

**UPPER ARKANSAS WATER
CONSERVANCY DISTRICT**

**Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
March 12, 2026
1:30 PM**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District was held Thursday March 12, 2026, commencing at 1:00 pm at the District offices, 339 East Hwy 50, Salida, Colorado, following the Water Activity Enterprise committee meeting, notice having been given by posting of Notice and Agenda on March 11, 2026, at the offices of the Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District, 339 East Hwy 50, Salida, Colorado.

DIRECTORS PRESENT (IN PERSON)

Timothy C. Canterbury	Robert B. (Bill) Donley	Ben Lenth
Richard Hilderbrand	Brett A. McMurry	Kristie Nackord
Tom French	Tony Telck	Tom Murphy
Tim Payne		

DIRECTORS PRESENT (BY REMOTE VIDEO AND AUDIO CONFERENCING)

None

DIRECTORS ABSENT

Mannie Colon	Mike Shields	Albert Eggleston
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DISTRICT OFFICIALS/STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Gregory W. Felt, General Manager	Ralph L. (Terry) Scanga, District Advisor
Jord Gertson, Hydrologist	Gracy Goodwin, Project's Manager
Jennifer A. Scanga, Office Manager	

DISTRICT OFFICIALS/STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT (BY REMOTE VIDEO AND AUDIO CONFERENCING)

Kendall Burgemeister, Attorney	Britt Searles, Administrative Assistant
Richard Brown, Legislative Consultant	

DISTRICT OFFICIALS ABSENT

Chris Manera, Engineer

STATE OFFICIALS PRESENT

Robert Canda, Deputy Water Commissioner, District 12
Talon Canterbury, Water Commissioner, District 11
Dan Henrichs, Water Commissioner, District 12
Nate Huffman, Deputy Water Commissioner, District 11

STATE OFFICIALS PRESENT (BY REMOTE VIDEO AND AUDIO CONFERENCING)

None

STATE OFFICIALS ABSENT

Rachel Zancanella, Division Engineer
Allen Keeling, Water Commissioner, District 13
Joe Crabb, Municipal Operations and Litigation Engineer and Augmentation Coordinator

EX-OFFICIO REPRESENTATIVE PRESENT

Gina Lucrezi, Chaffee County Commissioner

EX-OFFICIO REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT (BY REMOTE VIDEO AND AUDIO CONFERENCING)

Dwayne McFall, Fremont County Commissioner

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EX-OFFICIO REPRESENTATIVES ABSENT

Shawn Williams, Buena Vista Public Works Director
Christy Doon, City of Salida Administrator
Sean Kelly, Town of Poncha Springs
Travis Payne, Canon City Water Superintendent
Bill Canda, Custer County Commissioner
Dave Schneider, Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District Manager

GUESTS PRESENT

Christopher Olney, Colorado Springs Utilities
Meghan Bell, USGS

GUESTS PRESENT (BY REMOTE VIDEO AND AUDIO CONFERRING)

Jack Goble, General Manager of the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District, (LAVWCD)
Katie Garrett, Colorado Springs Utilities
Max Hanson, Office of Representative Brittany Pettersen
Lucas Epp, Custer County Commissioner

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Canterbury led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Guests were asked to introduce themselves.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF February 12, 2026

The minutes of the meeting on February 12, 2026, were approved upon motion by Director Donley with a second by Director Nackord.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Upon motion by Director Lenth with a second by Director Donley the Board approved the monthly financial reports dated February 28, 2026

PROGRAM PRESENTATION

Jack Goble General Manager of the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District (LAVWCD) presented a briefing on proposed revegetation legislation aimed at managing land "dry-up" within Water Division 2. Mr. Goble highlighted a significant decline in irrigated farmland across a five-county area from 1978 to 2022 and referenced the *Arkansas River Dry-up Study* as the basis for the proposed policy.

Key Provisions of the Draft Bill:

- **Applicability:** The legislation would apply to land where water is permanently removed and the decreed use is changed from irrigation to other uses on or after January 1, 2027.
- **Exemptions:** Land slated for development or re-irrigation within a reasonable timeframe is exempt, provided weeds and erosion are strictly controlled.
- **Access and Compliance:** Water right owners would be required to record a temporary access easement on the property deed to ensure long-term revegetation monitoring.
- **Financial & Operational Security:** To ensure compliance, only 50% of a changed water right may be initially utilized upon issuance of a new decree. Additional use of water under new decree would be proportionally tied to revegetation success on the dried up parcel. Alternatively, the Water Court may consider a performance bond provided to the local county as a guarantee of successful revegetation.

