



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 August 13, 2020 1pm

Call to order – The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jeff Ryan at 1 pm. In attendance were Jeff Ryan, Jeanette Nordahl, Sarah Howe-Cobb, Steve Granzow, Stan Frasier, John Baucus. Also in attendance were David Martin, Karl Christians, Becky Ayre, Connor Mertz, Katie Vivian, Autumn Christenson, Scott Kuehn, Emma Kelsick, Tracy Wendt and Chris Evans.

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

Motion by Nordahl to approve the financial statement and to pay the outstanding bills, second by Granzow: motion carried.

Correspondence-Evans shared the thank you notes that we have received.

Public Comment-none

Reports

NRCS – Becky was on the call and introduced herself as the new DC for the Helena Field Office. The Helena FO got funding for the last of the fuel mitigation contracts.

SRWG – Tracy Wendt with the SRWG said she sent out a newsletter last week. She recommended that the board check their junk files if they didn't get it. They changed up the Weed Whacker rodeo to comply with the social distancing and had a good turnout with about 25 people. A lot of attendees were asking how to make it even bigger next year. The Group is looking at a way to support the weed program better. Wendt and Evans may be working together for a grant to support their weed efforts. GID's board meeting last month brought up some issues with off-roading. They worked together on a press release for that issue. GID was concerned about potential damage to the infrastructure and will be putting up some signs. There are hoot owl restrictions on fishing due to temperature and low flow conditions on the Sun. Wendt met with a ranch hand at the Broken O who wants to use drones to collect flood information and is working on his Masters degree. She may be looping Evans into the discussion with him as that develops. The CMZ for the Sun River has been posted to the website. The next phase is to extend that up Elk Creek. The RCAC is meeting later this month so we will hopefully get the rest of the funding for that effort. SRWG's Water management working group will be meeting the 25th. Stream gages and prioritization for gages will be items for discussion.

Emma Kelsick gave an update on the Users Guide for the Rolling Rivers Trailer. She met with Martin, Evans and John Chase from Cascade CD as well as Connor Mertz to look at the Helena unit for specifics on that trailer. She is working on another draft of the users guide which will be helpful for an upcoming meeting of the sponsors. The Rain Barrel workshop was very successful and they sold all of their barrels.

MRCDC – Christians gave a brief report on the MRCDC. CDs on the lower end are still trying

to work through some issues with the ACOE plan to drop the flows. The Council had been working with the Corps to produce an EIS. They wanted to increase flows to attract the spawning sturgeon and then drop them down to 4000cfs, but then changed that to 8000cfs. A major concern was that they'd leave a lot of the irrigators high and dry. They often have to dredge out the pump sites anyway. The Council is doing a landowner survey to determine issues that they are having. The virus has put a bit of a damper on some of the Council activities but Liv Stavick has had a good opportunity to work with landowners.

Ryan said that one of the things that the council has been working with is the Naked Riverbank and the Living on the Bank projects.

WQPD— Ryan is back on that board as a representative of the CD. The last meeting was cancelled.

LHWG-no report

Weed District—No report

Supervisor Reports

Ryan-he and Drake went up to a homeowner's association gathering doing a facine installation, along with some of the BSWC members. Spokane Creek Project-the survey should be completed tomorrow for the floodplain permitting.

Granzow-he said that not much is going on in his area except for the subdivision that is going in between the new high school and the grade school.

Christians--said that the school superintendent in East Helena got the area seeded that needed to be reestablished. He'd asked about getting some weeds knocked down. Christians said that he cut them for them and baled them up. He said that they got a pretty good stand of vegetation. The lower part that is down by the creek the school is hoping to use as part of the FFA effort. The County Planning board recommended approval of the valley wide zoning. There weren't very many proponents at the meetings, but they recommended approval anyway. The Commissioners goal is open space and Christians believes that it is putting a burden on the landowners.

Baucus-he says it's been really quiet, other than lots of hoppers. Little Prickly Pear is dropping fast.

Nordahl-the fire up Dalton is pretty much nothing to worry about at this point. It's been windy and the water in the Blackfoot is dropping fast.

Howe-Cobb-GID is draining the Nilan Reservoir to do some work on the infrastructure.

