

MINUTES
Uintah County Conservation District
Regular Meeting, January 8, 2024
Location: USU Extension Office
328 East 200 South, Vernal, Utah

ATTENDANCE:

Conservation District Chair Bryan Bell

Conservation District (CD) Supervisor

Todd Thacker, Vice Chair

Jim Slaugh, Treasurer

Johnathan McKee, Supervisor

Steve Hanberg, Supervisor

Department of Agriculture and Food:

Darrell Gillman, UDAF

Terrell Thayne, UDAF—GIP Coordinator

Conservation District Staff:

Andrea Merrell, Clerk

Conservation District Supervisors, Absent:

Conservation Partners Representatives:

USDA—NRCS: Jeremy Maycock, District

Conservationist; Jennifer Snow, Program Specialist;

Jim Spencer, Wildlife Biologist

Cheyenne Reid, USU Extension

Guests: USDA—Forest Service: Todd Irish, Rangeland
Mgt Speclst; Mike Bertegrolli, District Ranger; Natasha
Hadden, Wildlife Biologist.

Brad Horrocks, Uintah County Commissioner

Tonya Kieffer-Selby, Utah Division of Wildlife Res.

Nathan Hall, Utah Dept. of Environmental Quality

MEETING – CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bryan Bell called the meeting to order at 11:00 am.

LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETING

11:00 am to 1:45 pm. Jeremy Maycock, District Conservationist, began the meeting with a PowerPoint presentation on the importance of locally led conservation. He then turned the time over to Jim Spencer to facilitate the resource concern identification process. He led the meeting participants through a process resulting in identification and prioritization of resource concerns for Uintah County. He will provide meeting participants with a report of the results of the Local Work Group Meeting. After the resource identification portion of the meeting, agency personnel were given time to report on their priority projects:

Tonya Kieffer-Selby, Outreach Manager, reported she is part of a group in Duchesne County working to develop and implement a trails master plan. She said this collaborative project is working to develop a trail system around Roosevelt city. In addition to development of trails, features of the project are an informational kiosk, bathrooms, pavilions, creek restoration project, and firefly habitat restoration project.

Jim Spencer, Wildlife Biologist, reported that he is working with Jim Bowcutt, UDAF Director of Conservation, to develop policy for a UDAF Pollinator Project. He told the meeting participants a program applicant must be willing to commit a minimum of 900 square feet of land to be able to participate in the program. If they are chosen to participate, they will be given pollinator plants suited for their site. The plants will be actively growing in cones and ready to transplant. He discussed the need for more native pollinator plants in our landscapes and the importance of attracting native bee species to our gardens. He gave the sobering statistic of a decrease in hummingbird populations of ten percent last year.

The Forest Service representatives updated the group on the progress they are making on reducing hazardous fuels and creating fire breaks along the Red Cloud Loop road. They are using mastication equipment to clear cut a 100-foot band on each side of the road for a fire break.

Darrell told the group that Uintah Conservation District owns a Dew Drop Drill that is available to rent to seed small areas. He said it would be very effective for someone seeding an area to establish a pollinator plot.

SUMMARY OF CONSERVATION DISTRICT ACTION

The Uintah Conservation District portion of the meeting began at 1:45 pm.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The Supervisors reviewed the December 11 Board Meeting Minutes. **Action Item: Steve Hanberg made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Jim Slauch seconded the motion. Voting unanimously approved the motion.**

SUPERVISORS REPORTS

Steve recently attended the Colorado River Resources conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. He discussed some of the topics presented and his observations related to the dynamics among the competing interests.

UINTAH COUNTY EXTENSION BUSINESS UPDATE

Cheyenne Reid, Extension Agent, reminded the Supervisors that the Uintah Basin Water Summit is coming up on Thursday, January 11. The Uintah Basin Beef Expo is being held on January 27 starting at 2 pm in Roosevelt.

She then reviewed the preliminary agenda for the Crop School to be held February 21 at the USU campus in Roosevelt. In the morning, she is planning workshops on crops and would appreciate the Supervisors' input. She has been contacted by the director of the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) AgVIP program about being included in the agenda.

