



# LEWIS & CLARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

790 Colleen Street • Helena, Montana 59601 • 449-5000 ext. 5

**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**USDA Service Center Conference Room**  
**790 Colleen Street, Helena MT**  
**March 21, 2019 at 1 pm**

**Call to order**—the meeting was called to order by Chairman Jeff Ryan at 1 pm. In attendance were Jeff Ryan, Jeanette Nordahl, Ron Ingersoll, Steve Granzow and Scott Blackman. Also in attendance were Mindy Gauthier, Karl Christians, Dustin Ramoie, Jennifer McBroom, Christian Lehnert and Chris Evans.

Introductions were made.

Motion by Ingersoll to approve the minutes as sent, second by Nordahl; motion carried.  
Motion by Nordahl to approve the financial report as presented and to pay all the bills, second by Ingersoll; motion carried.

### **Correspondence—**

Liability insurance—Evans updated the board on the paperwork about liability insurance.

County budget request—Evans shared the request from the county for our annual budget request. She will get them a copy of our budget along with a request for full funds.

Thank you from Betty Murphy--The board discussed the memorial for Gary Murphy. Nordahl made a motion to donate \$100 to the Dearborn Community Center in Gary's memory, second by Blackman; motion carried.

DNRC notes from Laurie Zeller—the main thing of note is that mileage rates went up the beginning of the year to 58 cents/mile.

### **Public Comment**

Dustin Ramoie was present to talk about the floodplain permitting. He was out yesterday and took a look at the valley. There's not much in the way of water running yet, but things could be setting up to flood. He's been pretty busy with permits this year already.

### **Reports**

**NRCS**—John was attending some training so wasn't here to give a report, but gave us a printed report. AC Mindy Gauthier was present to give the board some updates and discuss the Montana Focused Conservation program with them. John be doing a national detail on forestry practices review.

Mindy is covering the offices while John is gone. John had submitted a TIP for the new funding program. It's a 3-year proposal for hazardous fuel reduction on forested areas. The target area is North Hills and Colorado Gulch. There's still the Capital 360 pool of funds for forestry too. Granzow asked about whether the lawsuit in effect near Colorado Gulch will affect the 360. Mindy didn't know. There were 7 TIPs approved in the state:

Big Horn County - Ventenata Invasive Grass Control; Big Horn and Yellowstone Counties - Irrigation Improvement Project; Broadwater County - Elkhorn Cooperative Management Area Range Health and Conifer Encroachment Treatment; Lewis and Clark County - Hazardous Fuels Reduction; Lake County - Irrigation Improvement Project; Lincoln County - South Tobacco Forest Resiliency Project; Stillwater County - Pasture Monoculture Diversification Project.

Christians asked if the TIPs were difficult to put together. Mindy said that a lot of the planning had already been completed for those that were approved. The technical and design work was pretty much already completed.

Mindy gave some background on the MFC program and indicated that there will likely be some changes as they work their way through the initial roll-out. Karl asked about the facilitator training that NRCS did last week. Those trained will be available throughout the state to help with facilitation. Requests for facilitation can be made through the DC or the AC's in the state for the planning meetings.

Mindy gave some additional background on the new Farm Bill and how the program delivery has changed with the different programs. NRCS is looking at utilizing CSP, CIG and some of their other programs for projects that may have traditionally been funded through EQIP. The other EQIP fund pools like high tunnel, pollinator, beginning farmer/ranch, socially disadvantaged farmer/rancher etc.

NRCS is also looking at hiring some additional administrative staff to try to allow FO staff to get out into the field more of their time.

Evans noted the flyer in supervisor packets with scheduled meetings for the community planning concerns as well as a survey on the back for people who cannot attend those meetings but would like to provide feedback.

Evans requested that if they are available, it would be great to have at least one supervisor at each meeting to give an introduction to the meeting. It will be critical to have landowners in attendance or the special interest groups like watersheds, TU, etc. will be driving the priorities. Evans also mentioned that as a CD, we can take the feedback and incorporate it into our Annual Plan of Operations, with the goal of finding funding that is outside the NRCS funds to augment our Cost Share Program, basically turning it into a mini-EQIP program for area landowners who opt to not participate or can't get into a TIP due to lack of interest in their area.

Also discussed is the NACD CTA funding source and Evans noted that it would be helpful to have a fund pool similar to that which wouldn't be tied to EQIP (and therefore TIPs) for CDs to access for small projects for landowners who can't get funding for whatever reason. Mindy thought that would be an interesting idea to pursue.

