Branson-Trinchera Conservation District Board Meeting

MINUTES

Date: August 11, 2025
Place: Branson, CO (Online School)
Time: 5:00 PM

Business Meeting

A. **Call to order** and roll call: Meeting was called to order at 5:05pm
   - Dale Yocam—present
   - Harold Unwin—present
   - Will Ward—present
   - **Also present** were Dick Louden, Keith Mantelli (DT), Lori Chatterley (DM), Sammie Molinaro (NCRS), Kate Zeigler (Zeigler Geologic Consulting), and Garth Schaefer (CSCB).

B. **Appointment of Board Members**: Lori Green, Dick Louden: *Motion to appoint Lori Green and Dick Louden to the board by Harold Unwin. Second: Will Ward. Motion carried 3-0*

C. **Oath of Office** of appointed Board Members: Oath was signed by Dick Louden. Oath paperwork was left for Lori Green.

D. **Approval of Minutes** of prior meeting: *Motion to approve minutes by Will Ward. Second: Harold Unwin. Motion carried 4-0 with Dick Louden now voting*.

E. **Treasurer's Report**: Harold Unwin reported the following—
   1. Income Mill Levy: $317.87
   2. Bills: $500 each buyer's pool from the fair; $100 Fellowship of the Rockies; $100 Kim Cemetery
   3. Dean Oatment family donation $2000; Also, the checking account balance $50,395.17 and thank you notes were received from the Jim Davis family, the John A Doherty family, the Kim Cemetery Treasurer, and the Fellowship of the Rockies.

   Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report by Harold Unwin. Second: Dick Louden. Motion carried 4-0 with all voting yes.

F. Incoming Correspondence
   1. **4H letters:** letters about the fair sale were received from Lily Amato, Emma Amato, and Tate Baker.
   2. **CSCB Direct Assistance** $8104.40 received
   3. **CACD Region Meeting**/Conference/Scholarship: annual meeting will be in November.
   4. **Insects on Rangeland** Workshop info in the packet
   5. **CD Stakeholder meeting** Title 35 Landowner Definition Aug. 11 info in the packet

6. **Special Watershed Meeting** August 18: Garth reported this will be canceled.
7. **NACD Renewal**: the district does not donate to NACD. *No action taken.*

G. New Business

1. **Well Monitoring (Kate Zeigler, Zeigler Geologic Consulting, LLC):** Kate reported she has 4 families with 7 wells that will continue with tracking static water levels. She presented the final ARID groundwater report summation and will email the whole report with appendices. It can also be found through the USDA and contains a great deal of aquifer information. There was some discussion of collecting old data loggers. She believes conservation of water is already a priority in Las Animas County. The cost share amount would be around $1200. *Harold Unwin made a motion to continue with a cost share for the 4 families with 7 wells. Second: Dick Louden. Motion carried 4-0 with all voting yes.*
2. **Range Contest for Branson**: will be held September 24 in Kim at the Mustang Pavilion. Expecting approx. 160 kids. Lori was asked to see if SP-PRCD would split the meal cost which was $1128 last year total plus $75 for the pavilion. They plan to charge $5 per student to help with the awards. The kids will judge 3 sites and then identify 50 plants. Kim has no kids in FFA this year. *Motion to pay for all or part of the meal made by Harold Unwin. Second: Will Ward. Motion carried 4-0 with all voting yes.*
3. **Board of Supervisors List**: updates were made to contact information and no ex-officio was chosen. Lori reported she will need to add consecutive terms served. Harold has been on the board since 1978. *No action was needed.*
4. **MOA with SP-PRCD for District Manager/District Tech:** Lori presented the MOA with an understanding that this was just a conversation between districts. There was discussion of how many hours Lori will work for the district and her overall hours for SP-PRCD and hourly wage. She was asked to bring in a job description/agreement for the next meeting and to track her hours. It had been a long time paying the DM the $3000 rate and agreed it was time to contribute more. Lori was asked to look at the difference in Mill Levy % with population and Sammie is to provide a map of the districts. Lori reported that if the DT position does not get grant money, SP-PRCD had not decided what to do yet but would potentially have to pay for the full position themselves so that may alter the MOA in the future. *Motion by Harold Unwin to contribute $5000 toward the District Manager and maintain the $3000 for the District Tech. Second: Dick Louden. Motion carried 4-0 with all voting yes.*
5. **Long Range Plan:** Due December 31, 2025. The board discussed the plan and decided to work on it over the next few meetings. It was suggested to remove the

