



Lewis and Clark Conservation District

790 Colleen Street, Helena MT 59601 406.389.3895 <https://lewisandclarkcd.org>

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

April 13, 2023

1 pm

USDA Service Center, 790 Colleen Street, Helena MT
and via Zoom Conferencing

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by chair Jeff Ryan at 1:06 pm. In attendance in the room were Jeff Ryan, Jeanette Nordahl, John Baucus, Andrew Kretschmer and Chris Evans. Karl Christians joined those in the room at 1:11 pm. In attendance on Zoom were Skyler Van Dyken, Sarah Howe-Cobb and Tracy Wendt.

Motion by Ryan to approve the March Meeting Minutes, second by Nordahl; motion carried.

Motion by Nordahl to approve the Financial Statement, second by Howe-Cobb; motion carried.

Correspondence

Montana Biological Weed Control-Report and invoice for support.

Adam Strainer-Funding for the PPC fish screen-Tracy will ask the TU chapter in her area if they can contribute some. Chris will talk to MWCC to see if we can find some funding. The local fly shops could be asked to kick in some funding too, Andrew recommended. Re-visit at the next meeting.

Public Comment-There was none.

Reports

NRCS-Andrew Kretschmer was present to make the NRCS report. They have 8 EQIP pre-approved applications, and 3 new apps for the 2nd sign up, on farm energy and community ag. There's a Joint Chiefs project in the Elkhorn Mountains. No apps yet in our county. No CSP's approved yet, and 3 apps for forestry that they're waiting on paperwork for. For FY 2023 TIPS, they submitted all 3, which were approved as investment ready with some additions. Hilger Valley, York area, and the Wolf Creek expansion toward Lyon's Creek. John Baucus asked if the boundaries could be adjusted to include adjacent land. Andrew said that as long as resource concerns and practices don't change, they recently received guidance that that may happen. Andrew said that they can circle back on that.

NRCS has been allocated a Pathways student this summer. Housing could be an issue. They'd be willing to do work for landowners to offset that rent. Mid-May through August is the tentative time period they'd be here.

The Tri-County Fire Safe Working Group is looking for some help with home ignition zone assessments. Amy Teegarden is the executive directive and Andrew can help put people in touch with her. The project is primarily landowner education but will tie into their funding down the road.

Tom Watson has been detailed to the Regional Office for the time being, Kyle Tackett will be the acting State Conservationist. Jeff Ryan asked about the Community ag grant, so Andrew gave some background on that program. Sarah Howe-Cobb asked about how outreach is being done to the Augusta, Wolf Creek and Lincoln about these programs. Blackfoot Valley Dispatch, the Augusta Breeze could be venues for information. Andrew will discuss topics with Becky next week.

DNRC-No report.

SRWG-Tracy Wendt was on to talk about the Sun River Report. She'll have a big update next month and hopes to be here in person. The working group and board meet April 20th, the Working Group at 10 and the board at 1. It's an in-person or Zoom meeting. LCCD hasn't had a voting representation at their meetings since Dave Martin left. They're holding a spot for someone from LCCD if there is anyone who wants to be a voting member on their board, CD supervisor or staff member.

The first volunteer event will be at Freezeout Lake. Someone saw her article in our newsletter and will be bringing a bunch of people to the event on May 7th. The project is trash and ammunition clean up. The Muddy Creek Project, they are waiting on HB 7 at the Legislature to finish cycling through. They hope to start the big Muddy Creek project later this year. Ryan asked if there was formal testimony on that bill. Tracy said that she testified along with other potential recipients back at the very beginning of the session in January. The bill appears to be going through pretty well so far. They are using the Fellow program through the MCC program. Emily will be starting in late May through September and she will be doing the Water Quality Monitoring program along with outreach and volunteer recruitment. Otherwise, they'll be doing a number of weed events, including the July 8th 25th anniversary of the Weed Whacker Rodeo. Tracy will be in touch about the sprayer that we usually get for them. The 3rd Saturday in August will be Bashin' Trash, the Missouri River Cleanup. Lots of ideas and new opportunities for outreach and fundraising, and she'll be announcing them as soon as the board buys off on them. Andrew said that he'd be willing to host one of the branches of the Bashin' Trash, and to use his personal email address. Jeff asked if one clean up site will be the Hauser site. Andrew said that's the site that he'd prefer.

MRCDC-Karl Christians said that they sent out some letters to the Congressional delegation. One on the test flows at Fort Peck. They quoted the resolution that they took to NACD. Another on the operating plan in regard to the low flows. Karl has had a request in to NACD for the final language on our resolutions.

Once he gets those, he'll send them on to Kristen Juraas, and really start beating the drum following the session.

The Annual River Rendezvous will be in the Jordan area on June 21 with the CMR Working Group meeting the following day. They have about 8 years of data collection on monitoring sites showing that where there are no cattle, the trend is going down. Karl said that the salt cedar part will be interesting. John said that teasel is what's showing up along the streams in our areas.

They've been working on their budget and are struggling with admin support and such at Petroleum. Carie Hess had built up quite a system and the new person isn't really interested in doing the grant writing. They're hoping to get a person at DNRC to write grants for districts in the Missouri River CD Council area.

Jeff Ryan said that John Chase turned over the upper reach of the Council to Jeff Ryan.

