



Colorado First Conservation District
 970-329-3145
 145 Commerce Street Craig, CO 81625

Minutes 11/18/25

Place: USDA Office 145 Commerce Street Craig, CO

**NOTE: Agenda subject to changes and additions. Please note that the Board may discuss any topic relevant to CFCO business, whether or not the topic has been specifically noted on this agenda.*

Attendance: Board members - Doug Davis, Nick Charchalis, Wayne Counts, Jorgiea Raftopoulos, Steve Hinkemeyer (zoom) Staff - Kacey Green, Cassie Lamb, Mark Lowrey, Nicky Boulger (zoom)

Call meeting to Order: Meeting was called to order by Jorgiea at 4:30 pm

Reading of Previous Minutes: There were 3 typos in the October minutes. Steve moved, Wayne seconded to approve with changes. Motion passe

Treasure's Report: There was a question on timing of NFWF payments - Kacey said all has been going smoothly and there was no lapse during the government shut-down. Doug moved, Wayne seconded to approve the Treasurer's report. Motion passed

Guests: Rebecca Burton

Board Time Report:

Name	Time	Note
Wayne Counts	10	
Nick Charchalis	20	
Colton Murray	N/A	
Rod Cook	N/A	
Stephen Hinkemeyer	12	
Doug Davis	6	
Jorgiea Raftopoulos	5	

NRCS UPDATE: Nakayla Lestina reporting: all systems and programs are rebooting and getting up and running following the federal government shutdown. There may be some policy changes, but everything is a little unknown and murky right now. They are waiting on state guidance, and trying to catch up on field work before winter sets in. The top priority is CSP payments and they are working on certifications for EQIP, CSP and annual FSA reviews. Nakayla reiterated how much help Nicky has been considering staff shortages. EQIP rollovers were not funded due to wolf funding. Jorgiea asked how forage losses were determined in drought years. Nakayla responded that they look at RAP and precipitation data, as well as confer with FSA - sometimes CSU can come out on field visits and they can use this data and other projections. There were no field visits this year due to no enclosure cages. Jorgiea

reiterated the importance of on ground visits to collect actual data as some areas in the county can vary widely in both precipitation and loss. Nakayla - the County Committee has the final say if it the projections are too high or too low

DCT Report: Nicky Boulger reported that she is helping with all NRCS programs and the Demo plot for the district. She has worked with Jr. Kawcak on getting seed mixes for each plot. They will also use different amendments and cover crops .

District Manager Report: Kacey Green gave grant overviews including that both the YVEA and NFWF Rocky Mountain Rangelands were not selected for funding. Producer cost share, DCT yearly and CDA BIL funding are all winding down for the year. Both DCT and Producer cost share were approved for 2026

Mark presented an America the Beautiful project for Jim Showalter, spraying rejuvra in the spring of 2026. Wayne moved to approve the application for \$7317.00 Doug seconded. Motion passed.

Old Business:

- Land Use Board – Steve reported main discussion surrounding bison being declared wildlife, yet having no regulations was a topic of concern. Rio Blanco county has already experienced issues and conflict with horses and Cassie was concerned about brucellosis.
- Wayne took oath of office.
- Annual CACD business meeting review - Nick reported that resolutions from our watershed regarding mussels and wolves passed. San Louis Valley is currently battling issues with a dry-up program. NE is suing to build a canal from the Eastern CO republican river. All to say, water issues continue to remain on the forefront of ag issues. Wayne expressed appreciation for Nicks service on CACD and Nick would like to get more participation in the annual meeting. They realize cost is a factor and are considering scholarships

New Business:

- Steve -presented a slide show regarding a measurement device installation program for division 6. This can take place next spring, and can get waivers/ exemptions. Must apply for the program by the end of January. Steve will forward the slides and Kacey will distribute them to board. There was extensive information on this program and you can visit the Division of Water resources for more info. Or find it on the CWCBcolorado.gov or the Yampa White Green Roundtable website.
- Steve - asked for a letter of support from CFCD on a Restore Colorado grant to the Headwaters of the Colorado project for habitat restoration and wet meadows development along upper elkhead creek. Much discussion revolved around how the headwaters project can affect all downstream and the whole valley. Nick

made a motion, then withdrew. Doug moved to send a letter of support unless a reason was found not to support. Wayne seconded. Motion passed

- DCT Funding update -see above
- Annual Meeting - Will be February 17th. Nicky is heading up the meeting - we plan to make sides and can see about having meat cooked. All agreed that the palisade insectary would be a great guest speaker, so Nicky will get in touch. Other considerations for speakers would be Headwaters of Colorado. Gubernatorial candidates could possibly get an invite - not necessarily to speak, but would be good for them to attend and see what we do. Jorgiea was also checking on food - she and Nicky can coordinate.

Committee Report:

- NFWF Sage Grouse – Colton, Mark, Cassie, Kacey

No projects were submitted for review today. Kacey went over the proposed budget increase which included \$4 million to increase invasive annual grass treatments on public land, and an additional \$2 million in the habitat restoration line since we are working through the money ahead of pace. All other costs could increase accordingly. There was much discussion during the committee meeting, including concerns from Brian about spraying too vast of acreage and damaging annual forbes and about there not being a RFP open. Desa mentioned that the BLM may be asking for money and doesn't want to double-dip. Kacey will follow up with the BLM and work on the final budget before submitting to the State and NFWF. Nick mentioned that maybe some of the funds could go to Rio Blanco for fire rehab - Doug thought it is premature as they are not ready for seed and they have very good districts working on funding and grants. Steve said the Yampa White Green Basin Roundtable sent funds for this.

Discussion also was had regarding large amounts of farmed land that will no longer be farmed. Seeding would be a great use of these funds. The discussion went back and forth about how that would occur, spending limits and matches required. The district could draft a letter to landowners whose land will no longer be farmed, or we could ask the farmer to get a landowners list for us. Kacey mentioned that at this point, it was all hypothetical and might be best to discuss actual applications as they come in. Applications are still open to all and can go through the process like all other applicants.

Other

- Jorgiea will not be able to attend meetings in December and January

Next Monthly Meeting: Tuesday, December 9th, 2025 Time: 4:30

Adjourn Steve moved to adjourn, Wayne seconded. Motion passed Meeting was adjourned at 6:36 PM