groundwater objective, which is mostly fulfilled, and add rangeland health which could include the invasive species, brush management, rotational grazing, etc. Some discussion was had about the entities listed and who is still offering grant money and support. That will need to be updated. Lori will find out how many objectives are required and find the template so she can update it. Garth said it should work for the district and be a "living" document. There was discussion regarding prairie dog mitigation and ideas to raise money with equipment rental, etc. in the district. Garth suggested the district look at other 3 year plans in similar districts and gather ideas. We will revisit in September. *No action was taken.*

6. **Budget for 2026**: the board reviewed the 2025 budget and Harold was tasked to get financials for the 2026 budget. *No action was taken.*
7. **Authorize Lori Chatterley to sign Conservation Plan Schedule of Operations for CRP**: For timing and workflow, Sammie asked that Lori be authorized to sign. Also, get her an email/mailing list of the producers. Sammie presented a form to sign for Richard B. Sumpter and the Sumpter Family Trust to update a name. *Harold Unwin made a motion to authorize Lori Chatterley to sign the Schedule of Operations for CRP. Second: Dick Louden. Motion carried 4-0 with all voting yes.*
8. **Website:** Lori was able to regain access to the website and upload agendas for this year. There was discussion of what the board would like on the website such as board members, cost share program, meeting dates, etc. *No action was needed.*
9. **Facebook:** Lori will put together a Facebook page to better advertise for the district. *No action was needed.*
10. **Las Animas County Community Wildfire Grant**: Sammie asked for contacts with local entities that would be interested in grant money for wildfire equipment. Kim and Branson contacts were given. It was also noted that the district has some fire equipment. Lori mentioned there will be public meetings soon. *No action was taken.*
11. **Virtual Fencing workshop:** Sammie was approached by Halter would like to have a workshop in the district. He would like to do it in the fall and then a field workshop in the spring. The board generally felt that they had already had this topic covered previously but could invite interested landowners. They will revisit this in September. *No action was taken.*
12. **Community "Coffee Talk":** Sammie would like to have an informal NRCS stakeholder/community coffee chat event as other places are doing. Discussion that there are approximately 60 active producers in the district as well as 60 absentee landowners. Board will discuss in September. *No action was taken.*

H. Other Business

1. **2026 Matching Grant** submission: copy provided for the board.

2. **DCT Information**: Sammie went over the DCT program and provided info for the board.
3. **2026 DCT Re-enrollment through SP-PRCD**: Lori provided a copy of SP-PRCD's CSCB DCT re-enrollment and noted she included B-TCD as a partner district in the grant as they support the DCT position financially also.
4. **Sam.gov registration** update was submitted by Lori as she finally got access.

I. **NRCS Report:** Sammie gave an update on the reorganization of USDA. Many unknowns with staffing and funding. Potential removal of funding for conservation technical assistance (CTA) which many landowners use. 9 applications for grassland CRP in Las Animas/Huerfano Couties, rates were low. 5 program applications funded for the district. Partnership agreements are being written. Still no Farm Bill (working from the 2018 bill).

J. District Tech Report

1. Cost Share completions: Ricke Feemster, Vicki Jakson, Lonnie Jackson

Keith presented the cost share completions. Harold will pay them. *Motion by Harold Unwin to approve. Second: Will Ward. Motion carried 4-0 with all voting yes.*

K. **Next meeting date:** September 22, 2025 in Kim, Colorado @ 5pm

L. **Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 7:16pm

Members of the Public are welcome to attend and provide input.