

Wyoming Association of Irrigation Districts (WAID)

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday May 20, 2025

Meeting at 1:00 pm via Zoom

Attendance:

Steve Lynn, Ric Herman, Joan McGraw, Brian Duyck, Jim Mines, Trent Reed, Nathan Graves, Keith Kennedy, and Gail Whitman. Joining the meeting as a guest, House District 34 Representative Pepper Ottman. Pepper is a serving member on the House Agriculture, State and Public Lands & Water Resources Committee.

Meeting was called to order by President, Steve Lynn at 1:05 pm.

Approval of Minutes, Agenda and Treasures Report:

Nathan made the motion to approve the Meeting Agenda as presented. Ric 2nd the motion, the motion carried unopposed.

Ric made the motion to approve the Monthly Board Meeting Minutes for April 15, 2025, at 1:00 pm. Joan 2nd the motion, the motion carried unopposed.

Gail gave the attached Treasurer's Report consisting of the Voucher List, Deposit Lists and the Statement of Account for April to date. Brian made the motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented and pay the bills. Trent 2nd the motion, the motion carried unopposed.

Updates:

Gail shared the number of hits on the WAID Website for April was 9889.

Nowood Watershed Improvement District joined as a member. We now have 19 Members.

Brian gave an update on Farm Family Alliance going to the Pentagon to speak with the head of the Army Core of Engineers. Their purpose is to straighten out the misunderstanding of Waters of the Unites States vs Irrigation Canals.

While in Washington D.C., Steve and Ric Visited the Bureau of Reclamation office and met with Ms. Linnea Melbye, Senior Advisor to the Commissioner, Mr. Travis Yonts, Management Analyst for Operations, and Mr. David Reay, Missouri Basin Regional Liaison. They discussed aging infrastructure and federal funding. WAID sent them a letter thanking them for taking the time to meet with us. They also met with Senators John Barrasso and Cynthia Lummis, during a Meet and Greet, and introduced them to the Wyoming Association of Irrigation District's mission. They were unable to meet with Representative Harriet Hageman because she was in a committee meeting.

Old Business:

Sponsorship rates for the annual convention:

Trent made the motion to set the sponsorship rates at Platinum \$5000, Gold \$3000, Silver \$2000, and Bronze \$1000. Joan 2nd the motion, the motion carried unopposed. Sponsorship levels will be posted on the website with the convention registration. Members of the board will also solicit sponsorship donations.

Committee Reports:

State subdivision law:

Discussion was had on the three options developers have under the statute: 1) abandon the Water Right, 2) move the Water Right, or 3) keep the water right. It was noted that even though they keep the water rights, buildings, corrals, and roads create hard surfaces that are no longer irrigatable. Thus, they are orphaned due to lack of historic use and ultimately abandoned. With today's technology this can be identified and quantified. Adjudicated Rights are at stake. Discussion was had on the solution: 1) Letting the Irrigation Districts bank these water rights and move them to irrigable land within the Irrigation Districts or having the Board of Control make the decision of where to move these water rights. 2) creating a "model covenant" addressing what to do with the water rights. 3) Irrigation Districts setting rules in their regulations on standards, i.e. lots under 35ac must move their water rights to irrigatable land. Thirty-five acres is the limit that the state has set for land to qualify for Ag status.

Protecting Irrigated Farmland: Steve mentioned this topic goes back to the subdivision rules and holding our counties accountable to state statutes. We need to pursue getting Irrigation Districts to sign off on proposed subdivisions in the State Statutes and that "the developer shall certify it met with and made a good faith effort to resolve any conflicts with the irrigation district." There needs to be a general list of the "Burdens and Risks of Liabilities" subdivisions impose on Irrigation Districts as well as the future landowners. Irrigation District conveyances and drains, easements and right of ways need to be noted on Platts.

Easements: County exemptions to the subdivision statutes are a hinderance in getting developers to coordinate with the irrigation districts. It is important that developers understand that land within district boundaries may have Irrigation District easements across property with no water rights. It was also noted there is a disconnect with the realtors and title companies ie "Not their problem," "Buyer Beware."

WAID needs to use the website as a source of information.

New Business

Surveying Member Districts:

Trent made the motion to survey our member districts on their experience with the compliance to the Subdivision law. Nathan 2nd the motion, the motion carried unopposed.

Moving Bank Account:

Discussion was had on using a bank in Casper versus Torrington. Credit Unions were mentioned as a viable choice because they honor other credit union transactions. After July 1st Credit Unions can now take public funds. Gail needs to find the credit union or bank before board will make a formal resolution to open a new account and close the old account.

Open Forum

Steve wanted to remind everyone that the SEO is looking at orphaned water rights due to hard surfaces.

Question was asked where can an Irrigation Districts publish public notices aside from the newspaper? Keith said notice of meetings can be published on their websites.

Upcoming Events for Calendar

Agriculture, State and Public Lands & Water Resources Committee meeting June 10-11
At the NW Community College, Conference Center – Yellowstone Room in Powell WY.
WAID is on the agenda to speak at 10:15 am on the 10th,
Topic of discussion is Preventing Orphaned Water Rights.
Steve, Ric, Brian, Trent, Nathan, and Keith plan to attend.

The Select Water Committee wants to address misuse of irrigation prescriptive easements.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 pm.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday June 17, 2025, at 1:00 pm via Zoom.