



LEWIS & CLARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

Regular Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2022, 1 pm
Augusta Community Center
Augusta Montana

Call to order- the meeting was called to order by chair Jeff Ryan at 1:08 pm.

In attendance: Jeff Ryan, Karl Christians, Stan Frasier, Sarah Howe-Cobb, John Baucus, Skyler Van Dyken, Becky Ayre, Tracy Wendt, Connor Mertz and Chris Evans.

Meeting minutes – motion by Jeff Ryan to approve minutes, second by John Baucus; motion carried.

Financial report and outstanding bills-motion by Ryan to approve the financial statement and pay the outstanding bills, second by Frasier; motion carried.

Correspondence – Evans shared the few things that we have received that don't fall somewhere else on the agenda.

Public Comment – There was none.

Partner Reports

NRCS (Ayre) – Becky Ayre said they're still working on getting applications made into contracts. They have some trainings that the Missoula area is doing every Tuesday that they're trying to get someone in the office to every week. Karl Christians asked how the hiring process statewide is coming. She said that of those hired when Andrew was hired to the agency, about 30% have already left the agency or are with the agency but have moved to a different state. They're working on back filling those positions.

DNRC CDB (Criswell) – Written report.

SRWG (Wendt) – Tracy said that they are working on supporting the USFS on their weed spray days this year. The Weed Whacker Rodeo is July 9 and LCCD got a sprayer from Murdoch's to donate. They have been working with Teton CD on a grant app to make some changes on Broken O on a diversion near Floweree. They will be looking for letters of support and will ask for one from Lewis and Clark. Geological surveys, other information gathering and an engineering report will be part of the grant application, including an automated diversion. It should assist with water management as well as leave more water in the river. Hopefully they'd also get funding for water monitoring. They'll work with FWP, GID and other local agencies to make sure that the project has multiple benefits. Baucus said that HVID put in an automated headgate several years ago for their main headgate and it's been pretty interesting for board member to access etc. He recommended that she talk to their board to get some perspective on how it's worked for them. Karl Christians said that the Musselshell area has had those as well. SRWG will be getting a portion of the

proceeds from a Great Falls baseball game. The group was approached to do an ammunition cleanup recently and so will be doing a volunteer cleanup at Freezeout Lake. Bashin' Trash had a phone call the other day for organizing that.

MRCDC (Christians) – Karl said that the biggest thing they're working on is the test flow issues with the Army Corps. The Corps is looking to reduce their maximum flows since the flows in 2018 showed a positive result. Jeff Ryan said that he'd gotten a voice mail from the coordinator for WPIC about possibly setting up a tour for the WPIC group on Lake Helena, possibly Spokane Creek.

WQPD (Ryan) – Jeff said that the Planning Board has come up with some potential changes in the wording about requiring more stringent requirements for more significant testing for water availability. This would potentially change the zoning laws for the county.

LHWG (Mertz) – He's been working with the group on their Education and Outreach committee, and is working with them on planning for the Rain Barrel Workshop.

Their Big Sky Watershed Corps member has really been doing a great job. She got involved with the Helena CORE group on education efforts. They may be doing some workshops later in Helena, but their main focus is the Watershed Festival in August.

Weed District – No report, but people have seen the weed sprayers out in the county.

HWCI/MCC (Holzgen) – no report

Extension – no report

MACD – Chris Evans gave a run down on what's up with MACD. Karl Christians said that the EQC efforts look like they're paying off.

Supervisor Reports

Ryan – Wrapped up the Lake Helena project

Christians – Continued development

Howe-Cobb-Drought continues. The Augusta area is missing most of the storms that are coming through the southern part of the county.

Frasier-can't get his grass dried out enough to mow it. Hasn't started spraying weeds yet.

Baucus-Grass is really slow...they're getting more rain than Augusta, less than Helena, but it's been cold. Things seem good in Canyon Creek.

