

MINUTES
Uintah County Conservation District
Regular Meeting, April 14, 2025
Location: Western Park Board Room
302 East 200 South, Vernal, Utah

ATTENDANCE:

Conservation District Chair Bryan Bell

Conservation District (CD) Supervisor

Jim Slaugh, Treasurer

Johnathan McKee, Supervisor

Steve Hanberg, Supervisor

Conservation District Supervisors, Absent:

Todd Thacker, Vice Chair

Conservation Partners Representatives:

Cheyenne Reid, USU Extension

Jeremy Maycock, NRCS

Department of Agriculture and Food:

Darrell Gillman, UDAF

Conservation District Staff:

Andrea Merrell

Guests:

SUMMARY OF CONSERVATION DISTRICT ACTION

MEETING – CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bryan Bell called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Andrea Merrell passed out copies of the minutes for the March 26 Uintah Conservation District (UCD) Board Meeting. The Supervisors reviewed and discussed the minutes. **Action Item: Steve Hanberg made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Jim Slaugh seconded the motion. The voting was unanimous, and the motion passed.**

AGVIP PROGRAM

Darrell gave details about expanded conservation incentive payments available to agricultural producers under the AGVIP Program. They are currently accepting applications to participate in the program until May 30, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. An applicant applies through the UDAF website, under Conservation.

This program applies to pastureland and cropland. The program is designed to provide incentive-based payments to producers who use best practices and implement additional practices to improve crop yields, build soil health, and protect water quality. If selected to participate in the program, the participant works with a UDAF conservation planner as they develop a comprehensive conservation plan. They will also need to complete an annual conservation evaluation of their operation and choose additional conservation practices to implement in their operation. Darrell said the program is like the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Conservation Stewardship Program.

UINTAH COUNTY EXTENSION BUSINESS

Cheyenne reported she traveled to Puerto Rico in March to attend a watershed conference. While there she gave a presentation about the Pot Creek Watershed Plan. She displayed a cloth poster she had made to enhance her presentation. She said most of the participants were from Puerto Rico and the eastern United States. Because they were unfamiliar with issues in the west, they didn't have suggestions for motivating landowners to implement changes suggested in the Watershed Plan. She is attending another conference in Billings, Montana, in July and is hoping for more input.

She informed the Supervisors that Terrell Thayne is hosting a Drought Summit planning meeting on April 30 at 6 p.m.

Cheyenne is putting together a monthly newsletter for the agricultural community. The first issue will give information on

organizations within Uintah County that support the agricultural community. She will send a draft newsletter to the Supervisors for their review and comments.

She is helping Matt Yost interview and hire an intern to irrigate the Vernal Research Farm. The Supervisors discussed the past donations that have been made to the Research Farm. Cheyenne reiterated the funds are used to pay for equipment rental if needed or fuel as well as fertilizer, seed, and other supplies to establish the crops for research.

Steve made a motion that the Board reapprove \$5000 each year to help with costs to establish the crops for yearly research. Jim seconded the motion. The voting was unanimous, and the motion passed.

NRCS BUSINESS

Jeremy Maycock, District Conservationist, provided a handout to the Supervisors outlining current issues and work in Daggett, Duchesne, and Uintah counties. He informed the Supervisors that project funding and personnel funded by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) have been canceled. They are able to make payments on all existing contracts.

He said Daggett, Duchesne, and Uintah Counties are projected to receive four million dollars under Farm Bill programs. Jeremy talked about the categories of applications his staff are currently planning and obligating. Of particular interest is the High Tunnel Fund Pool for Daggett County and the upper country of the Uintah Basin for 2026-2028. They discussed the success of these projects and the life span of the high tunnels.

Jeremy reviewed the charts on the handout related to snowpack. As shown on the handout, the snowpack has peaked. The group reviewed the data on reservoir storage.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- A. **Balance Sheet/Bank Statement Review.** Andrea gave each Supervisor a copy of the March MACU bank statement and March Balance Sheet. For the savings account she reported the interest earned and the balance as of March 31.

For the checking account she reported two checks cleared during March. She reported the check number, the amount, and the payee for each check. Then she reported there was one deposit made in March. She reported the deposit date, the amount, and source of income for each deposit. She compared the ending balances as shown on the Balance Sheet and the MACU bank statement.

- B. **Income:** Andrea reported she recently contacted Vernal Hay Company. They are sending a check for the remaining rental fees generated by the Esch no-till drill during the 2024 growing season.
- C. **Expenses:** Andrea presented the Supervisors invoices she received since the March 26 UCD Board meeting. There was an invoice from Duchesne Conservation District (DCD) for one-third of the cost of lunch for the Zone 6 Annual Meeting, an invoice from DCD for the purchase of six rolls of weed barrier, and four invoices from Andrea for drinks for recent workshops and meetings; renewal of entity registration; one month QuickBooks subscription; one month QuickBooks Live Expert assistance.

Action Item: Steve made a motion to accept the financial report as presented and approve payment of all invoices as presented. Johnathan seconded the motion. Voting unanimously passed the motion.

SERA

Andrea gave the Supervisors the time records she completed for their SERA expenses from January to March. They reviewed them to make sure they were accurate. After the Supervisors reviewed their time records, checks were made and given to each Supervisor. A check was written for Todd Thacker and mailed to him.

- A. **Action Item: Upcoming workshops:** April 30, Drought Summit, 6 p.m. to be held at the Uintah County USU Extension Office. **Action Item: Johnathan made a motion to pay SERA expenses to any Supervisor attending the Drought Summit as a representative of Uintah Conservation District. Steve seconded the motion. Voting unanimously passed the motion.**

ARDL PROPOSAL

Darrell presented an ARDL application for Raquel Nash. She is requesting an ARDL to supplement NRCS funding. Her plan is to replace several worn out wheel lines with Center Pivots. The project will install a phase converter and about a mile of pipeline. The Supervisors discussed the project. **Action Item: Jim made a motion to approve the application for an Agriculture Resource Development Loan and for it to be forwarded to UDAF for further processing. Steve seconded the motion. The voting was unanimous, and the motion passed.**

OTHER BUSINESS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Jim Slaugh is involved in the construction of the pipeline for the Central Canal. The Supervisors discussed issues related to construction of the project. Jim said the Phase 1 construction is complete. The pipeline will be filled and tested tomorrow.

Meeting adjourned by Chair Bell at 2:00 p.m.

Motion by Steve and Seconded by Jim