**SRWG** – written report from Tracy, comments from Martin. Motion by Blackman to approve \$1000 as a sponsorship for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary event in August, second by Nordahl; motion carried.

**MRCDC** – there were 2 written reports from Rachel Frost for the Missouri River CD Council.

**WQPD/ LHWG** – Jennifer was present to talk about WQPD and LHWG. The Tryan project started up this week again with the nicer weather. There are 3 landowners involved in that project. They finished the Tryan section before the cold snap and even got the fencing in. They started back up on Tuesday. The project is going a bit further than they'd anticipated due to flood damage from last year. There was an eagle scout project with a 7<sup>th</sup> grader who was able to cut about 3500 willows for the project. They cut the willow off Gary Burnham's property. Jennifer thanked the board for the additional funds to move the project forward.

Flooding is a concern this year. The Valley Flood Committee is meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup> at

6:45 at the Moose. Public works is going to start cleaning out culverts and ditches. Dan Karlin may have further details on the agenda for the meeting.

WQPD has a floodplan/workplan. They ramped up the monitoring for the flood potential this year. They have 17 or 18 wells that they're getting groundwater level measurements on. Those results will be posted to their website. There's a link to a story map that has groundwater data for the whole district that is similar to the groundwater level map that they've done for some of the subdivisions. They're also looking at the surface water in the Helena Valley, keeping an eye on the levels of the ice.

April 11 is the Watershed Group meeting. After 3 or 4 years of trying, they may finally be getting their non-profit status. The meeting will likely be at Montana Wild.

**Weed District**—Christian was present to talk about what they've been up to. They're working on getting the shop up and ready. They're working with Jenny Garcin at the county trying to get some whitetop education outreach put together. They are working with the county attorney on the noncompliance issues. They're looking for spray crews for the summer, preferably people who can spray into fall.

There are still funds in the County's Alice Creek grant for weed concerns. They are also doing some work on Forest Service through the Capital 360 program.

### **Supervisor Reports**

Since the meeting was running long, the board members opted to not do individual reports. Associate Supervisor David Martin had submitted a written report.

### **Old Business**

Evans updated the board on the progress with the East Helena High School CTE/Vo-Ag program. With about 110 registrations for the freshman year, about 24 had submitted registrations for the agriculture class which is really good. Christians also told the board about the donation to the program by Julie Dooling who had some leftover funds in her campaign fund. She had a limited time to donate the funds, so wrote the check to the Conservation District to hold for the CTE/FFA program. At the last meeting, Superintendent Whitmoyer and Dan Rispens, the principal for the Middle School, asked the committee if they would be willing to be advisory to all of the CTE courses, including Business Economics, the Industrial Trades and Technology, and Family Consumer Sciences. The Council agreed to do that at least for now.

### **New Business**

MACD Dues request--after some discussion about where we are with MACD and our continued concerns, motion by Granzow to pay ½ of our calculated dues now, with ¼ after the Spring Board meeting depending on progress, and the final ¼ after the convention based on further progress. Second by Blackman, motion carried.

CD Cost Share Program discussion--Given that we were short on time, the board has opted to have Evans summarize the applications we've received and send that summary to the board for their review. At some point we will need to set up a committee to deal with these.

223 applications—Motion by Granzow to approve sponsorship of both 223 grant applications, second by Blackman; motion carried.

AIS Grant—Evans summarized the goal of the grant; motion by Nordahl, second by Ingersoll to approve sponsorship; motion carried.

MWCC t-shirt project and partnership program buy in—Evans shared the t-shirt design with the board and there was some discussion about the value of buying into the Partnership Program for

helping to fund small projects. Motion by Granzow, second by Nordahl to approve \$100 for the t-shirt project with the idea that there will be some t-shirts purchased, and to pay the Partnership fee; motion carried.

### **310 Permit Applications**

#### LC-01-19-Broken O

Location: Sun River

When: 2/5/19 to 4/15/19

Purpose: Bank stabilization upstream of private bridge

Dimensions: 475 feet to extend 5-10 feet from existing toe into the river bed

Materials: 2-4 foot granite boulders, Willow stakes, 500, 4-12 foot long, coir fabric, geotextile

Team report comments: Recommended approval with modifications: Work in the dry/no-flow by temporary reroute of channel. Use NRCS Specs. Try to finish by April 1 to limit impact to fisheries. Really want MARS at mitigation to use funds in Sun River Drainage. Waive 15 days.

