



# LEWIS & CLARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

790 Colleen Street • Helena, Montana 59601 • 406-449-5000 ext. 5

**Regular Meeting Minutes  
December 9, 2021, 1 pm  
Montana Room, DNRC, 1539 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Helena MT 59601 and via Zoom Conferencing**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jeff Ryan. In attendance were Jeff Ryan, Karl Christians, Sarah Howe-Cobb, Stan Frasier, Jeanette Nordahl and John Baucus (last 3 were on Zoom). Also in attendance were Justin Krause, Tom Wipf from Elk Creek Colony, David Martin, Becky Ayre, Christian Lehnert (Weed District on Zoom), Tracy Wendt (Zoom), Connor Mertz and Chris Evans. Steve Granzow joined the meeting at 2:09 pm. John Baucus had to leave at 2:30 pm.

Introductions were made.

Motion by to approve October minutes by Howe-Cobb, second by Christians; motion carried. Motion by Nordahl to approve the financial statement and pay the bills, second by Howe-Cobb; motion carried.

There was discussion about needing to fill the Dearborn area supervisor area and some names were given as potential.

Jeff noted that if there's any public comment, to please chime in.

**NRCS**-Becky said that the office is at 75% staffing and has 15 applications for the FY in EQIP, 5 CSP applications. Over the winter, Becky will be working with DNRC on outreach to the Wolf Creek area TIP and the Dalton Mountain Road TIP. Over the summer the office will be working with John Baucus on some work that will hopefully lead to a brush management TIP and the irrigation districts for an irrigation TIP. The office would like to have a meeting to look at water use issues in the County. CRP this year had one application that the Teton office did for the Helena FO. They are currently working through the building lease and some significant changes will be made in the coming year or so. Next year's round of TIPs will be phase 2 of the Wolf Creek area forestry project. Becky may not make the next CD board meeting.

**SRWG**-Dave said that they recently had their last quarterly meeting of the year. They're working on planning for 2022. Dave is the chair of the projects committee. Chris Evans said

that she and Tracy will be working together to onboard the BSWC member and work with her on plans for 2022.

**MRCDC-Karl** said that one of their current issues is the Fort Peck test flows. The Army Corps of Engineers won't be doing them this next year due to lack of water in the reservoir. The high flows test will negatively affect the irrigators who have pump sites on the river downstream from Fort Peck. The estimated cost to irrigators will be around \$7.5 million. Sidney Sugars has threatened that if they lose the acres that support their activity, they'll completely pull out of the area and move somewhere else. Howe-Cobb asked what they're doing the test flows for. Karl said it has to do with the pallid sturgeon spawning, in hopes that it would improve the spawning. He had a conference call with FSA in Bozeman on the CREP program. Karl feels like the program has run its course since interest has gone to almost nothing. Part of the deal with the council is that they have to file a report every year about it. Molly is putting together a comment letter for the FEMA/Floodplain situation. The deadline for comment has been extended and Traci Sears said that the more public comment the better.

**WQPD**-They had the monthly meeting Tuesday and confirmed that a watershed festival will be happening in August. They also had a consultant that discussed the deep well aquifer situations across the state and specifically in Helena in the next 2 years. The City of Helena would lose the right if it's not developed.

**LHWG**-The group has been bringing in some new people who might join their board including a representative from PPLT and the Discovery Foundation to look at Education issues. They're still working on clarifying their organizational documents etc. The next big thing they're having is the Annual planning meeting in the spring.

**Weed District**-they've been doing some updates on bylaws for the Weed District and board term schedules. They're also looking at doing some educational efforts and Christian has asked that if the CD has anything that we'd like to collaborate with them on, to please reach out. They've also been working on the budget for the next year. They are working on grant reports and grant submissions. No current weed management plans are in work at the moment. One of the board members wants to create a weed management area in the Ten Mile Creek area. Joel Redding resigned last month from their board so they're looking for a new supervisor as well. Christian asked that if we know of anyone who might be interested, to please submit something to them.

