt with participating private landowners. The intent is to bring on a Range Con to prepare rangeland management plans in conjunction with the virtual fencing. There was a discussion on whether all of these tasks in addition to the current tasks

could be handled. The start date was discussed (is December 1st feasible?). Some Board members felt this technology is too expensive, others that the application of this technology is huge and County-wide including possible use for cattle/wolf management techniques.

On a motion by Tyler and second by Stephen, Kristen was authorized to apply and also look into the CAWA RFP, with the caveat that there would need to be a second Board vote to accept the grant if awarded.

VII. NRCS Report

-Clinton reported on EQIP projects and the RCPP headgate project.

IX. Public Forum

No public comments were received.

Adjournment -The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 am on a motion by Nadine and second from Stephan.

Next Regular Meeting – November 15, 2022