

MINUTES

Uintah County Conservation District

Regular Meeting, June 8, 2026

Location: Western Park Board Room

302 East 200 South, Vernal, Utah

ATTENDANCE:

Conservation District Chair Bryan Bell

Conservation District (CD) Supervisor

Todd Thacker, Vice Chair

Jim Slaugh, Treasurer

Shane Frost, Supervisor

Johnathan McKee (1:30PM), Supervisor

Conservation District Supervisors, Absent:

Conservation District Staff

Andrea Merrell

Conservation Partners Representatives:

Jeremy Maycock, DC, NRCS

Cortney Borer, SGI Biologist, NRCS

Department of Agriculture and Food:

Darrell Gillman, UDAF

Stephanie Nelsen, UDAF

Guests: Uintah High School FFA Chapter
President and Vice President

SUMMARY OF CONSERVATION DISTRICT ACTION

MEETING – CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MEETING MINUTES*

Andrea Merrell passed out copies of the agenda for today's meeting and minutes for the May 11 Uintah Conservation District (UCD) Board Meeting. The Supervisors reviewed and discussed the minutes.

Action Item: Shane Frost made a motion to approve the agenda for today's meeting and the May 11 meeting minutes as presented. Jim Slaugh seconded the motion. The voting was unanimous, and the motion passed.

NRCS REPORT

Jeremy Maycock, District Conservationist, explained the NRCS concept of local action plans and stated that NRCS policy is local action plans will be developed by the District. He reminded the Supervisors that during the Local Workgroup meeting held in Jan 2026 that several resource concerns were identified. A good way to begin developing local action plans is to review the identified resource concerns and look for areas or projects that are being missed with NRCS funding.

Stephanie Nelson, UDAF, brought up the frustrations she has heard from agricultural producers who have applied for funding for many years hoping to upgrade their worn wheel lines to center pivots, but because these systems receive lower ranking scores they are not reached by the available funding. Jeremy Maycock related when an applicant's project is in a Colorado River Salinity Control Program (CRSC) area, the ranking score the project receives is mostly determined by the amount of salt savings to be obtained. Each funding cycle the applications for converting wild flood irrigation systems to sprinkler irrigation systems receive the highest-ranking scores. The available funding is usually depleted by these projects.

He related the Grand Junction, Colorado area chose to withdraw as a Salinity area. This allows them to use their state's general EQIP funding, and thus different criteria for ranking all irrigation projects. This also means the Grand Junction area has to compete with the entire state for those funds.

Todd Thacker asked if Salinity funds can be used for water storage projects? Jeremy Maycock stated that in order for any practice or project to receive funding through the CRSC program there must be measurable salt savings. The only way a water storage project can receive funding through CRSC is if it is tied to sprinkler irrigation systems in fields.

The Supervisors said that control of invasive and noxious weeds are a top priority in Uintah County. They discussed different invasive weeds and areas where they are a problem. Shane Frost said that thistle treatment is needed in the Randlett area. They all agreed that Knapweed and White Top continue to be a problem. For the July Board Meeting, Andrea Merrell agreed to extend an invitation to Nate Belnap, Supervisor, Uintah County Weed Department to attend the Board Meeting. Perhaps with his input on what invasive weeds pose the greatest threat to agricultural production and which areas have the greatest infestations the District can work with Jeremy to develop an Action Plan for 2027.

AgVIP

Stephanie Nelsen, UDAF, discussed the updated AgVIP program. She stated the application period is now open but will end on June 22. Federal grant funds the State previously received to fund projects under the AGVIP program will be exhausted after successful applicants are awarded funding this application period. She asked the Supervisors to spread the word around their constituents about this program and the open application period.

Stephanie also gave the Supervisors a general outline of the AgVIP program and how project funding is determined. She said there is a payment cap of \$75,000 per application. For operations of 200 acres or less there is a separate payment rate. She invited the Supervisors to contact her for more information and assistance with making applications prior to June 22.

UDAF REPORT*

- A. **Annual Scope of Work.** Darrell Gillman passed out a copy of the District's Annual Scope of Work for 2026. He explained how the Scope of Work guides the focus and work the District undertakes each year. The Supervisors reviewed and discussed the Annual Scope of Work.

Action Item: Shane Frost made a motion to approve the Scope of Work for 2027 with the changes made. Jim Slaugh seconded the motion. The voting was unanimous, and the motion passed.

- B. **UDAF Program Report.** Darrell Gillman told the Supervisors the UCC Board member from our Zone will complete his second term at the end of this fiscal year. There needs to be a new board member nominated or appointed from our Zone. Darrell explained the importance of being on the Board. The new board member needs to be willing to call the three CD Chairs in our Zone before and after UCC Board meetings for issues to present during UCC Board meetings. Meetings are held quarterly and you could attend in person or by Zoom. Darrell explained that our Zone has attempted to have representation from each county on different boards. Darrell ended conversation by asking interested Supervisors to contact him.

He reminded the Supervisors to take the survey they were emailed by Jace Farnsworth. He told them not many surveys have been returned and it is important that the Supervisors have input in future decisions on how the Districts are organized. The Commissioner of Agriculture has extended the submission deadline for the survey by one more week.

ESCH NO-TILL DRILL REPORT

Andrea Merrell passed out a spreadsheet documenting the payments the District has received from the Vernal Hay Company. She did go to their office last Wednesday June 3 and met with Kayleigh, the new bookkeeper. Andrea reported she also gave Kayleigh a copy of the spreadsheet passed out today. Kayleigh is going to go through their books and determine the amount the District is owed and work out a monthly payment plan to get the payments caught up.

The Supervisors discussed the current rates, which they decided were still set right. Andrea will ask Jeff if any maintenance is needed.