Jeff asked Skyler if there's anything in the Dearborn area to talk about. He said he's never seen the streams and rivers this low.

John Baucus asked about CI 191 and if there's been any more information about it. Evans will ask MACD if they are tracking it.

Staff Reports – see reports in Supervisor packets.

Old Business – We'll be looking at that parcel on Lake Helena tomorrow to look at potentially acquiring an I&E area and possible office space for the CD.

New Business-Evans sought board approval for a re-group on the 2023 cost share program (practices) in order to rethink the process for it. The board agreed that

continuing the Water Test Program for 2023 was a good idea, but that putting the practices cost share on hold for 2023 was a good idea.

310 Permits

LC-08-21-Motion by Ryan to approve a 1 year extension, second by Howe-Cobb; motion carried.

CP-04-22 – John Baucus had gone out on the site visit. From what they could tell at the site visit, there was not work in the stream, but all of the vegetation was removed, and it was down to mineral soil. The landowner will revegetate and send follow up photos. The flat area that he's cleared for RV parking, is all up-gradient from the stream. Ryan asked if the area is larger than 1 acre. Jerin from the Corps of Engineers was at the on-site and gps'd the site, so may have those numbers. The violation from last year came up. Adams had admitted at this on-site that the seeding didn't take well. Schedule for a follow up site visit (with last year's violation too). One year follow up. Motion by Ryan that the action is a violation and that he agrees with the inspection team's recommendations, second by Frasier; motion carried.

CP-05-22-Baucus gave a report on this activity as well. Work was done when the stream was dry. As the stream came up, the streamflow resumed. Motion by Christians, second by Howe-Cobb, that the stream be restored to the original conditions, with the recommendations of the inspection team, and to include the Sterling Ranch board in the communications, requiring a follow up site visit; motion carried.

CP-06-22 After discussion with the Helena Forest Service office in Choteau, this work was identified to have taken place in 2018 as an approved emergency action. Why the complainant's well is just now drying up is not known, but it's probably not connected to work that was done in 2018. Furthermore, the Forest Service is contracting with someone to do additional work to address the current situation for which they'll need a 124 permit. Motion by Ryan, second by Baucus that this activity was not a project; motion carried.

CP-07-22 Motion by Ryan, second by Frasier that this activity was not a project; motion carried.

EME-01-22-Tabled pending inspection

LC-13-22 Dahl-motion by Christians to approve as proposed, second by Howe-Cobb; motion carried.

LC-14-22 Perry-motion by Christians to approve as proposed, second by Baucus; motion carried.

LC-15-22 Wolf Creek Cattle Co-Baucus went out on this one, it's a rail car bridge on top of an old log bridge. The company that sold them the rail car indicated that it's no longer considered a safe alternative. They will use a crane to lift out the old bridges and work will include removal of material to widen the channel, and the new bridge. Motion by Baucus to approve with modifications second by Christians. Motion carried.

LC-16-22 METG Motion by Ryan to approve as proposed, second by Baucus; motion carried.

Other Business

Anonymous Complaints-Evans wanted clarification from the board on how the CD is handling complaints that come in from people who are concerned for their safety

from the person they're filing the complaint about. In the past, we've handled it by either contacting the landowner in question, or doing a drive-by if we can see the project from a public road. The board is in favor of continuing that practice, making sure that a form is filled out for each complaint as needed, whether it's a staff member, a supervisor, FWP or the initial complainant.

Ex parte communications-a caution brought up at a recent meeting at the county, that the board members need to be careful about not group emailing each other. Anything over a group of 3 supervisors constitutes a quorum and should be publicly noticed.

Adjournment-having no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm. The next meeting will be at the Dearborn Community Center, July 14, 2022 at 8:30 am, followed by the 2nd in the series of regional Local Work Groups at 10:30 am.

Chair Jeff Bjar Date 8/11/22

Christina
Recorder Christina Date 7/5/22 8/11/22