



LEWIS & CLARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

Regular Meeting Minutes Via Conference Call Due to COVID-19 Pandemic May 13, 2020 1 pm

Call to order – The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jeff Ryan at 1:01 pm.

In attendance were Jeff Ryan, Ron Ingersoll, Jeanette Nordahl, Steve Granzow, Stan Frasier and Sarah Howe-Cobb. Also in attendance were Emma Kelsick, Connor Mertz, Autumn Christenson, Tracy Wendt, Jennifer McBroom, Jason Saari, Karl Christians, Mary Hendrix, Eric Trum and Chris Evans.

Introductions were made.

Motion by Howe-Cobb to approve minutes as sent, second by Ingersoll; motion carried.

Motion by Nordahl to approve the financial statement as presented and to pay all the bills, second by Howe-Cobb; motion carried.

Correspondence-letter from SWCDMI increasing the dues amount. Motion by Granzow to approve, second by Nordahl; motion carried.

Public Comment-none

Reports

NRCS – Jason Saari was on the phone to make a report for NRCS. He is covering the office through August. Jason has worked in the Deer Lodge NRCS office for the last 6 years. The Helena office is working on pre-approving applications for EQIP. New software is being problematic nation-wide. There are 3 applications for the fuels reduction TIP in the northern part of the county. 13 applications for the Capitol 360 program; there is an application deadline in mid-June for CSP. They are now required to report every Friday about any knowledge of milk-dumping or livestock killing for national statistic reporting. Ryan asked if there has been any word about the building re-opening; Saari said there hasn't been anything.

SRWG – Wendt was on the call to talk about a few things. The Pull Your Share program was cancelled for this year since the schools remain closed. Tracy and Emma took a trip up into the watershed. The Weed Whacker Rodeo is still planned, and they'll practice the social distancing rules. They'll be sending people to the sites that the schools had planned to cover. The CMZ mapping for the Sun River is underway. It's a little bit behind schedule but public meetings will be in early June. The RCAC committee meeting is next week when Wendt and Evans will be presenting on an application to extend that project up Elk Creek.

Emma Kelsick gave a report on her activities on the Rain Barrel project for Cascade CD. She is working on compiling a User's Guide for the Rolling Rivers Trailers for the trailers across the State.

MRCDC – Autumn said that Kyle Tackett had participated in the call to talk about the partnership of the MRCDC with NRCS. The River Rendezvous has been cancelled for this year.

WQPD – McBroom said there was a WQPD meeting last month. They are expecting an increase

in delinquent tax payments. They are working on expansion of the eastern North Hills assessment to include some of the bigger subdivisions that are seeing major water draw-downs. The Tryan project completion was done including re-seeding. There was some required grant work with DEQ that needed to be finished but McNeal had some major health issues so hadn't been able to finish that. Frasier said that they also discussed the Grizzly Gulch project.

LHWG – the new chair of the watershed group will probably be at the June meeting to talk about changes at the Watershed.

Weed District – no report.

Big Elk Divide Restoration Committee – Eric Trum presented information on the group which is part of the Forest Collaborative which is composed of different user groups, including industry and recreationists and others. Trum said that if the funding that they are seeking is received, the CD could potentially be part of the effort that they are working on. The goal is collaborative work on forest land, National Forest as well as private land. Trum is requesting a support letter from the CD. Frasier asked for some details on the restoration projects and what they entail. Trum said that there is potential for conifer encroachment projects, wildfire reduction as well as watershed restoration type projects. Frasier said that he knows that the Elkhorn Working Group has been proposing removal of the conifer encroachment for grazing improvement, but it's supposed to be a wildlife management area, not for cows. Trum said that they are a different group. Frasier would like have a look at the project list before he'd support it. Trum has sent the link to Ryan for the board to review. Ryan asked when they'd want a support letter, and Trum said probably before June if the board is in agreement of it. Howe-Cobb said that she was curious about the funding, specifics about if they get the funding how does he envision the CD working with the group. It would likely be similar to the Capitol 360 project, where the CD/NRCS office work with private landowners to let them know about the opportunities available.

Supervisor Reports

Ryan said that he has been working on the Little Prickly Pear Creek willow planting on the section that had been restored. Jason Mullen, Jeff Ryan and his grandson and some others worked on willow facines. Two weeks ago Ryan saw that the water was at bankfull and the work done was holding. Ryan thanked the Baucus family for letting them do some work on that area.