Board Discussion and Inquiry:

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- **Scope of Legislation:** In response to a query regarding whether the bill applies to temporary substitute supply plans (SSPs), Mr. Goble clarified that the bill is strictly intended for formal change-of-use cases.

Advisor Scanga noted that Buena Vista represents the driest region in the Arkansas Valley and pointed out that the current draft lacks provisions for areas with extremely low precipitation. Mr. Goble acknowledged that adjustments for longer revegetation periods in high-desert climates might be considered.

Manager Felt inquired about the hydrological and geological considerations of the bill, noting the importance of ongoing conversations with counties to ensure they are supported during dry-up situations.

Director Hilderbrand inquired about the selection of plant species for these projects. Mr. Goble stated that requirements are based on field experience and the use of native species specific to the local ecology.

Hydrologist Gertson raised concerns regarding wildlife habitat. Mr. Goble noted that while wildlife is a critical issue, it is not currently addressed in this specific bill to avoid legislative complications; he suggested such matters would remain under the jurisdiction of the Water Court.

The Board requested a follow-up on the bill's status following its formal introduction, scheduled for the following day.

EX-OFFICIO REPORTS

None

HYDROLOGY REPORT- Jord Gertson, Hydrologist

None

PROJECT MANAGEMENT REPORT- Gracy Goodwin

Project Manager Goodwin presented the project update for March 2026. Included in her report was TCP Alluvial Storage, DeWeese Enlargement Feasibility Phase 2, Intraditch Exchange Project, Round Mountain Reservoir, UAWCD DCP Upgrade, and Cottonwood Dam Project.

Cottonwood Special Use Permit - Manager Felt stated that we have been working on our renewal for 9 years and he said there was a lot of proof reading going into getting the details correct on the Operation Agreement for the Special Use Permit. The new SUP will be good for 30 years and includes the provisions for the dam replacement project and the continued arrangement of augmentation for USFS evaporation at Cottonwood Lake in exchange for annual permit fees from the District.

HYDROLOGY REPORT- Jord Gertson, Hydrologist

Hydrologist Gertson provided a summary of current water storage levels and presented a report regarding 2-5 wells within the Poncha Springs system. This report serves as an operational guide for augmentation procedures and the strategic use of associated water rights. Mr. Gertson identified depletions for these structures at approximately 30–40 acre-feet, with the objective of maximizing UAWCD allocations.

Hydrologist Gertson updated the Board on the Regional Resource Planning Group (RRPG) and its study on how water exchanges impact water quality, highlighting a new USGS dashboard that monitors 13 stations in real time. In response to an inquiry from District Advisor Scanga regarding the specific benefits to the District, Mr. Gertson explained that the data serves as a preemptive study to protect the Upper Arkansas basin, demonstrating that it is not as heavily impacted as the lower basin.

Director Hilderbrand inquired about the methods for measuring and the rate of sediment accumulation. Mr. Gertson noted that the United States Geological Study (USGS) is developing solutions to characterize sediment types, specifically citing work on Fountain Creek. To conclude, Hydrologist Gertson reviewed the maintenance task list and checklists completed for each District reservoir over the past two months.

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ENGINEERING REPORT – Colorado River Engineering, Chris Manera

No Engineering Update for the March meeting.

LEGISLATIVE CONSULTANT REPORT – Richard Brown

Legislative Consultant Brown provided a comprehensive update on the current legislative session, referencing the written report previously distributed to the Board.

Regarding the Beaver Harvesting bill, General Manager Felt noted that beaver activity poses significant challenges beyond general disruption, specifically interfering with the integrity of water gaging systems; Mr. Brown further noted that such activity contributes to increased water loss through evaporation. The discussion then turned to the siting of data centers, identified as a primary legislative issue characterized by significant community opposition. It was noted, however, that a pending environmental bill may provide a framework for establishing more rigorous standards for such facilities. Finally, Mr. Brown reported on a special task force for natural resources currently evaluating the utility of severance taxes, though he expressed skepticism regarding whether the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) would support any proposed modifications to the current tax structure.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

RESUME REVIEW COMMITTEE

Nothing of significance in the January 2026 Resume.