**HWCI**-Jeff Ryan said that he's pretty sure Autumn is cutting willow today for the Musselshell project. They've submitted the application to ACOE for the Dana Ranch project on the Missouri.

**MACD**-Dave Martin said that in the planning meeting this morning we discussed the direction that MACD is headed. He thinks that the ship is turning in the right direction at the moment. He thinks that the Executive Director is doing a great job balancing what they're doing. They've done a lot of work on their strategic plan as well as creation of their operations/work plan. He said that if the CD has a dues discussion in January or February, we can revisit it then. He thinks we should have a better handle on where they're actually going by Spring Board meeting. They've asked to have a meeting with representatives of Lewis & Clark CD to discuss our issues moving forward. Evans gave a report on the convention. She said that the single best session she'd ever attended at an MACD convention was the legislator attended session. Overall, the convention was pretty good. At the EO meeting on Tuesday, the group has opted

to change their name, taking the "Association" out, so they are now the Montana Conservation District Employee Organization. The group will be pursuing non-profit status as well.

### **Supervisor Reports-**

**Steve Granzow, supervisor emeritus**, was present and was asked about what's new with him. Evans said that the CD Board has a gift for his retirement that she'll get to him when we receive it. There's a storage unit going in across from his property in the Hamlin development. The Prickly Pear Creek has run well even with the drought. There's a hay shortage in that area due to the dry weather. He's been doing physical therapy for his Parkinson's Disease which has helped somewhat, but it's a progressive disease.

**Karl Christians**-He's been working with the PPLT and the grazing potential on their property. He's met with Terry Dunlap, and with Blake and Nate from PPLT to give some estimates on carrying capacity. It looks like they're probably going to incorporate grazing for the whole year on Sevenmile. That's been a win for both parties. Jeff said that he's pretty sure the project was on the Perfectly Montana program on Sunday morning (not sure which station).

**Jeanette Nordahl**-She asked if the Little Wolf Creek Ranch had submitted an application for the bridge. Evans said no. She also said that Fred Skierka has denied the Ponderosa Snow Warriors access for trail riding this year due to the denial of his 310 Permit application. Trees and power lines have been downed due to wind.

**Jeff Ryan**-Jeff had been asked to assist with the Kilby Butte project near Roundup and has given some technical recommendations. Connor will be going over next week to assist with the execution of that project. Saturday morning Jeff and Drake will be cutting some willow for the project for Connor to take over for the project. Given the Lake Helena projects coming up, he and Karl have been discussing a gizmo to do mass cutting of willow.

**Stan Frasier**-He's in Arizona and says that life is pretty good where he is. Stan said that the email that he sent out after the last meeting about vaccinations/masking. He said that in the future if he attends meetings in the future he'll be asking about vaccinations.

**Sarah Howe-Cobb**-Wind has been howling on the Front Range this winter so far. They had a fire up off of Benchmark that they were able to contain.

**John Baucus**-He said his area is just really dry, he wished that it was better news.

David Martin-he's the new chair of the projects committee for the SRWG. The CDOWG has picked up some steam with new interest for the Steering Committee. Roddy Rost approached David Martin at Convention and said that while we do need to tell our stories, we need to be honest. Dave is continuing involvement with the Washington State CDs.

### **Staff Report**

**Connor**-At the MACD convention he made a 223 grant application presentation to the RCAC and was fully funded. Decision on the ACOE permit should be coming soon but he's assuming that we won't need a permit from them. He met with the landowners on the project along with the probable contractor. He's taking care of a few other items and we'll need to get the fabric ordered early in case of backorders. Both of those landowners applied to the cost share program. The Pollinator initiative program had a few contacts this fall. One task of the BSWC member will be assisting in streamlining that program for future years. He assisted with the Rivers violation installation. They got the coir fabric installed and had another agency meeting to discuss moving ahead. With the floodplain requirements he needs approval to do the revegetation. He's been working with Evans on the planning efforts. He's submitted some

grant reports etc. In regard to the truck maintenance, we bumped up the budget for repairs/maintenance. He sat in on a webinar based out of University of Utah on some of the restoration efforts and assessing where projects would be most applicable.

