

HUERFANO COUNTY WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

Minutes of Board Meeting July 28, 2025

The monthly meeting of the Huerfano County Water Conservancy District, which had been properly noticed and was available for public participation, was called to order by President Scott King in person at Walsenburg Housing Authority, 220 Russell St, Walsenburg on July 28, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

Directors: Scott King, Jacque Sikes, Kent Mace, David Steffan. Excused: Lonnie Brown.

Secretary: Carol Dunn; **Attorney,** Ryan Farr; **Engineer,** Steve Smith by Zoom.

Guests: Doug Brgoch, Ed Diemer, Pauline Adams, Amos Mace, Kristan Lowe, Lenna Rauber, Dale Lyons; Doug Winter by Zoom.

Agenda: Accepted on a Mace/Steffan **motion**.

Minutes: Minutes of the May 19, 2025 meeting were approved on a Mace/Steffan **motion**.

Financial Reports: Financial reports for July 2025 were accepted as presented on a Mace/Sikes **motion**.

The **audit** by Ronny Farmer was conducted on July 9 at La Veta Town Hall.

Old Business: Thorne Ranch discussion – Farr reported Huerfano County has accepted the MOU with the HCWCD purchase proposal, which will serve as a template for a sales agreement and will be voted on at the Commissioners' 7/29/25 meeting. A Mace/Steffan **motion** was approved for King to "DocuSign" the nonbinding MOU with Huerfano County after approved.

New Business:

Water court case 16CW3074, Spanish Peaks LLC (Perrino marijuana production), finding of reasonable diligence and to make a conditional water right absolute in part; Spanish Peaks Well #1; Huerfano River alluvium; 40 gpm, 50 af/yr conditional. Farr explained what has happened on the case to date. The Board decided to not get involved in this diligence case.

Welton position paper: Welton (Pryor Ditch) abandoned a junior water right to make up for injury to senior water users by change of diversion location; is being asked to conduct an HCU before the court rules. HCWCD stipulated out and was the only opposer to the case.

DWR River Reports: Lenna Rauber reported on the Huerfano: 45 cfs at Manzanares, 12 cfs at Badito, and 2 cfs at I-25; the call is #33. On the Cucharas, Ed Diemer reported: 11.9 cfs at Boyd Ranch, 4.1 at Harrison Bridge, 0 cfs at I-25; the call is #5.

A Sikes/Steffan **motion** was approved to authorize Amos Mace to purchase one more transducer for water measurement at the Wm Craig Ranch.

HUERFANO REGIONAL AUGMENTATION PLAN

Augmentation Water Plan updates – Sheep Mountain reservoir is about full. The river diversion has been cleaned out. Amos is going to work on better fitting and sealing the doors of the pumphouse. SMAF reclamation plan revision – Kent and Steve have been working to get permission from Mined Land Reclamation for alternative seeding in the kochia. It was suggested HCWCD submit a technical revision to the plan.

At the ranch, recharge has slowed down quite a bit because the infiltrators are clogged by algae. Amos reported the metering and calibration problems have been solved. The additional transducer will make the entire system Bluetooth-enabled.

Water Year 2026: Smith gave a summary of aug water commitments.

Flying Rockin' R filled Rainbow Pond – 2 af of tier 2 water are needed. The other 2 ponds will require 4 af, but that is not planned in 2026.

Bear Bottom Ranch requires ½ af of tier 1 water. Tier 3 (excess) is being leased now while waiting for fire suppression eligibility. Bear Bottom wants 4 af next year.

Twin Lakes leased water – Because of dry conditions, HCWCD ran out of exchange potential in June. If the river levels rise, we should be able to exchange 5-6 af.

Congressionally Directed Spending – HCWCD sent Rural Development a revised cost for the ballast repair project. The PER estimate has changed because we can get angled riprap cheaply enough to use that alone, instead of mixing in rounded river rock. Applegate decided we can do an all-riprap project using a pit in Silver Cliff (Tezak) and a hauler from Gardner. Regarding the 25% local match, an application for \$114,800 in Basin WSRF funding has been submitted to the Ark Basin Roundtable Needs Assessment Committee. If it moves forward, it would be discussed at the September ABRT meeting; if approved, funding would come through around March 2026.

Fire Remediation Project – Steffan reported on the tour of the Spring Creek burn scar remediation work with Kelsey Newton, a grad student at CSU. She's researching how fire scar remediation is funded and the details about the cooperative project HCWCD participated in.

Arkansas Basin Roundtable Report: King reported on the July meeting. Nebraska is suing Colorado over the Perkins County Canal; NE has the right to come into CO to develop that water right. Southern states on the Colorado River have agreed to a different way of measuring water available in the River. Colorado Springs citizens recently rejected a large land annexation.

Break – King called a break at 7:13 pm; meeting reconvened at 7:27 pm.

Bills: On a Mace/Sikes **motion**, the board authorized the transfer of up to \$9,500.00 to ColoTrust savings and approved paying the following bills, which total \$14,159.29:

Mountain States Financial: Bookkeeping, June	\$250.00
Monson, Cummins, Shohet & Farr: mtg, aug plan, Thorne, exchg storage, Pryor Ditch	\$5,106.10
Dunn Write: contract, mileage, internet, phone, internet	\$2,422.51
La Veta Carpentry: monthly website admin	\$250.00
monthly water analyst contract	\$250.00
Doug Brgoch: monthly water consultant contract	\$500.00
Mace Water & Land: Operations of SMAF June 2025 + 3 HOB0 MX transducers	\$3,219.93
Applegate Group: Aug plan acctg/projectn/admin, Twin Lakes, SMAF liner, dredging proj	\$553.75
Sadie Wardell: Wm Craig water operations, June	\$570.00
Div Mining Reclamation: annual SMAF permit renewal	\$792.00
San Isabel Electric: monthly usage at SMAF (EFT)	\$180.00
Spanish Peaks Library: monthly rent	\$65.00

At 8:22, there was a Sikes/Steffan **motion**, approved by the board, to go into executive session, joined by attorney Farr and consultant Brgoch to discuss: attorney advice regarding terms and conditions for purchase of land and water rights on Thorne Ranch and to discuss the Badito and Martin ditches. Discussion in the executive session included purchase, acquisition, lease or sale of real, personal or other property interest as in CRS 24-6-402(4)(a); determine positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations, and instructing negotiators pursuant to CRS 24-6-402(4)(e); and conference with an attorney representing the District for the purposes of receiving legal advice on specific legal questions pursuant to CRS 24-6-402(4)(b).

On a Mace/Steffan **motion**, approved by the board, the executive session was closed at 8:50 pm and the regular session reconvened.

There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Scott King, President

Carol Dunn, Secretary