MACD/SWCDMI—Martin updated the board on the status of our request for good standing with the organization. After some background discussion on updates to our major issues with MACD, he said he thinks they're doing more good things than we know about, they're just making us work hard to find the good stuff. MACD seems to want full dues payment up front, especially from the CDs with the bigger budgets, and CDs are supposed to pay the dues, regardless of performance. The workplan has dragged on for 2 and ½ years, the fact that they've had to redo the board trainings meaning they're paying for things twice, so Martin thinks they aren't really looking at performance as a real issue to tie to justification for dues. For the last year he's tracked their activities on the conference calls and read their minutes. First of all, he has trouble--when he reads the minutes--recognizing that they are reflecting the same meeting that he attended. If we want a true picture of them as a board and what they are doing and saying, we almost need to listen to the meetings instead of or in addition to reading the minutes. This last meeting, there were some comments about our letter that had been made during the meeting that weren't in the minutes. The general gist of their discussion was about not

wanting to give LCCD special treatment; that they don't like LCCD micromanaging them; and they really don't want any oversight. The second thing that came up was in regard to criteria used to determine whether a district is in good standing. Simpson referred Martin and CCCD Chair Gayla Wortman to the bylaws for that criteria. Upon reviewing the bylaws, Martin found that the only thing mentioned is lack of service and financial concerns. They also said that they denied us good standing because they need to know how much funding they'll have for the year. Our letter did refer to financial concerns since we are looking at building capacity. They didn't respond to that concern directly. They never responded to our initial dues letter early in 2020. They're sending a clear message that dues are a mandatory entitlement for them. In their meetings they keep implying that because the bigger districts aren't paying their dues, they can't hire a good executive director. The tone during their meetings is not particularly professional. They are not checking each other during the meetings. We have until September 1 to pay full dues in order to be in good standing. Their denial was unanimous.

Evans interjected that as far as she can determine from the current bylaws, no good standing means that we do not have a vote at the area meeting. Simpson had called this morning and he and Dean Rogge would be willing to meeting with us to determine what our issues are. Evans wondered how many letters we actually have to send to get the message across.

Granzow had been on the MACD and was in line to become president but resigned because of his regular job. Since then, he's noticed that the board has been less inclusive and seems to have moved more to exclusivity. The bylaws have been under review since Carlson left as ED and it has taken over 7 years to get those completed. Granzow would like to just leave MACD out of everything and move forward with our own thing. Evans noted that every version of the bylaws in the last 10 years has gotten increasingly "pay to play" in spite of what they say to CDs about not being "all about dues". Granzow said we paid full dues for years and years and didn't see much out of them.

Martin interjected in regard to bylaws, they seem to not even know what is in their bylaws. Just the simple election process at the area meetings gets bungled every year. Martin said that Evans continuing with the Education committee would be a good thing. That committee is really taking off. Ultimately the trust between us and MACD has been broken and until they're ready to repair the relationship, it's pointless to continue. Any discussion with them should focus on our relationship with dues discussion coming later. We should take our nearly \$10,000 in dues and go get good conservation on the ground for the county. Granzow agreed that getting conservation on the ground is our first priority as a CD.

Evans asked if the board wants her to tell them that we want to meet with them. Martin said that Simpson and Rogge might be in town with the new ED having been hired. Meeting in person would likely be better than a Zoom. Ryan said that we need a motion from someone to not pay the rest of our dues for 2020. Motion by Granzow to not pay any more dues for 2020 and put 2021 dues payment on hold til further notice, second by Frasier. Motion carried. Evans said her opinion is that if we do meet with them, unless they're ready to have a conversation about the issues and not dues, there's

little point to meeting with them.

Elk Creek Flood Task Force—On hold for the time being. Evans anticipates that with the new CTA person, things might take off with landowners. Other than that, Wendt already mentioned the 2nd round of 223 money we're attempting for the CMZ on Elk Creek.

East Helena CTE—We'll be having another meeting soon and it's planned at this time to be held in person, with a tour of the high school.