Granzow-no report – PP is right up to its banks if not over.

Nordahl said that the water is just coming up and she found a violation this morning in the Lincoln area that she shared with Evans.

MACD/SWCDMI – David Martin has been following activities at MACD. He had emailed a brief update to Evans. It looks like MACD will be doing some leadership training similar to what was done in January, at the area meetings this fall.

Elk Creek Flood Task Force – Connor Mertz and Evans have been organizing a riparian management workshop. The event is planned for July 21 at the Youth Center. Dr. Clayton Marlow will be the main speaker. Allen McNeal is planning to discuss site selection, natural flooding cycles and their role in riparian systems. Connor and Chris applied for and were successful in getting a small grant from SWCDM to help with costs. Representatives from SWCDM, SRWG and NRCS plan to be at the event to discuss programs. Ryan said that with the state re-opening guidelines, there's still a chance that we can have the workshop. Evans and Stacey Barta will be discussing Montana Youth Range Camp around June 1 and Evans will make the call on this event at that time.

East Helena CTE – Christians updated the board on the CTE program. The group is working on a community needs assessment for the Perkins grant program.

Healthy Watershed Consortium – Autumn Christenson was on the line to talk about the program. They just finished up the 1st quarterly report which Evans sent out to the board. Christenson highlighted some of the most recent work, including the Naked River Banks project. Ryan drove up to meet with them on the project and said that the project they’re looking at is on an inside bend, lower energy. They’re planning willow soil lifts, a willow wall and other green measures. Autumn said that she will be assisting Tenlee in getting materials for the facine that they’re planning. The producer site will be the Spokane Creek project that the Lewis & Clark CD will be doing and Autumn said that the Ranching for Rivers program can assist with solar pump costs.

Autumn will be focusing a lot more on the Ranching for Rivers program, including grazing planning etc. If anyone has some feedback for her on grazing plans, please reach out to Autumn. Autumn has been in contact with Tracy and Paula for the irrigation TIP they’re working on for the Sun River Area. Christians said that she should check with NRCS for grazing plan assistance.

New Business

NACD CTA funding application – motion by Granzow to approve the application, second by Nordahl; motion carried.

Part Time Hire – Evans reminded the board that we will need to purchase a new computer system when we are ready to hire our new person, and there was a discussion about benefits being offered for anything 20 hours/week or more.

Permissive Mill Levy-Motion by Granzow to increase the Health Benefit for an additional person, second by Howe-Cobb; motion carried.

310 Permit Applications

EME-01-20 Ingersoll-Tabled pending inspection

Extension Request LC-24-19 Evans – motion by Granzow to approve a 1-year extension, second by Howe-Cobb; motion carried.

LC-09-20 Northwestern Energy – there was no inspection requested by FWP or the supervisor in the area. Motion by Ryan to approve waiving the 15-day waiting period, second by Ingersoll; motion carried.

Other Business

Evans updated the board on what she’s been doing working from home. She has completed the requirements for becoming a notary public, only waiting on the stamp. She has been taking minutes for the Career Technical Education effort for the East Helena High School, for the Education Committee for MACD, and the Stream Restoration Committee. At some point next week, she and Karl Christians will get the Rolling River Trailer moved to our office and will verify that things are operating correctly

She received and signed the Pollinator Grant contract for the PPLT project on behalf of Jeff Ryan.

In coordination with Stacey Barta, she will make the decision around June 1 on the Montana Youth Range Camp and the Augusta Riparian Workshop. If Social Distancing is still required, we’ll likely postpone to next year.

The RCAC meeting is May 20 – we have 1 application for the CMZ mapping for the Elk Creek System, supporting the SRWG effort.

In addition to all of that, daily work is getting done, 310 permits are being handled and this has been a banner year for the wildflower seed program.

Granzow had a question about a phone number for our board. Frasier said that he's been using Zoom for the fire department meetings and he likes it. The advantage is that you can see everyone and it's more responsive.

Consensus to try it month to month.

Motion to adjourn 2:19 pm.

Announcements

Next meeting – Conf. Call? Time 1pm--should be Augusta Youth Center but will probably be via Zoom call. July 9th at 8:30 at the Dearborn Community Center and 9:30 in September at Lambkins.

APPROVED

Presiding Officer

Date

Recorder

Date