



LEWIS & CLARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

**REGULAR MEETING
Via Zoom Conferencing
December 10, 2020 1 p.m.**

The meeting was called to order by chairman Jeff Ryan at 1pm. In attendance were Jeff Ryan, Steve Granzow, Jeanette Nordahl, Stan Frasier, Ron Ingersoll, John Baucus and Sarah Howe-Cobb. Also in attendance were Karl Christians, David Martin, Chris Carparelli, Christian Lehnert, Autumn Christenson, Tracy Wendt, Andrew Kretschmer, Connor Mertz and Chris Evans.

Motion by Nordahl to approve the November minutes as sent. Second by Frasier; motion carried.

Motion by Nordahl to approve the financial statement as presented and to pay the outstanding bills, second by Ingersoll; motion carried.

Correspondence

There was none

Public Comment

There was none

Reports

NRCS-Andrew gave a brief report on what the NRCS office is up to. They just wrapped up CSP and are looking at TIPS, working right now with the HVID on some lateral projects. They may be postponing that one until next year.

SRWG-Tracy Wendt made a report for the watershed. Her main efforts at the moment are on grant reporting and planning for 2021. Muddy Creek RFP is going to be going out soon.

They've also had some follow up meetings from the water management working group. The CMZ project is on schedule. She sent out a year end newsletter with a fundraising request.

Connor Mertz is working on a story map for the watershed and she is working with Jeff Ryan on a volunteer willow planting project. Connor will be working part time for the SRWG and they will be reimbursing Lewis and Clark CD for his time and expenses.

MRCDC- Ryan made a report on the MRCDC, they had an executive meeting on December 1. Jim Simpson was on the call and mentioned that MACD is gearing up for the legislative session,

they'll be looking for \$80,000 for CDs that don't have enough funding. They also discussed the losses to the Conservation District's Bureau and what is next with that. MRCDC is concerned and wanted to have a meeting with Mark Bostrom to discuss the urgent need to fill positions at the Bureau. There's talk about moving the Bureau remainder under Autumn Coleman's shop, temporarily but there are concerns that it wouldn't be a temporary measure. There's concern that this seemed like a big surprise, and that there's been a lack of discussion with partners.

WQPD-Ryan said that they met on December 1 via zoom. Ryan brought up the issue about the session and if they're dealing with outreach. They are doing a video discussing their projects. Susan Good Geise tried to convince Jeff Ryan to get on the Zoning Panel. He declined, mainly due to the time requirements and also, he didn't think the CD should be too close to that situation at the moment. If other board members might be interested, they can reach out to the county commission.

LHWG-Evans had a discussion with Erin Wall, Connor will be keeping track of them as well.

Weed District-Christian Lehnert was on to make a report. He had some trouble getting spray crews hired on last spring. They did end up having a good year. They were able to get back out on some of MDT's highways and got a large portion of all the county roads sprayed at least once this year. Noncompliance wasn't as bad this year. They'd been averaging over 200 cases per year and were under 200 this year. He was able to get a chemical cost share program approved for this fiscal year. Susan Suter retired from the office in August so he hired a new office assistant at the end of the season. The hiree is working out really well, her name is Hallie Kellerman. She previously worked for the Montana Conservation Corps. He missed doing Ag Days and other events this year due to Covid. The cost share program, it's only \$250, so if anyone knows anyone who may be interested, send them to the Weed District. Evans asked Christian to send details on their cost share program and she'll put it in the newsletter coming up. Evans asked Christian to keep us in mind for the next year's planning when it comes to education events.

Healthy Watershed Consortium-Autumn Christenson said that things are a bit slow at the moment with the holidays. She said that in regard the Ranching for Rivers potential with PPLT, she's been keeping tabs on that situation. They're going to start with a grazing management plan and will be working with Stacy Barta. For Naked Riverbanks, they're going to have a core partners' meeting after the new year. She's still working on the contact for Jeanette for the person living in Lincoln about the potential weed management TIP. The Two Dot project brought up the idea of doing a similar Naked Riverbanks project. She added that the Healthy Watershed end of year report will be going out next week. Connor Mertz had a question about the Naked Riverbanks, homeowner's association project status. Ryan said he was copied on an email from Tenlee about waiting for leaf off on the willow. It sounds like the floodplain permit may be holding that up a bit. He hasn't heard back from them on whether or not they're cutting willow.

MACD/SWCDM-Evans had a brief update, she has Sarah Howe-Cobb's 5 year cert and pin, There was a funding plan request for comment on the legalized marijuana funds--Supervisors are asked to get comments to Evans to return to them.

Martin said that the technical side of the convention was phenomenal. Kay Webb from Little Beaver CD did the technical side for them. They had over 200 people on at some points. The merger was approved and the bylaws are done. Martin said they still had problems with the parliamentary procedure portion of the meetings. Their framework seems to be improving and the direction seems good. Rebecca is a very thoughtful listener who participates and gives feedback, and it's nice to have an ED who gives such good consideration to things. Ryan met Rebecca at an in-person meeting and agrees that she is a great fit for that office.

