

Gunnison Conservation District
210 W Spencer Ave STE A, Gunnison, CO 81230

GUNNISON CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

July 21, 2026

The regular meeting of the Gunnison Conservation District Board of Supervisors was called to order on July 21, 2026, at approximately 4:05 p.m. at the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District Conference Room, 210 West Spencer Avenue, Suite A, Gunnison, Colorado.

Board Members Present:

Dan Zadra, President
Tommy Rozman, Vice President
Jan Coury
Jesse Kruthaupt
Jon Mugglestone, Treasurer
Mark Rozman
John Rozman

Board Members Absent:

Employees Present:

Tonya Carr, District Manager
Ben Prior, District Conservation Technician / Wildlife Biologist

Employees Absent:

Others Present:

Jamison Jeweks, NRCS (attending online); Hannah Kersting-Cranor, CSU Extension; Beverly Richards, UGRWCD; Jesse Kruthaupt, Trout Unlimited; Jon Mugglestone, Crested Butte Land Trust

Partner and Agency Updates

Jamison Jeweks from NRCS reported that all NRCS contracts for the year have been obligated and no additional projects are anticipated for this year. NRCS is now focused on planning for next year's program cycle. The sign-up deadline for next year's applications may open as early as mid-December, earlier than in past years. Jamison encouraged producers interested in next year's projects to come into the office now to begin planning.

The Colorado State Forest Service provided no formal update; Mike Tarantino was not in attendance.

Hannah Kersting-Cranor from CSU Extension reported that the GCD's drill seeder was displayed at the Cattleman's Days events all week, with UGRWCD pulling the seeder in the parade, generating public interest and some producer inquiries. Upper Gunnison has awarded additional funding to support a seed program. If producers work with Dr. Joe Bremer on a custom drought-resistant seed mix, UGRWCD will cover up to half the seed cost (up to \$1,500); Hannah and John Scott will conduct three years of monitoring. A no-till drill workshop is planned for the second week of October, one day for train-the-trainer and one day open to producers. Hannah also reported that CSU Extension received additional funds through the CDA Wolf Mitigation Grant, which was used to purchase three pairs of thermal binoculars, four trail cameras, and a dump trailer. The thermal binoculars are available for free lease to producers experiencing wolf issues (a damage deposit is required). CSU Extension is working with stockers to establish a carcass management program.

No update was received from the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies; Marcella Tarantino was not in attendance. Tonya Carr noted a Bird Conservancy agreement requiring a board signature, which will be reviewed.

UGRWCD provided no formal update; Beverly Richards had no new items to report.

Jon Mugglestone from the Crested Butte Land Trust reported that the GCD's CDA Noxious Weed grant application is in process. Applicator Bradley Wiggington will treat noxious weeds on the Robinson parcel and additional CBLT properties before photos are taken for documentation. Jon noted that the CDA has narrowed this grant's applicant

pool to county weed programs and conservation districts only. The grant (\$6,500) will flow through the district as a pass-through: CDA will reimburse GCD, and GCD will then pay CBLT. Ben Prior confirmed the mid-year report is due in a few weeks and the process is straightforward.

Approval of Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes of the June 23, 2026, regular meeting. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made and seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report / Financial Statements

The Board reviewed the June 2026 financial statements provided by Tonya Carr. A motion to approve the financial statements was made and seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

District Conservation Technician Report

Ben Prior reported that the Ocate Creek restoration project is wrapping up after approximately six years. The landowner is pleased with the results; the property has been placed under conservation easement, riparian vegetation is growing back, and the stream restoration work is complete. The site is accessible and well-suited for a field tour at the upcoming Watershed Association Meeting.

District Manager Report

Subdivision Review Policy – Board Direction: Tonya Carr reviewed Colorado statutory requirements for conservation district participation in subdivision review referrals, citing the applicable state statute and sharing a legal reference memo distributed to board members in advance. Under the statute, a conservation district's authority to comment is specific to three areas: soil suitability, floodwater problems, and watershed protection. The statute further provides that non-response to a referral is treated as implicit approval. Tonya clarified that the district is not required to offer independent development opinions, and that comments should be grounded in the three statutory areas. The board discussed the Hinsdale County referral and the materials distributed before the meeting. The board agreed to continue handling referrals as received per Colorado statute, limiting comments to soil suitability, floodwater problems, and watershed protection. Tonya indicated she will also request written guidance from the CSCB on this topic at the next opportunity.

New Business

DCT Update – Ben Prior

Wet Meadow Restoration Planning: Ben Prior reported that he has conducted planning site visits on several private properties for potential wet meadow restoration work. The most promising site is located at Coachetope Creek (the Coachetope Creek Ranch), where he has been working with the landowner and NRCS. UGRWCD's Upper Gunnison team has completed a survey of the area through to Pauline Creek and identified good restoration potential. Ben also visited the T-Bar T Ranch site, which showed less immediate promise.

Ben reported that he is close to completing his Conservation Planner 3 certification; once certified, he will be authorized to sign Form 252s independently without routing them through Jamison Jeweks or Dan Olson, which will streamline project workflows.