MANAGER'S REPORT – Greg Felt

WRDA Resolution and Funding Application

The Board considered a resolution to support an application for funding through the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), specifically coordinated with the offices of Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper and Congressman Pettersen.

Upon motion by Director French, seconded by Director Murphy, the Board approved the WRDA Resolution and authorized the District to pursue a funding authorization for Custer County water projects.

Colorado Inclusion in Section 595 of Water Resources Development Act

Manager Felt informed the board of a request from Congresswoman Brittany Pettersen for UAWCD support of a bill to add Colorado to the western states currently allowed access to the WRDA Section 595 funding. Colorado has long been excluded from this opportunity. There was board consensus to support this legislation.

Manager Felt presented an analysis of the current "dry year" conditions, comparing current water allocations against historical data from high-precipitation years. He highlighted the significant impact of sustained drought on the District's available supply. Notably, snowpack levels above Salida that would generate the river flows through the Wellsville gage are currently at approximately 61%. Felt observed that while modeling is most accurate during average snowpack years, current data for the Southeast District indicates conditions more severe than the droughts of 2002 and 2012.

Manager Felt informed the Board of the upcoming Water Forum in April and the Colorado River Presentation on the 19th of the month.

DISTRICT ADVISOR REPORT- Terry Scanga

Advisor Scanga reported on his assistance with the annual report for submission to Division 2, which details augmentation demands and supplies. He noted that a recent data server outage has been successfully resolved. Advisor Scanga briefed the Board on ongoing meetings with the Town of Buena Vista regarding engineering, the 50 acre-foot (AF) agreement, and the impact of appropriations on depletions, noting that this work mirrors current efforts with Poncha Springs and that there may be similar future opportunities to coordinate more closely on water accounting with Buena Vista.

Additionally, Mr. Scanga and Manager Felt met with the 3 Elk Homeowners Association regarding a proposal to adjust the "blue line" for consumptive use water rights related to the filling and refilling of

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their pond. It was noted that return flows from irrigated lands currently reach the mainstem rather than 3 Elk Creek, totaling approximately 100 AF per year. The District is outlining this proposal for review by legal counsel and engineering to assist the homeowners. Regarding public outreach, Advisor Scanga highlighted the "Water Talks" articles and podcasts, some of which have featured General Manager Felt and himself as well as Hydrologist Gertson. Advisor Scanga noted the development of a virtual studio for audio and video production, with upcoming recordings scheduled with Chris Woodka, and Amy Ostdiek.

Following Mr. Scanga's update, General Manager Felt detailed the components of the Annual Augmentation Report.

Director Nackord suggested that an orientation program be developed for new Directors.

LEGAL REPORT – Law of the Rockies, Kendall Burgemeister

Attorney Burgemeister presented the Law of the Rockies report, providing an overview of opposition matters, transactional items, and pending water applications; the full written report was distributed to the Board for detailed review.

The update specifically highlighted two applications regarding the Trout Creek intra-ditch exchange and addressed the consultation report received from the water court. Additionally, Attorney Burgemeister provided a status update on the Union Ditch case, focusing on the preparation and filing of responses to comments.

CHAIRMAN & DIRECTOR REPORTS

None

NOTICES & MEETINGS

- **March 19, 2026 – SECWCD Board Meeting followed by Special Meeting on Colorado River at 1:30 PM**
- **March 20, 2026 – Presentation to Fremont Conservation District and Irrigation Companies on Augmentation, Pathfinder Park, Canon City**
- **April 8, 2026 – Arkansas Basin Round Table, Pueblo Community College**

ADJOURN

There being no further business coming before the Board or Enterprise and upon motion by Director Donley, the meeting adjourned at 3:21 pm.

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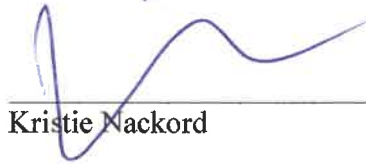
Respectfully submitted,



Gregory W. Felt, General Manager



Timothy C. Canterbury



Kristie Mackord

Absent - no signature

Mannie Colon

Absent - no signature

Robert B. Donley



Ben Lenth



Tom E. French



Brett A. McMurry



Richard Hilderbrand



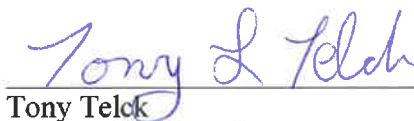
Albert Eggleston



Tom Murphy



Tim Payne



Tony Telck



Mike Shields