The Supervisors asked Andrea to invite Jeff McKee to the August Board Meeting to review the fees and discuss anything else that needs to be adjusted in the District's agreement with them.

ZONE 6 UACD AUXILIARY SCHOLARSHIP*

Andrea Merrell read the scholarship application submitted to the District by the due date. The Supervisors discussed the candidate's qualifications. Shane Frost recused himself from the discussion.

Action Item: Todd Thacker presented a motion to approve the candidate as presented for the Zone 6 UACD Auxiliary Scholarship for 2026. Jim Slaugh seconded the motion. Shane Frost recused himself from voting. Voting was unanimous and the motion passed.

FRAUD RISK ASSESSMENT EVALUATION*

Andrea Merrell reviewed the Fraud Risk Assessment Evaluation for Fiscal Year 2026 with the Supervisors. After filling out the appropriate blocks, the score was tabulated and recorded. Bryan Bell, Chair, and Jim Slaugh, Treasurer signed the form on behalf of the Conservation District.

FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss Statement. Andrea Merrell gave each Supervisor a copy of a MACU checking account Reconciliation Statement for May. She also gave each Supervisor a copy of a Balance Sheet and a Profit & Loss Statement—both dated June 7, 2026. She told the Supervisors the MACU Savings Account earned \$0.16 in May. During May check number 289 cleared for \$90.53. There were four deposits totaling \$6,686.08—\$1557.39 from 3rd quarter UDAF grant payment, \$2708.69 from 3rd quarter SERA reimbursement, and \$2420 from the sale of 18 rolls of weed barrier.

B. Income after May 31. Andrea Merrell reported there was one deposit made on June 3 for \$420 from the sale of 3 rolls of weed barrier.

C. Bills for Payment. Andrea Merrell presented an invoice for pipeline materials for the Oaks Park Pipeline Rehabilitation Project totaling \$6,204.68 (this expense approved for maximum of \$5000 during the December 8, 2025 UCD Board Meeting). The Supervisors discussed the value of the Oaks Park pipeline repair project and District funding that is available. Jim Slaugh recused himself from the discussion.

Action Item: Motion by Todd Thacker to increase maximum for Oaks Park Project from \$5000 to \$6,204.68 to pay in full the pipeline invoice submitted. Shane Frost seconded the motion. Jim Slaugh recused himself from voting. The voting was unanimous and the motion passed.

After voting on the above action, Andrea Merrell presented an invoice for \$750 for purchase of six rolls of weed barrier and an invoice for \$451.09 for the purchase of 60 waterproof notebooks containing the District logo and name. These notebooks are to be given to attendees at workshops, farm field days, and other agricultural events.

Action Item: Shane Frost made a motion to accept the financial report as given and authorize payment of two invoices as presented. Johnathan McKee seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous and the motion passed.

SERA

Andrea Merrell gave each Supervisor a copy of their meeting attendance this quarter. It was determined she had forgotten to add the Drought Meeting and the Conservation District Legislative Meeting held at the Uintah County Commission Chambers on April 22. All UCD Supervisors attended. The Drought Meeting commenced at 4:30 pm and after it ended, the Conservation District (CD) Legislative Meeting commenced. The CD Legislative Meeting ended at 8:30 pm. This meeting information will be added to each Supervisors SERA for the fourth quarter.

EDRL (Closed portion of meeting)

Meeting closed for review of Emergency Drought Relief Loan (EDRL) application and discussion.

Meeting opened for the vote.

Action Item: Shane Frost made a motion to approve forwarding ERDL application to UDAF for processing as it meets the intent of the loan program. Johnathan McKee recused himself from voting. Todd seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous and the motion passed.

OTHER BUSINESS AND UPCOMING EVENT

- A. **Future Farmers of America (FFA), Uintah High School Chapter Presentation:** Bryan Bell explained to the other Supervisors he had talked to the Uintah High School FFA Advisor about coming to a UCD Board Meeting to brainstorm ideas for the District to support the High School FFA Chapter. The two Advisors could not attend today's Board Meeting, but they did ask their President and Vice President to attend today's meeting with some ideas. To begin the discussion, Darrell Gillman talked to the two guests about fund-raising project ideas the FFA students could do such as hay nutrient sampling, soil sampling and so forth. The conservation district provides any equipment the students need to collect the samples. The landowners pay the District for the work the FFA students completed, and the District gives a portion of the payment to FFA to support their program.

The FFA Chapter President said they had also discussed ideas for needed help with their advisor and she had suggested the District could help to fund contest-study materials such as flashcards and booklets. The Advisors do have information on where to purchase the study materials. After discussion, it was decided that more discussion is needed. Bryan will invite FFA Advisors to attend either the July 13 or August 10 meeting. He will ask them to bring information needed to purchase study materials as well as cost estimates.

- B. Emergency Drought Relief Loan Program (EDRL):** Darrell Gillman discussed the program with the Supervisors and told them what the funds can be used for and what are the collateral requirements. Applicants apply online for this program.

After discussing the ERDL program, Darrell explained the ARDL Loan application is also on-line. The program provides loan funds for practices for which the Natural Resource Conservation Service has engineering standards and specifications. In addition, Hay Barns can qualify for loan funds. However, the structure must be used to store forage—not equipment.

- C. Sage Grouse Initiative Program.** Cortney Borer, NRCS SGI Biologist informed the Supervisors she is taking applications for SGI practices for FY' 2027. She asked Supervisors to spread the word about this funding. She has also been contacted by the Sageland Collaborative, a non-profit focused on restoration of Sagebrush ecosystems. She asked them to contact her with any questions they might have about her program or the programs of the Sageland Collaborative.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:00 pm by Shane Frost and seconded by Todd Thacker.
Motion passed.