Decision: Motion by Blackman to approve as modified with the additional modification of no geotextile fabric where willows will be put, second by Nordahl; motion carried.

#### LC-02-19 Jeff Claassen

Location: Spokane Creek

When: late summer/fall 2019

Purpose: Bank restoration/stabilization from flood in 2018; demo project

Dimensions: 300'

Materials: willow wall, rock from the site, coir fabric

Equipment: excavator and truck

Team report comments: Recommended approval with the following modifications:

1. Require Turbidity mitigation (silt fence)
2. No instream work from 10/1 to 11/1 for brown trout spawning time frame

Decision: motion by Nordahl, second by Ingersoll to approve as modified; motion carried.

Ryan recused himself from voting. Motion carried

#### LC-04-19 Probert

Location: Sun River

When: 5/1 to 9/1

Purpose: stop steam bank damage

Dimensions: 200 LF of bank

Materials: 30 CY rock, large

Equipment: Dump truck

Team report comments: project as planned will cause more problems. Barbs have not tended to work on the Sun, including at a project a few miles upstream. Riprap will definitely cause problems up and downstream. Given landowner desire to do something, the minimal work as follows is recommended:

1. Jetties are a problem on the Sun so only one at the beginning of erosion
2. 15-20' keyed in at beginning of erosion
3. Barb at key site
4. Willow lifts approximately 50-100' down

Landowner will likely need help to get this done.

Decision: motion by Blackman to table pending Jeff Ryan having a chance to take a look at the project, second by Granzow; motion carried.

LC-06-19-Broken OLocation: Sun RiverWhen: 4/1 to 11/15Purpose: to improve post 2018 flood river channel conveyance and aesthetics. Also to reduce a potential rising flood level adjacent to existing house.Dimensions: 294 LF of bank starting upriver from confluence of Elk Creek and Sun River.

Temporary gravel and earth haul road will be used just north and upriver of existing house.

Materials:Equipment: Excavator and 6-wheel off road dump truckTeam report comments:

Decision: There was discussion about the comments from FWP and further discussion based on the plan and drawings. Removal of the gravel bar that was deposited will be likely to make the bank and therefore the house, more prone to erosive damage. Ryan said it's his opinion that this project is primarily an aesthetic one and that the amount of work proposed simply for aesthetics is detrimental to the stream. Motion to deny by Blackman, second by Nordahl; motion carried.

For EME-30-18, LC-41-18, LC-03-19, LC-05-19, LC-07-14-19, motion by Blackman to table pending inspection, second by Ingersoll; motion carried.

**Other Business**

There was brief discussion circling back to Mindy Gauthier's report on Montana Focused Conservation. Supervisors Blackman and Ingersoll indicated that they have had little success with obtaining EQIP funds over the past several years, especially with changes made to the program. They would rather do projects on their own. There's little doubt that this change will further disenfranchise most agricultural landowners in the County.

Ryan mentioned that he has been in correspondence with our Area National Association of Conservation District representative, Sunni Heikes-Knapton. He has discussed the Board's concerns with her as well as the idea of finding some funding for CDs to obtain for landowner projects. There was agreement across the board that there's little chance that NRCS would veer from this course, so the CD needs to be looking for project funds to help landowners with their project needs as we are able.

Evans said that a letter to NACD from the Board is always an option to at least go on record with the Board's concerns. There is also the possibility of working with other concerned CDs across the state and taking the issue to MACD as a group. Karl Christians said that he's been approached by several Conservation Districts who would be interested in working collaboratively about the issue.

**Calendar of upcoming events**

March 25-10 a.m. to 3 pm 310 committee meeting, DNRC

March 27-SWCDMI Education Grant Deadline

March 31-Current County TIPS signup deadline

April 11-Meeting in Helena

April 25-223 Grant Deadline

April-TBD-next Sun River planning meeting with CDs/possibly RCPP

May 2-6-8 pm Public Planning Meeting Lincoln Sr. Center

May 9-Augusta Board meeting  
May 9-6-8 pm Public Planning Meeting Augusta  
May 16-6-8 pm Public Planning Meeting East Valley Fire Hall  
May 17-Flood Awareness Day, East Valley Middle School  
May 23-6-8 pm Public Planning Meeting Lincoln

**Announcements**

**Next meeting** – April 11, 2019 Helena 1 pm

**Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm.**

**APPROVED**

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Presiding Officer

Date

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Recorder

Date