**Chris-Evans** gave an update on her new role as Vice Chair of the Employee organization. She serves on a variety of committees: Education Committee for MACD, the Stream Restoration Committee, the East Helena High School Career Technical local advisory committee, the Conservation District Outreach Work Group. She recently was invited to the Core Partners meeting as a representative of the Employee Organization and sits in on the MACD board meetings when she can. With all of that, things are pretty busy in the office.

**Cost Share Program**-Connor and Chris talked about the Lake Helena Shoreline Project applications on adjoining parcels. Both applications are for \$2500 and the landowners would match with \$2500 cash, materials or in-kind of some sort. Motion by Ryan to approve both applications, second by Christians; Christians asked about Holter Lake dropping their water level and if Hauser also does. Ryan said that they do drop the levels to mitigate ice dozing of the bank. Motion carried.

**LC-27-21-Nilan Water Users**-There was discussion about the onsite visit and FWP Biologist Katie Vivian's recommendations. Understanding that this permit application is strictly for a temporary repair to buy time for a more permanent repair which could include lowering the pipe in place the following modifications were recommended:

- Rip rap/rock to be keyed into banks
- All rock will only be placed downstream - no rock upstream of pipe
- A channel for stream flow and fish passage should be created in the rip rap. Middle of the channel is likely the best option to capture the most energy
- Rock will not be higher than current pipe (higher rock downstream may lead to upstream scour)
- Rock should only extend ~3-4 feet downstream
- Work to occur in low water
- Contact LCCD when short term project is completed so that a follow up inspection can be completed.
- Permit to be for 6 months (until April 15)
- Reconsider annual maintenance permit after successful project completion and two high water events - review of project completion should occur after high water of 2022 to check pipe/project integrity
- Pursue ARPA or other funds to get a plan in place for a long-term solution, and reapply for completion of that project by January 2024

Motion to approve with the above by Jeff Ryan, second by Karl Christians; motion carried

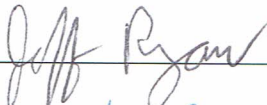
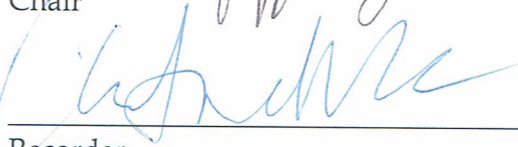
**LC-28-21 Bare**-Connor discussed this one. This is a strange situation because he had an application in last year with Land Escapes, but the landowner was never notified that the application was approved. There was a list of modifications recommended by the team. Motion by Ryan to approve with the modifications, second by Howe-Cobb, waiving the 15 day waiting period. Motion carried. Karl said that maybe the CD could put up some signage at the launch sites with a request to reduce wakes in certain areas. Maybe FWP could assist with a tour or something? The Flathead is looking at this also in their area at the legislature.

LC-29-21 Phillips 66-Tributary to Walker Creek. Stan Frasier didn't think it needed to be inspected in advance but requested a follow up inspection. Motion by Ryan to approve as proposed, with a follow up site visit when the project is complete, second by Jeanette Nordahl; motion carried.

**Other Business**

There was discussion at the planning meeting about inflation and raises for staff. Jeff said a minimum 5% raise, should be given to staff. Ryan made a motion for a 5% raise now with a mid-year raise if necessary, second by Jeanette; motion carried. Effective pay period 1<sup>st</sup> of the year.

Motion by Jeanette to adjourn 3:41 pm second by Christians. The next meeting will be January 13, 2022, in the Montana Room at the DNRC building at 1 pm.

Chair		Date	1/13/22
Recorder		Date	1/13/22