



# LEWIS & CLARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

## REGULAR MEETING Minutes

October 13, 2022

1 pm

Russell Meeting Room, DNRC

1539 11<sup>th</sup> Ave, Helena and via Zoom conferencing

**Call to Order** – Jeff Ryan called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm.

**In attendance** – In attendance in the room were Jeff Ryan, Karl Christians. Also in attendance were Tracy Wendt, Becky Ayre, David Martin, Jessica Ramirez, Connor Mertz and Chris Evans. Attendees on Zoom were Supervisors Stan Frasier and Sarah Howe-Cobb.

**Introductions were made.**

**Minutes** – Motion by Ryan to approve the minutes as sent, second by Christians; motion carried

**Financials** – Motion by Ryan to approve the financial statement and pay the outstanding bills, second by Christians; motion carried

**Correspondence** – Evans shared the correspondence, including the Montana Wildlife Federation proposal, the information from Beth Barry, and the nomination forms from the Montana Department of Agriculture for their Young Ag Couple's Conference. After some discussion, Sarah Howe-Cobb said she'd ask Chase Young if he would like to attend.

**Public Comment** – there was none.

### Reports

**NRCS** – Becky Ayre said that the office is still getting mask protocol emails every Monday and Friday. This year for the State of Montana, 55 million was obligated in EQIP, CSP and Easements. In Lewis and Clark about 500,000 was obligated. 10 CSP contracts for 1.4 million, EQIP 21 for 1.5 million. This year for EQIP statewide, there are 99 active TIPS, Lewis and Clark has 4 of those and the 3 county work unit has 7. Helena is putting forward 3 new ones, and a modification for a 2019 one to work with the Elk Smith Collaborative project. With the IRA funding over the next several years, funding will probably double for NRCS in Montana. Nationwide, they're looking at bringing on 4000 more staff for NRCS. They're working on getting the Forestry practices in under the IRA umbrella of funding. The agency is moving forward with trying to get an Admin person in each field office and a DC in each field office as well as the 4000 people nationwide. This year their application batching deadline for EQIP and CSP is October 28<sup>th</sup>. CSP payments are currently being worked on and the FO staff is helping Choteau. That ranking deadline is next Friday. Jim Olson in Choteau is transferring over to the Forest Service and with Paula being gone, the Choteau office will be shorthanded. Becky is acting DC in Choteau and the acting Supervisory DC for the work unit. Mindy is currently the direct supervisor for the work unit. In Whitehall the Soil Con is on paternity leave through the end of the calendar year.

**DNRC** – report in packet

**SRWG**-Tracy Wendy highlighted that their board meeting and water management work group meetings are on the 26<sup>th</sup> at 10 am. Their board is looking for someone who can officially represent LCCD for a vote on the board. They'll hold a spot on the board for us. She noted that she met with Bill and Julie Madden on their place upstream on Elk Creek. She said that while the 2018 and 2019 flooding damage was a real issue, things are healing up. She got to see their beaver complex that they're very excited about. They are interested in joining the watershed board. She referred to the written report for the rest of the information. A few years ago, there was a group that met about stream gauges on Elk Creek. Finding funding for the gauges wasn't so much of an issue, but maintenance would be another issue. The FWP has an interest in having a working gauge up there and may be able to fund the maintenance. That group will likely be meeting again soon. Also, part of that group is the National Weather Service. The CD will maintain interest in that group. Stephen Bagley at FWP is the contact. If someone on Elk Creek isn't using their full right and wants to lease it, he is also a good contact for that.

**MRCDC**-Karl Christians gave an update on that group and Molly Masters had provided a written report. Karl said that the CMR work group will be re-convening next week. The Living on the Bank website has been coming along really nicely. The Test Flow issue is still going on. The group is negotiating with the Army Corps on flows. Next year it's unlikely that there will be a test flow due to the reservoir being so low. The salt cedar team is trying to get rolling. They're hiring a position for the CEMIST for eastern Montana. Jeff Ryan said that he talked with Molly at the area meeting and thinks she's doing a really good job.

**WQPD**-Jeff Ryan said that they had a real meeting last time. Not too much is going on, but they did elections of Chair (Patrick Johnson) and Vice Chair. They've been doing water testing in the District for certain metals in ground water and surface water. No critical numbers except for the nitrates in the Birdseye area.

**LHWG**-Connor sat in on their last meeting. The Big Sky member wraps up in November. They're doing interviews for next year's member. They do trash cleanup on a section of York Road and they'll be doing on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Weed District**-No report.

**HWCI**-No report.

**Extension**-no report.

**MACD – Convention**-Evans will register herself, Connor, Jeff, Dave Martin unless she hears back from any of the other supervisors.