Healthy Watershed Consortium—Autumn gave a brief report on what they've been up to in the past quarter. Ranching for Rivers has a couple of projects on the ground in the western part of the state. She is working on a packet for the Technical Assistance leaders. The Naked Riverbanks Campaign: has made some great strides in the last few months. They have 2 demo sites going on right now. An NRCS person out of Great Falls approached them on some issues on the Missouri River which could be expanding that project. They've been doing a lot of work with the CRP program. She offered assistance to Lewis and Clark County on any of the CRP. If the Helena FO needs some outreach help on the TIPS side of things, she'd be able to do that. Connor Mertz gave an update on the Riparian Management Workshop that he's been working on. They are looking at a different format of training for that type of event, creating a story map for the SRWG efforts. He thanked Dave Martin, Emma Kelsick and Chris Evans for the training on the use of the Trailer this month. He helped out with an event in Manhattan. There wasn't a huge turnout but they got an opportunity to really work with some of the kids who did attend. He'll get us some photos of that event for our records.

Old Business

NACD CTA job—Evans asked the board if any of them would like to review applications and/or help with interviews. Ryan, Nordahl and Martin indicated an interest.

Part time position with the CD- Evans requested the approval to purchase a computer system for that position. With the plans to look into providing technical services, it would be good to have a system that handle Arc. Motion by Granzow to approve purchase of laptop and up to 2 monitors, second by Baucus; motion carried.

New Business

Pollinator for Area 6-Evans told the board about the initiative that Area 6 has been working on. We are signed up for a couple of acres of seed for a pollinator effort. More details to come.

Email opportunity for board-with the new domain name for the CD, we have the opportunity to set up email addresses for the board managed through that domain. Evans asked that supervisors let her know if they're interested.

Covid-19 Expenses--Evans said that Ryan had asked about the increased costs for some of us for data limits, etc. with the Coronavirus situation. Wendt said that MWCC has funding that may be available for the CD if they're a Watershed Partner. Motion by Granzow that CD supervisors and staff can submit for those expenses on the travel/reimbursement form, going back to March; second by Howe-Cobb; motion carried.

Soil walk idea-Evans was approached by someone from NRDC with the idea of doing a soil walk. They were discussing the possibility with Tim Dusenberry. They were just interested in seeing if the CD would be willing to give some support. Consensus was initially yes, but Evans should request that they come back to the board with actual costs.

310 Permit Applications

LC-03-19 GID--Howe-Cobb and Vivian went onsite with Erling Juel from GID. The concrete grout on the application was missed during the permitting process since it was only noted in one place on the design. There was no concrete grout on the materials list. The inspection team

recommended that the loose concrete grout needs to be removed. There was discussion about the reasons that the CD doesn't like seeing grout. GID's perspective is that they like to have their structures clear of vegetation because it makes maintenance easier. Motion by Ryan to write a letter to GID about the materials listing in the future, the use of rip rap and specifics for rip rap in the future, including dirty rock, no geotextile fabric, and incorporation of willow and other plants with the rock. Howe-Cobb said that GID really likes using concrete in their projects. Frasier said that we need to make it clear to them that the Board decides what happens with projects.

Update on the Meyer brick dam – Follow up with the County Attorney office.

EME-01-20 Ingersoll-remains tabled pending inspection

CP-02-20-Renck-Oro Fino Creek. Frasier went out on this inspection with Strainer. The landowner excavated the streambank to use fill for the culvert which is undersized. He needs to remove the culvert, restore the streambank to original as much as possible and revegetate remove culvert. And we need a plan with a permit application. Follow up inspection. Motion by motion by Frasier, second by Granzow. Motion carried.

LC-16-20-Mosley – motion by Ryan to approve with FWP modification second by Nordahl, waiving the 15-day waiting period; motion carried.

LC-17-20 Remer – Baucus went out on the site inspection with Strainer. The landowner wanted to remove the debris and grass and willows with an excavator. Motion by Granzow to approve with modifications, second by Nordahl; motion carried.

LC-18-20 Kuehn- Scott Kuehn was on the call for the meeting and gave some background on his proposed project. A 1925 Mining Shovel needs to be removed from the site to be relocated to a museum. Motion to approve with Uthe's recommendations by Nordahl, second by Howe-Cobb; motion carried.

LC-19-20 Weltzien – motion by Granzow to approve, second by Nordahl; motion carried.

LC-20-20 Spring Creek Landowners-Waiting on a site inspection

Next meeting – September 10, 2020 at 1 pm via Zoom.

Ryan won't be at the September meeting. Someone else will have to run the meeting most likely.

Motion to adjourn by Nordahl at 2:58.

APPROVED

Presiding Officer _____ Date _____

Recorder _____ Date _____