The Supervisors expressed an interest in learning more about the UDAF easement program—Lee Ray McAllister Working Farm and Ranch Fund. They expressed an interest in finding out how farmers can participate in the carbon sequestration credits program. Additionally, they want more information on adopting and improving soil health practices and effective treatments for invasive weed species in Uintah County.

Cheyenne said the afternoon workshops will be on the topic of beef quality assurance. She ended by asking the Supervisors to contact her if they think of other ideas for the Crop School.

NRCS BUSINESS

Jeremy Maycock introduced Jennifer Snow a newly hired program specialist to the Supervisors. He said Hayden Carson has reported to the Vernal office as a range conservationist.

Staff in the Roosevelt and Vernal offices are actively working on the ranking of fiscal year 2024 program applications.

SOIL HEALTH EQUIPMENT GRANT

Andrea reported the invoice for the no-till drill has been submitted to UDAF for grant funds. When the funds are received and deposited in the checking account, Bryan will pay the supplier and arrange to pick up the drill.

The Supervisors discussed arrangements to be made before the no-till drill is available for rent. Johnathan volunteered to talk to Vernal Hay Company representatives about how much they would charge to store, maintain, and rent out the drill. For the February meeting, Jim will bring an example of an equipment rental agreement. Andrea will bring a copy of the rental agreement for the District's Dew Drop Drill. At the February meeting a rental agreement and rate will be developed.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- A. Balance Sheet/Bank Statement Review. Andrea passed out a Balance Sheet dated January 6, the December Bank Statement, and the Checking Account Reconciliation for December. She reported the interest earned and ending balance for the MACU savings account. Andrea informed the Supervisors that Bryan closed out the MACU Certificate of Deposit (CD) in preparation for the purchase of the Esch No-Till Drill. She reported the amount of the assessed penalty for early closure of the CD and the remainder deposited to the MACU checking account. As soon as the check is received from the State Treasurer's office, a District check will be written to the supplier Lifetime Ag for the total cost of the drill. At the February Board meeting, the Supervisors will decide what to do with the remaining CD balance.

- B. Checking Account Activity. For the checking account, Andrea reviewed the bank statement and reconciliation details for December. She reported one check cleared the account and reported the check number, date, amount, and vendor. She reported one deposit was made, which was from closing out the District's CD, and reported the cleared balance. There was one uncleared check. She told the Supervisors the check number, date, amount, and vendor.
- C. Comparison of Actual Expenses to Budget. Andrea passed out a Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual worksheet for the period July 1 to December 2023. She compared the figures for actual total income and actual total expenses to the budgeted amounts for those items. The actual amounts were less than the budgeted amounts. No adjustments to the budget are needed.

Action Item: Steve made a motion to accept the financial report as presented. Todd seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous and the motion passed.

INCOME AND EXPENSE REPORT

- A. Income: Andrea reviewed with Supervisors details of first payment request from UDAF District grant.
- B. Expenses: Andrea reviewed details of an invoice she received from UDAF requesting payment for Andrea's payroll from July 1 to December 31, 2023. She presented the invoice for today's lunch for participants of the Local Work Group meeting. **Action Item: Todd made a motion to approve payment of the two invoices as presented. Jim seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous and the motion passed.**

SERA

The Supervisors discussed attendance at the January 11 Uintah Basin Water Summit. When the Supervisors supported the Water Summit financially, this sponsorship included attendance fee for one supervisor. It was decided that Bryan will attend the Summit for the District.

The Supervisors discussed attendance at the Soil Health Workshop in St. George, Utah from February 6 to 8. There is interest in attending the Workshop, but it depends on reviewing schedules for conflicts. **Action Item: Johnathan made a motion to approve SERA expenses for any Supervisor (not being sponsored by another organization) who attends the Uintah Basin Water Summit and/or the Soil Health Workshop. Jim seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous and the motion passed.**

ARDL PROPOSAL

There were no ARDL applications to present at this meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Darrell informed the Supervisors that the Water Optimization Grant Spring application period is open until January 31, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

Steve made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned by Chair Bell at 2:45 p.m.