

MINUTES

Uintah County Conservation District
Regular Meeting, November 10, 2025
Location: Western Park Board Room
302 East 200 South, Vernal, Utah

ATTENDANCE:

Conservation District (CD) Supervisors

Bryan Bell, District Chair
Todd Thacker, Vice Chair
Johnathan McKee, Supervisor
Steve Hanberg, Supervisor
Jim Slaugh, Treasurer

Department of Agriculture and Food:
Darrell Gillman, Resource Coordinator

Conservation District Staff

Andrea Merrell

NRCS:

Conservation District Supervisors, Absent:

USU Extension:
Cheyenne Reid, Extension Agent

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 October 14 Uintah Conservation District (UCD) Board Meeting. The Supervisors reviewed and discussed the minutes.

Action Item: Todd Thacker made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Jim Slaugh seconded the motion. The voting was unanimous, and the motion passed.

UINTAH COUNTY EXTENSION BUSINESS

Cheyenne Reid, USU Extension Agent reported on the Drone Workshop she conducted on September 27. She stated the 5 participants were really in to the drones. The portion of the workshop that demonstrated how to use drones for spraying crops was presented by a specialist from San Pete county. She plans to set up additional drone workshops.

Cheyenne informed the Supervisors that the County Extension office is being renovated. The renovation is scheduled to be finished in 90 days. In the meantime, she will be working from home. If you need her call and give her at least an hour notice if you need to meet her in person.

She invited the Supervisors to attend an Informational meeting on Utah Diversion Measurement and Telemetry Program. This program is a collaboration between the Upper Colorado Commission and the Colorado River Authority of Utah with support from Jones DeMille Engineering. The meeting will be held in the Vernal Community Room, Nov 18, 6 to 7 pm.

UPDATES FROM UACD CONVENTION

Darrell Gillman gave highlights of some of the presentations he attended as follows:

Pat Hearty, historian, discussed how Dust Bowl affected Utah in Grantsville area. The dry, windy conditions caused blow outs a mile long and 8 feet deep. Tumbleweeds would pile up against the fences and then the dirt would settle in the tumbleweeds and pile up and bury the fences. They are hoping that we learned from the 1930's Dust Bowl and will avoid having another Dust Bowl.

Peter Byck, the keynote speaker is a video creator. He talked about his video called "Roots So Deep". He explained the premise of his video is to visually document study areas and show the condition of land where a landowner on one side of a fence was implementing conservation practices and the landowner on the other side used conventional practices. One of their findings was the number of birds inhabiting the field was a key indicator of the biological health of the field. If there were a lot of insects, there would be a lot of birds. One landowner put his cows in the field and left them all season. If the cows needed supplemental feed, the landowner provided it. The researchers observed no birds in that field. The neighbor of that landowner helped him put in cross fencing and water troughs; within six months the birds returned to the field; including quail which he hadn't heard for years.

Kelly Pearson, Ag Commissioner addressed the convention. Scott Chew gave a presentation on the Legislature, discussed Colorado River. Predicted a leaner year for the budget.

Hannah Freeze, UDAF, discussed balancing salinity from northern half of the Great Salt Lake to the southern half.

Jim Bowcutt, UDAF discussed study UDAF is undertaking to look at the effectiveness of Districts around the State. Checking to see if the District Clerks are posting agendas to the Utah Public Notice website, posting minutes, posting our audio files.

FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss Statement. Andrea gave each Supervisor a copy of a Balance Sheet and a Profit & Loss Statement—both dated 11/9/2025. As the Federal Government shut

down continues, she reported she was not able to get the MACU October bank statement prior to today's meeting. She also passed out a spreadsheet she prepared that lists the checks issued and deposits made during October. One check was issued in October. She reviewed the date the check was issued, the payee, reason for the payment, and amount. There was one deposit made in October. Andrea reported the date of the deposit, the name of the payer, the source of income, and the deposit amount.

B. Income after October 31. Andrea reported there was one deposit made on November 5. She also reviewed the payer, source of income, and deposit amount.

C. Bills for Payment. Andrea presented two invoices for payment. One payment request is to reimburse Andrea for purchasing an item for the UACD Auxiliary Scholarship Auction held during the recent UACD Convention.

The second invoice is from Myron Operations LLC for the 2026 calendar recordkeeping books the District purchases each year for the purpose of encouraging agricultural producers to adopt improved management practices such as irrigation water management, prescribed grazing, and to provide them a means to create records of these practices.

Action Item: Steve Hanberg made a motion to accept the financial report as presented and authorize payment of the invoice presented. Todd seconded the motion. Voting unanimously passed the motion.

SERA

A. Upcoming workshops. Andrea checked with Supervisors for attendance at the UACD Convention or any other workshops they attended since the last Board meeting.

ARDL PROPOSAL

There were no ARDL proposals for today's meeting. Discussed interest rate changes in the program. The governor and the legislature want all programs to be self sufficient. That is the reason the interest rate was raised to 4%.

OTHER BUSINESS AND UPCOMING EVENT

Todd asked about Water Optimization and federal funding. Darrell explained the Water Optimization funding program is a state program. The ranking is based on efficiency changes and water savings. Todd asked about a project Brush Creek Water Users are planning to replace worn pumps and renovate their Green River pump station. Darrell confirmed they have been approved for an ARDL for their pump project. Darrell told the group the Water Optimization Program Spring 2026 application period will be January 1 to February 28, 2026.

Duane Houston is the local representative for the Water Optimization Program and the Basin States Salinity Program.

The Supervisors discussed a project Jim Slauch is spearheading: There is a worn out cement pipeline 2700 feet (proposed 4800 foot replacement) coming from Oaks Park Reservoir to Grasshopper Flats 4500 feet (proposed 3500 feet replacement). The cement pipeline is losing an excessive amount of water. Jim and other stakeholders are looking for funding to replace concrete pipe with HDPE. They have all rights of way (perpetual easement) needed for this project to proceed. The proposed plan is to install new pipeline in same alignment as cement pipeline. On behalf of stakeholders he plans to apply for Water Optimization funding and NRCS EQIP funding. The official name of the project is Ashley Valley Reservoir Oaks Park Pipeline Restoration Project. Further discussion of this project will be put on December meeting agenda.

Esch No-Till Drill. Andrea reported she visited Jeff McKee at Vernal Hay Company to get Esch No-till Drill usage during the growing season. The Esch No-Till Drill has been used to treat 1500 acres this year.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:15 pm by Todd and seconded by Johnathan. Motion passed.