

# HUERFANO COUNTY WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

## Minutes of Board Meeting

March 23, 2026

The monthly meeting of the Huerfano County Water Conservancy District, which had been properly noticed and was available for public participation, was convened in person: Walsenburg Housing Authority, 220 Russell St, Walsenburg on March 23, 2026, at 6:06 pm.

**Directors:** Scott King, Jacque Sikes, Kent Mace, Lonnie Brown. David Steffan by Teams meeting.

**Secretary:** Carol Dunn; **Attorney:** Ryan Farr. **Engineer:** Steve Smith by online Teams meeting.

**Guests:** Ed Diemer, Doug Brgoch, Pauline Adams, Amos Mace, Jerry Pacheco (Walsenburg), Cathy Garcia (Cong. Hurd). By online Teams meeting: Dale Lyons, Doug Winter.

**Agenda:** Accepted on a Sikes/Brown **motion**.

**Minutes:** Minutes of the February 23, 2026 meeting were approved on a Brown/Sikes **motion**.

**Financial Reports:** Financial reports were accepted as presented on a Mace/Brown **motion**.

### OLD BUSINESS:

### NEW BUSINESS:

**Water Court case 2026CW3007:** DWR “Ag Water Protection Right Rules.” Farr explained this case and the board discussed it. No action will be taken by HCWCD.

**DWR River Reports:** Ed Diemer reported on both rivers. Cucharas flows: 5.5 cfs at Boyd Ranch, ~1 cfs at Harrison Bridge, and 1.15 cfs at Hwy 10, with Ballejos Ditch (#8 Reed) in priority. Huerfano flows: 9.45 cfs at Manzanares, 14.4 cfs at Badito, and .683 cfs at I-25, with #16 in priority.

**Walsenburg Urban Renewal Authority** request for nomination – HCWCD has no nomination or recommendation for this position.

**Flood Warning Gages removal estimate:** The Sky Hi Engineering quote of \$5,930 dated 2/26/26 to remove the 6 remaining flood warning gages was accepted on a Brown/Sikes **motion**. Mace Water & Land will need to add some shelving to the SMAF pumphouse for storing the gage equipment.

### **HUERFANO REGIONAL AUGMENTATION PLAN**

**SMAF update** – Applegate Group will check to see if we can put water in the reservoir. Because of dry conditions so early in the year, the Huerfano River is getting low already. As a maintenance item, Mace reported the battery on the return valve needs to be replaced.

### **Recharge pond update** –

At the Wardells’ decision, the Wm Craig ditch has been turned on. Sadie Wardell will be taking over Rick Dunn’s water analyst duties, and both types of transducers will be used this water season. Amos Mace will check on the Solar Bee pond aerator at Town of La Veta in the coming month. He recently checked on the seeding at the Wm Craig Ranch and saw some seed sprouting. He will be spraying for weeds on the gravel around the SMAF pumphouse and estimated the cost will be \$130-\$140.

**Thorne Ranch:** King gave a purchase update. We are under contract for the land and water rights. The title work has been ordered. The earnest money check was given to Dotter Abstract title company. As part of diligence, Huerfano County provided the deeds we needed. We have received three bids for ALTA survey on the property, which will be discussed in executive session.

As part of diligence, Farr suggested we will want to do a phase 1 environmental assessment.

### Infrastructure Improvement Funding Opportunities –

- **Loan program**, REDL through San Isabel Electric – Sikes explained this Rural Economic Development Loan can be up to \$1-million at 0% interest for 10 years. We would apply through San Isabel Electric, and Sikes said turnaround could be fairly quick.

- **Community Project Funding** (Cong. Hurd) – Request was submitted on March 16 with an ask of \$3,250,000 for constructing a reservoir and improving water infrastructure on Thorne Ranch. Staff asked if we would be able to use \$1,500,000 rather than the full request, and we confirmed.
- **Congressionally Directed Spending** (Sen. Bennet & Hickenlooper) – Dunn is ready to submit this request, which is a duplicate of the request submitted to Cong. Hurd; however we've been unable to paste the letter of support into the google application form.
- **Community Perspectives Grant** (C.U. Boulder) – Decided to pass on this – most of the \$7,000 grant would pay for student labor and travel time, plus hotel and mileage expenses from Boulder.

**REPORTS –**

**Ark Basin Roundtable:** Brgoch, King and Brown reported on the most recent meeting: Alan Ward is now the CWCB rep on the Interstate Basin Compact Committee. CWCB's budget for 2026 is \$454,000. Kent Mace and Lonnie Brown will attend the Ark Basin Water Forum in Salida, April 22-23.

**Comments:**

Cathy Garcia – Southern Colorado Regional Director, Congressman Hurd's office, explained the office can provide assistance when working with federal government agencies, like Veterans Affairs and Social Security. Cong. Hurd has introduced nearly 20 bills this session – e.g. the Fix our Forest Act.

Jerry Pacheco – New Walsenburg City Administrator introduced himself. The City will be lifting the boil order by Wednesday after recently fixing critical breaks in water lines. Pacheco has 30 years of municipal government experience. He wants to push an agenda for growth and feels the City needs more users on its utility systems to improve revenue streams.

King called a break at 6:58 pm; meeting reconvened at 7:25 pm.

**BILLS:** On a Brown/Sikes **motion**, the board authorized transfer of \$13,000.00 from ColoTrust and payment of the following bills, which total \$13,909.54:

Mountain States Financial: monthly bookkeeping + 1099 forms and filing	\$459.55
Monson, Cummins, Shohet & Farr: mtg, aug plan, exchg storage, Thorne Ranch	\$5,640.75
Dunn Write: contract, mileage, internet, phone, office supplies	\$2,741.22
La Veta Carpentry: monthly website admin	\$250.00
Doug Brgoch: monthly water consultant contract	\$500.00
Applegate Group: aug plan acctg/projection/admin, bd mtg, Thorne, ballast repairs	\$2,865.00
Mace Water & Land: SMAF operations January 2026	\$1,070.81
IOA/Walsenburg Insurance: bond, Mace	\$100.00
San Isabel Electric: monthly usage at SMAF (EFT)	\$217.21
Spanish Peaks Library: monthly rent	\$65.00

At 7:26, there was a Brown/Sikes **motion**, approved by the board, to go into executive session, joined by attorney Farr, consultant Brgoch and engineer Smith, to discuss the Thorne Ranch purchase and sale agreement, pursuant to CRS 24-6-402(4)(a) (purchase, acquisition, lease or sale of real, personal or other property interest). On a Mace/Brown **motion**, approved by the board, the executive session was closed at 7:52 pm, and the regular session reconvened.

On a Mace/Brown **motion**, it was decided to contact BH2 Land Surveying and let them know we would like to have them to perform the ALTA survey on Thorne Ranch if they can adjust their quoted schedule in order to finish the survey within 4-6 weeks after notice to proceed. If that is not possible, we will choose Southern Colorado Surveying Service to do the ALTA survey. Board approved.

There was a Brown/Sikes **motion** to approve filing the 2025 Annual Report to the Court by March 31, 2026 if none of the board members have any suggested changes to it. Board approved.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm.

Scott King, President

Carol Dunn, Secretary