WQPD- Jeff said that they're still working on their Strategic plan. They're moving forward with a facilitator. Jeff said that he's pushing our Regional Education Center at every meeting.

LHWG-No report

Helena CORE group-Summer education walk series has been scheduled.

MACD-They've been up on the hill with the session a lot, but are also planning the Spring MACD Board meeting June 6-8th in Helena. HB 321 has seen its ups and downs, but there is still hope. SB 28 is probably dead, but we'll have to see. It's been a pretty brutal session, partisanship-wise.

Supervisor Reports

Jeff Ryan was out at Tim Old's project and there was discussion about the Blake project and possibly breaking it into 2 parts instead of trying to get it done in one year. The willow cutting for the FWP project went well, about 40 people showed up and they got it done fast. The project is shaping up for this spring at Black Sandy.

Installation should happen in the next few weeks. Lake Helena still has ice on it, so we're waiting on that project until the ice goes off. Should happen in April or May. He has all the willow from the Sevenmile Creek project that is needed for that project.

Karl Christians said it's mostly been quiet out his way. The East Helena High Career Technical Education program has a good group of teachers. The school is full already. At the CTE meeting that they had, they found out that the next night was an FFA banquet. He had a conversation with the principle and superintendent that the CTE council isn't a rubber stamp and if that's what the school wants, the members won't be sticking around. The new Ag teacher is a go-getter, and took kids to the state FFA Convention, was apologetic that she didn't have anyone's address on the council. Karl is working on getting in touch with Helena Sand and Gravel about the lease for the ag center. Casey Harris with the IA&T section is doing great metal work with those students.

John Baucus said they have lots of lambs and lots of calves. A CR Anderson teacher brought a crew of students out to see the lambs, the one that the CD sponsored. Grass is finally starting to green up.

Jeanette Nordahl said they have a lot of snow. It's been a good season for snow mobilers and the club is in good shape.

Skyler Van Dyken said he's waiting for the snow to go off and the grass to green up. They got another 4-5 inches of snow overnight.

Sarah Howe-Cobb said that they're waiting for spring. The Augusta area has a new weekly newspaper, the Augusta Breeze. We could look at doing outreach using that. Evans will get the information for that paper from Sarah.

Staff Reports-

Chris Evans had a written report on activities for the board. The biggest news is that the new employee should start April 17th. It will take a while for him to get his feet

under him, but the plan is to have him do work similar to that which Connor Mertz did for the District. In other news, there are a lot of councils and committees that Evans helps out with, most notably the MACD Education Work Group (former Committee) which she is currently chairing. That group has broken into teams to work on specific topic and projects, including the Rolling River Trailer Team, the Stewardship Week/Poster Contest Team, the Outreach Team (taking over the work that the CD Outreach Work Group was doing), and the MACD Scholarship Team. All of the Teams have met except the Rolling Rivers Trailer Team, but they should be meeting soon. The idea is that a member of each team can then report to the larger Work Group, which is meeting every other month right now.

Old Business

Day on the Range details-Will be at the Ponderosa Snow Warriors clubhouse, September 21. The Club is doing the food for us and Claudia Lyman has been working on a speaker/presentation line-up.

Update on Liability Insurance-We should have our quote from Rocky Mountain Insurance Services soon.

Update on the 3 Bar x Conservation Center-Jeff listened in on the hearing about the West Billings Education Center which died 15-0. If we were to make a push for ours, we need to make sure that we have the MACD, County Commissioners and other partners behind us and focus on the regional nature of it. We haven't heard anything from the Vulk family.

New Business

Augusta FFA Program donation potential-put off to the June Meeting in Augusta.

UCA updates-Evans shared the recommended updates to the UCA. The board agreed with the changes, and so Evans will forward those changes to Becky Ayre to move up the chain.

Augusta meeting will be at 9:30 am-Local Work Group will be done after our meeting concludes. Lunch at the Buckhorn Bar after the meetings.

John said he's been working with some engineers who want to come to one of our meetings to talk about work. They've been working with the Helena Valley Flood mitigation.

Excused vs. unexcused absences for supervisors-there was a brief discussion about this topic, and it was concluded that we need to have it on future agendas/in the minutes.

310 Permit Applications

LC-03-23 Sterling Ranch Co.-there was no inspection requested since no work has yet been done since the team went out in 2022. Motion by Baucus, second by Nordahl to approve with the modification that a follow up inspection is required; motion carried.

Other Business

BLM public lands management shift proposal-Karl Christians asked if anyone had read anything about it. Sounds like there's a possibility that they'll be focusing on

recreation rather than grazing. Karl has encouraged people to get out and monitor their range management effects.

Jeff Ryan went out on Black Sandy and met with the new FWP Engineer. A 200 foot soil lift is going to bid out for \$34,000 as the low bid.

Karl mentioned that the State Technical Committee meetings need to be better attended by Conservation Districts. If there's a concern with the NRCS requirements, then the CD supervisors need to be getting involved and questioning the specifications at the STAC meeting.

Other Business



Operations plan review - The board reviewed the 1st quarter operations plan.

Evans anniversary review - Jeff Ryan completed the review prior to the meeting.

Announcements

Adjournment at 3:28 pm

Next meeting — May 11, 2023 1 pm Helena USDA Service Center.

| | | |
|-------------|--|---------|
| Approved by |  | 5/11/23 |
| | | Date |
| Recorded by |  | 5/11/23 |
| | | Date |