Grant Updates: Ben provided updates on several pending and awarded grants. The NFWF Big Game grant decision is expected in August. The Biophilia grant has been approved, with funding directed to the district. The Restore grant (\$300,000, also tied to wet meadow work) appears to have been approved. The RMEF grant (\$44,000 for fence work) allows Ben to request funds 60 days ahead of implementation. The Restore and Biophilia grants include capacity funding for the district (approximately \$20,000/year from Restore and \$10,000–\$15,000/year from Biophilia). Ben noted that Hinsdale County has expressed interest in contracting with GCD for Ben to conduct sage grouse reviews; he has shared the existing Gunnison County contract as a template and is awaiting their response. Tonya emphasized the importance of ensuring future grants include administrative and capacity components; Ben

acknowledged this and noted that implementation-only grants can serve as matching funds for future capacity grants.

Watershed Association Meeting Planning Committee

The Board discussed forming a small planning committee for the Gunnison-Dolores Watershed Association Meeting confirmed for August 26, 2026, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., at the Powderhorn Community Center. Dan Zadra has secured the community building. The board agreed on the following responsibilities:

Jesse Kruthaupt and Ben Prior will plan the site visit, which will include the completed Ocate Creek restoration project and Lanny Denham's stretch of Saboya Creek, where low-tech BDA structures were installed several years ago, and a new NRCS-funded diversion structure has recently been completed. The landowner has granted permission to access the site. Both sites are easily accessible and require minimal walking.

Guest speakers: Hannah Kersting agreed to give a 20-minute presentation on the drill seeder program. Jesse Kruthaupt offered to ask his UGRWCD supervisor to present on the Blue Mesa water accounting spreadsheet. Tonya and the planning committee will coordinate with Kalli Savvas from CSCB on the overall meeting agenda structure.

Tonya Carr will coordinate the planning committee meeting, logistics, participant count, lunch planning, and meeting agenda. A committee planning meeting was tentatively set for approximately one week after the board meeting.

District Manager Report

CD Maturity/Renewal Decision: Tonya reported that the district's Certificate of Deposit (CD) matures on August 11, 2026, with a current balance of \$22,875.77. Options included renewing for a new 30-month term (through February 11, 2029) or transferring the funds to the district's checking account. The board tabled this item pending the outcome of the executive session.

CSCB Wildfire Engagement Guidance: Tonya shared revised CSCB guidance on wildfire engagement for conservation districts. She noted that the original CSCB guidance was based on a single experience and that she, along with others, submitted revisions. The revised guidance asks district managers to be added to local cooperator lists, not to attend fire operations meetings, to enable access to cooperator meetings and emergency grant documentation. Tonya has been attending cooperator meetings for the current Elk Fire as a precaution, in the event the fire moves onto private land and the district needs to support landowners in applying for emergency grant funding. She added UGRWCD and Hannah Kersting to the cooperator list because of their work with livestock and agricultural producers. Hannah Kersting noted that CSU Extension has an existing agricultural impact survey tool, developed during the Slate River bridge closure, that could be adapted for fire-specific use; she offered to connect Tonya with Jenny Bierman at CSU Extension.

BOR Grant Update: Tonya reported that BOR grant enrollment is complete and all partners have submitted their NEPA needs assessments. All projects have submitted their scope of work, and the grant manager has responded positively. The outstanding question involves NEPA documentation for the Ocate Creek project: because the project is complete, BOR needs the NEPA review documents held by NRCS before it can consider reimbursement. Jesse Kruthaupt offered to facilitate an information release form through NRCS so BOR can receive those records.

NDME Grant Reapplication: Tonya asked to review the NDME reapplication before submission to update language from the previous year regarding the prior fire and management process. The application will be submitted in August.

Executive Session

At approximately 5:30 p.m., the regular meeting was recessed, and the Board convened in executive session pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(f)(I) to discuss personnel matters: annual performance reviews and compensation for the District Manager and the District Conservation Technician. No formal action was taken in executive session. Employees whose performance was discussed were offered the opportunity to request that the discussion occur in open session. Jamison Jeweks left before the executive session.

Resumption of Regular Meeting – Open Session (approximately 6:30 p.m.)

The regular meeting resumed in open session. The following action items were considered:

Bank Account Signatory: A motion was made to add Mark Rozman as an authorized signer on the district's bank accounts. The motion was seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Staff Compensation: Staff moved to approve the recommended salary increases (Option A) for the District Manager and the District Conservation Technician, as discussed in executive session. The motion was seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

DCT Re-Enrollment Ratification: A motion was made to ratify the district's July 1, 2026 submission of the 2027 DCT enrollment application and budget to the Colorado State Conservation Board, and to obligate the required 20% district match consistent with the compensation approved this evening. The motion was seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

CD Renewal: A motion was made to renew the district's Certificate of Deposit for a new 30-month term (maturing February 11, 2029). The motion was seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Upcoming Events

Gunnison-Dolores Watershed Association Meeting: August 26, 2026, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Powderhorn Community Center.

The next regular GCD Board Meeting will be held on August 18, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.

7th Grade Mill Creek Summit: September 18, 2026

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Board Approval

These minutes are submitted for approval at the August 18, 2026 regular meeting of the Gunnison Conservation District Board of Supervisors.

Respectfully submitted by:

Tonya Carr, District Manager

Date: _____

Approved by the Board of Supervisors:

Dan Zadra, President

Date: _____

Tommy Rozman, Vice President

Date: _____

Jan Coury, Supervisor

Date: _____

Jesse Kruthaupt, Supervisor

Date: _____

Jon Mugglestone, Treasurer

Date: _____

_____ Date: _____
Mark Rozman, Supervisor

_____ Date: _____
John Rozman, Supervisor