### **Supervisor Reports**

**Jeff Ryan**-Gearing up for the Beaver Creek Willow Cutting this Saturday from 10-2. He got a call from Mike Bishop, retired EPA. He's in a collaborative group with the Forest Service on this project. Mike had called the CD office as well. He was unhappy with the new part of the project when he was out there in July and the stream was dry. Early September the project went dry again unfortunately. Connor said they're using wells to do some groundwater monitoring, and they people doing that said that there has been no consistent trend in re-charge so they're still trying to figure out what is going on.

**Karl Christians**-Karl said that he did a swing by Claassen's after a site visit. He's working on the project and is moving a lot of material out of the floodplain. The willows on the lower part are looking good, but on the upstream side they took a bit of a beating from the deer.

**Stan Frasier**-no report

**Sarah Howe**-Cobb-drought is still bad. Nilan Reservoir has had even more water taken out.

**David Martin**-Resigning from the SRWG board at the end of the year.

### **Staff Reports**

**Ramirez** – Jessica had provided a report for the board and highlighted her activities.

**Mertz** – Connor had provided a written report of his activities since the last meeting. He would like to get approval from the board for the next Lake Helena Shoreline project. Motion by Ryan, second by Howe-Cobb for Lake Helena part 3; motion carried. He's also been busy with 310

permit applications and complaints. Adam Strainer is working with Burnhams on a fish screen project and is asking for a letter of support for that. Motion to approve by Christians, second by Ryan; motion carried. There's a pollinator workshop for the Area 6 effort and Connor wanted to let the board know about.

**Evans** – Evans referred to her written report, but highlighted the latest effort by the EO to work through getting some Best Practices organized for CD offices, to try to slow staff turnover. She's also put together a grant application for activities in 2023 and asked for Board approval. Motion to approve the capacity grant app by Ryan, second by Christians; motion carried.

### **New Business**

Supervisor ID Forms-Evans will start working on filling out forms for staff and supervisors. They are \$10/application through MACo and can be used to get a government rate (if available) at hotels.

3<sup>rd</sup> quarter Workplan Review-Evans gave a brief overview of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter report for the CD activities.

Recap of local work group meetings-Becky Ayre and Chris Evans gave a report on Local Work Group activities and wrap up, as well as an overview of the results of the Resource Concern Survey filled out this year so far. They discussed how each organization treats the information gathered. Both add what they feel is appropriate to their work plan for the next year—and in the case of the Elk/Smith Collaborative, have already begun work on the project. Longer term issues can be incorporated into each organizations long term/strategic plans as appropriate.

August LWG-weeds, climate change-education and workshops

Dearborn LWG-forest service brought Elk Smith collaborative project

Lincoln LWG-FWP, weeds, wildlife, fish, education

Helena-No public or partners were present.

Becky said that the office is working through the possible TIP development for willow projects.

### **310 Permit Applications**

CP-08-22 Adams Motion by Christians, second Howe-Cobb that the work is not a violation; motion carried.

CP-09-22 Ranieri-motion by Christians, second by Ryan to call it a violation; motion carried. Area is in a mapped floodplain. Span could have been longer, solid design with minimal disturbance. The applicant is already planning to put in an application to finish the project and knows that they'll need a floodplain permit.

CP-10-22 Unknown-Threemile Creek-Culvert had been in place prior to the new work. The new work consisted of new material on the road. Motion by Ryan that no permit was required, second by Christians; motion carried.

LC-19-22 Cobb No inspection requested, motion to approve with Adam's recommended modifications by Ryan, second by Howe-Cobb; motion carried.

LC-20-22 Turner no inspection requested, motion by Christians to approve as proposed, second by Ryan; motion carried.

LC-21-22 Bean motion by Ryan to approved the permit for 5 years, second by Howe-Cobb; motion carried

LC-22-22 PPLT Motion by Ryan to approve as proposed, second by Christians; motion carried.


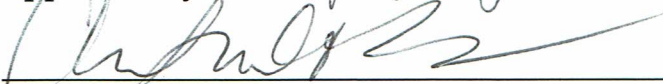
LC-23-22 Feedback Motion by Ryan to approve with modifications, waiving the 15 day waiting period, second by Christians; motion carried.

LC-24-22 Northwestern Energy Motion by Christians to approve, second by Ryan; motion carried.

LC-25-22 Pipinich Motion by Frasier to approve as proposed waiving the 15 day waiting period, second by Ryan; motion carried.

Stan said that he didn't put in for a mileage reimbursement for Lincoln meeting and wants to donate the mileage.

Next meeting—November 10, 2022, 1 pm USDA Service Center.

Approved by		11/10/22
		Date
Recorded by		11/10/22
		Date