Supervisor Reports

Jeff Ryan said that he took part in the Two Dot installation process. Connor and Andrew did some willow cutting. There's a time lapse video available that Evans will upload to the YouTube channel. Evans will send that out when it's ready. A Lewis and Clark County landowner helped out and was really interested in a similar project on Lake Helena. He's begun the excavation and has applied for CD cost share. Autumn Coleman and Allison Russell arranged a tour on the Phase One of the Beaver Creek project. We are sponsoring a grant at the legislature for Phase 2.

Steve Granzow-In the IR this morning, there is a proposed project to get rid of 20 million tons of the newest part of the slag pile. It's supposed to be headed for South Korea to be processed for zinc. It remains to be seen if that project will actually happen.

Karl Christians gave a quick update on the solar pump trailer project. He's found a trailer that he thinks will work at Trailer Plus.

Dave Martin wanted to report on the MACD Education Committee results. It's a group that has grown and has gotten a lot of traction recently. They are getting started on an outreach/marketing plan for CDs. The East Helena CTE group has moved forward well this year and met effectively and the classes are going well.

John Baucus said that things are quiet in his area, most people are still grazing on grass which is unusual for this time of year.

Staff Reports

Connor Mertz gave a report on what he's been up to this month. He has taken over much of the responsibilities for the pollinator program and has been updating participant information for follow up purposes. We have had a lot of interest in the program with a lot of really excited people. Evans gave a website training class to Connor and Andrew and Connor got a Beaver Conflict page put together. He'll be working on the Stream Project page and a staff page this winter. He'll also be doing some site maintenance. He went on the Beaver Creek project tour and has been doing some data input on the 310 database. He's sat in a number of trainings and meetings. He's been doing some work for the Sun River Watershed Group as well which they will be reimbursing the CD for.

Andrew Kretschmer thanked everyone for the opportunity to work with the CD and the help and guidance. He's been working on Elk Creek, meeting with Mike and Sarah on potential projects. He's hoping to set up a late spring landowner meeting in the area, and is working to prepare at least one TIP with fuels mitigation and possibly a weed TIP, using some of the MCC crews. Flood mitigation work is moving slowly due to some trouble making solid contacts with

landowners in the area. He's still pursuing the contact information for a TIP on weeds in the Lincoln area. The photo contest is complete and he'll be sending entries out for board review. The board had a look at the merchandise that Andrew put together and made a selection for hats and gloves. Andrew has been working on the forest inventories for Forest Management Plans for NRCS contracts. He has also been working on a digital walking tour at the Ten Mile Creek Park. He hasn't yet settled on a software and is still researching opportunities. He's working with MACD on access to ArcGIS to make those licenses more available to CDs. He's attended several NRCS trainings, the webinar with APHIS on grasshoppers.

Ryan thanked Andrew and Connor for all their help and assistance.

Old Business

Planning for 2021/Long Range-Much of the board and staff met this morning to review the new long range plan. Evans will get edits completed and will get the document out to the board prior to the next board meeting. The Budget review didn't happen, so we'll take a look at the budget at the next meeting.

Cost Share Program

Comment from Jeff about follow up photos, agreement from landowner to let us show others what the project outcome is like.

Motion by Granzow to approve both applications, second by Howe-Cobb; Martin asked if the project will transfer problems to adjoining landowners. Ryan said that the ice dozing or ramping is the main problem that the area deals with; Jeff recused himself from the vote; motion carried. Autumn asked if the Living on the Banks website would be a good site for the education component of things, and Jeff said yes it is.

New Business

Status of DNRC-CDB Concerns-Following the discussion from the MRCDC section, Evans asked the board if we want to send letters out to our legislators about our concerns about the lack of funding and support for the Conservation Districts with the loss of so many from the Conservation Districts Bureau. There was discussion about that communication being something that MACD should be doing on behalf of the CDs. Christians thinks a direct phone call to Bostrom would be a good thing, with the recommendation that Evans and Ryan would be a good thing. Evans will coordinate a zoom call with Bostrom in the next week or so. Martin says that if CDs could just maintain funding this year it would be good. He recommended having a dozen key bullet items that staff have provided to us over the years.

Supervisor Election Status--Evans updated the board on election status; no one ran against any who filed, so they're all re-elected. John Baucus will need to be reappointed in 2021 if he wants to stay on. He has had concerns about being able to be involved as much as he thinks the position warrants. The board indicated that they understand completely the challenges involved and would like him to stay on if he would like to.

310 Permit Applications

LC-21-20 Stockton--the applicant submitted an amendment to their application and Ryan said that the material is in line with what Ryan and Strainer requested. Ryan thinks it should be approved with the amendment, with the stipulation that the applicant notify the CD so that members can be there during installation, motion Frasier, second Howe-Cobb; motion carried.

**Please note that some of these applications may not be acted upon due to needing inspections or other information.

Other Business

Budget discussion?

Adjournment at 2:59 Motion by Ingersoll, second by Frasier; motion carried.

Calendar of upcoming events

Dec 10-Board meeting Helena

Jan 4-1st day of the 67th Montana Legislative Session

Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council - 01/13/21 - 9:30-12 (virtual)

Jan 14-Board Meeting-Helena

Jan 26-27-MT Weed Control Association (MWCA) annual (virtual) conference

Jan 13-MT Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council (virtual) meeting

Mar 15-19-MT Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council meeting and grant hearings in Helena

Announcements

Next meeting – January 14, 2021 1pm, held virtually