



LEWIS & CLARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

Regular Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2022, 1 pm

Montana Room, DNRC, 1539 11th Avenue
Helena MT 59601 and via Zoom Conferencing

In attendance in the room: Jeff Ryan, John Baucus, Karl Christians, Chris Evans, Connor Mertz, Becky Ayre, Brett Heitshuse (MT Dept Ag), John Peterson (MT Dept Ag)

In attendance via Zoom: Jeanette Nordahl, Sarah Howe-Cobb, Autumn Holzgen (MCC), Stan Frasier, Tracy Wendt (SRWG), Dave Martin

Call to order-CD chair Jeff Ryan called the meeting to order at 1 pm.

Meeting minutes – John Baucus made a motion to approve the February minutes as sent, second by Sarah Howe-Cobb; motion carried.

Financials – budget is looking good so far, motion by Nordahl to accept financial report and pay all the bills, second by Baucus; motion carried.

Correspondence – Evans shared correspondence that didn't apply elsewhere in the agenda.

Public Comment - There was none

Partner Reports

NRCS (Ayre): The Field Office is in the middle of EQIP pre-approvals (TIPS and high tunnels), so far one has been approved. All CSP applications that have been received are assessed and ranked. NRCS is doing an MOU review. The new State Office RCPP coordinator starts March 21st (Justin Trout – based out of Helena). May 2nd – expanded telework ends for NRCS staff, hopefully CD meetings can start back up in the office.

The Field Office is planning to do a projects tour of Wolf Creek area on April 22nd.

DNRC CDB (Criswell): written report in electronic meeting packet. There are grant opportunities coming up. DNRC has a lot of funding right now, so it's a good time to apply. They are doing Submittable trainings—the new grant platform. MEPA training is March 17th, with Mill Levy & Permissive Levee training also coming up. The Employees Organization is working with DNRC on grant for capacity development.

SRWG (Wendt): They have a lot of events coming up for the spring and are in “pre-project mode”. Tracy is applying for 7 grants. The Muddy Creek Master plan is ongoing and they are still working on Adobe Creek avulsion issue. Tracy noted – Weed Whacker Rodeo (July 9), BBQ at the Ballpark (July 28th), Bashin' Trash (Aug

20th). At RiverFest last month they were able to raise \$5000 for the Watershed Group, and the willow planting project on Willow Creek coming up
MRCDC (Christians) – UM put together a stakeholder group to reintroduce Bison and Bighorn Sheep on CMR, MRCDC voiced concerns. They are putting together comments for 30x30 plan. They are also providing comments on ACOE test flows for sturgeon (MRCDC found that \$80 economic damage, pump site damage, etc. Sidney Sugar going to pull contracts if they lose acreage) and strongly oppose, but if it happens will support mitigation measures. Karl said that they conducted the 6-month review of coordinator.

WQPD (Ryan) – expanding monitoring efforts for arsenic in Birdseye area, hiring a hydrogeologist.

LHWG (Mertz) – DEQ Groundwater Awareness Day (Annual Meeting at Lewis & Clark Brewery (March 22nd @ 5-7pm), larger discussion on Integrated Water Management plan, project committee collecting ideas (discussed some fish passage projects, restoration of Merritt Creek)

Weed District (no one present) – cost-share program is up and running (\$250)

HWCI/MCC (Holzgen) – focusing on beaver-mimicry projects out in Central MT, working with Cascade CD on a few river bank projects.

Extension –

MACD (Ryan) – proposal to revamp committees, legislative ad-hoc committee has started meeting, LCCD discussion if we should plan a legislative meeting.

Department of Ag, Groundwater Protection Program – (Brett Heitshuse) is interested in how soil health affects water quality, looking to collect information for any information leads.

Supervisor Reports

Ryan – First FEMA call, next week March 24th 1-2pm.

Baucus – Sieben was happy to host willow cutting, hit with 8-10 inches of snow last week's storm.

Christians – Farm Bureau ag day May 10th, sitting on conservation panel for LHWG annual meeting, CTE committee for E Helena, looking into building Ag center for the high school.

Frasier – will be back in town first week in April, should be at the meeting in April.

Nordahl – finished up Dept. of Ag Weed trust application review this morning.

Staff Reports

Mertz – report in meeting packet; Lake Helena project, Rain Barrel workshop, Pollinator Initiative pick-up days

Evans – report in meeting packet

Old Business

Karl Christians is exploring moving forward with the floodplain permit for Spokane Creek project, looking at the .4-foot rise option.

New Business

Sponsor Drive paperwork – Evans handing out/ mailing to supervisors to distribute to potential new sponsors. She will send forms out to current sponsors and to a mailing list made up of consultants etc.

Legislative event – Evans would like some feedback from the board on having a legislative event. We need to secure a site, and make some decisions on format. Invitations can't go out until after the election in November, but we need to have something planned before then. She is looking for ideas, since nothing we've ever done before has drawn in many legislators.

Grant Sponsorship for the EO/Capacity and training – DNRC is looking for CD to host grant to complete new employee/administrator planning. Motion by Christians to approve, second by Nordahl; motion carried.

Watershed Management grant re-apply – Evans said that it's her opinion that we don't reapply for this grant at this time, given the timing.

LCCD Board approval for District Development Grant for 2023 75th anniversary planning – Evans discussed the potential of doing a District Development grant to help cover the costs of our 75th Anniversary plans for 2023. We could plan a couple of different stream tours, or other project tours as well as some other fun social media related activities. We could also upgrade some of our swag and other things. As people have ideas on items or activities, if they could get them to Chris, that would be great.

310 Permits

Extension for LC-46-19 Geise – motion by Ryan to extend, second by Baucus; motion carried.

Extension for LC-02-19 Claassen – motion by Christians to extend, second by Baucus; motion carried.

LC-02-22 BBCTU – motion by Baucus to approve w/ modifications, second by Christians, motion carried.

LC-03-22 Grady – motion by Ryan to approve, second by Baucus; motion carried.

CP-02-22 Barker – discussion on intent for access, whether easement is for logging or development. Motion by Jeff to determine it a violation and that the landowner needs to submit a permit before completion, Nordahl seconds; motion carried.

William Townsend question-Gabions – Baucus said that in his experience, gabions will fail over time, wire will rust and rot, he suggested EcoBlocks or poured concrete abutments as a solution. Ryan concurred with that and made a motion to not approve gabion baskets, second by Baucus; motion carried. Evans will notify the applicant of the decision.

Beutler issue – Given the question on jurisdiction, there will be an onsite visit to the proposed project to determine whether the applicant needs a permit.

Other Business

District Authority Discussion – the board went over the old Ten Minute Training on District Authority. Karl Christians had some good input given his time with the DNRC-CDB.

Adjournment-Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:06 pm. The next meeting will be April 14, 2022 at the DNRC Montana Room at 1 pm.

Chair Jeff Ryan Date 3/17/22

Recorder [Signature] Date 4/14/22