



Lewis and Clark Conservation District

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

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

March 14, 2024, 1 pm

USDA Svc. Ctr. Conf Room, 790 Colleen Street, Helena MT
and via Zoom Conferencing

Call to Order—The meeting was called to order by chairman Jeff Ryan at 1 p.m. In attendance were Jeff Ryan, Karl Christians, John Baucus, *Jeanette Nordahl, Sarah Howe-Cobb, Skyler Van Dyken*. Also in attendance were Tracy Wendt, Andrew Kretschmer, Joe Kremer-Herman, Keegan McClanahan, Grant Williams. (*attendees in italics were on Zoom*).

Introductions—Introductions were made.

Minutes—Motion by Ryan to approve the minutes from February, second by Baucus; motion carried.

Financial Statement & Outstanding Bills—Motion by Nordahl to approve the financial statement and to pay the outstanding bills, second by Ryan; motion carried.

Supervisor Absences—Stan was absent.

Correspondence

Horse Creek Hills decision-Keegan gave some background on the subdivision ruling. The judge put a stop to the subdivision. The judge was concerned about the water availability. This issue will likely go to the Supreme Court. This could affect the exempt wells across the state.

Public Comment-No public comment.

Reports

NRCS—Andrew passed out hard copies of his written report.

DNRC—no report

SRWG—Tracy Wendt has spoken with Alan Beck and they're going to do a volunteer day to do some work. Alan is going to have some folks look at his big bend and maybe request some revisions on his 310 permit. He's really eager to get some project work done. They're waiting on the RDG funds from DNRC for a granted project and can't spend their federal funding until they get that match. They're going to be featured with the MWCC's tour this

CONSERVATION • DEVELOPMENT • SELF-GOVERNMENT

year. Tracy will keep the board informed on that. They got a community grant to do some work on Wadsworth Pond in Cascade County. Next Wednesday at 2 pm is the next water quality meeting. They'll have an MSU student in to talk about how water efficiency practices are affecting the water availability and quality. Their watershed is at around 50-60% snowpack. GID is still anticipating filling the reservoirs so far, but the irrigation season may be shorter. The Water Management group meets in April. They'll have someone in to talk about the Drought Map and how that map gets adjusted, as well as someone from the Weather Service to talk about projected weather. October's meeting will be at Cascade CD's new building.

The USFS has some weed pulls/spray dates scheduled already. She sent dates to Chris and Joe. The Weed Whacker Rodeo is July 13th. They're attending the Wild Wings Celebration in Choteau. She has about \$600,000 of grant applications submitted and is hoping for success so that she can hire another person. They will be applying for a WMG to provide some capacity in funding. She will be requesting some letters of support from the Conservation District.

MRCDC—They are still fighting test flows, but are hoping to get 50/50 mitigation. Test flows will cause a huge loss in those communities. On the Council side, they are still working on the River Rendezvous. It will be in Broadwater County, Hellgate, Confederate Gulch areas. CMR Working group is focusing on range monitoring through the summer. They'll be doing a tour in Petroleum County. They've been responding to numerous potential rule changes. At the last Council meeting they had a speaker present on coordination. There was an Executive Order signed by Bill Clinton that requires federal agencies to coordinate and work to reach consensus with local government.

WQPD—Keegan is the hydrogeologist with the WQPD. Keegan said that they are working with the City of Helena on some water rights. They've put in some exploratory wells and are hoping to discuss that at their next meeting. Jeff said that the last meeting they had a presentation by Gary Burton on the Water Watchers program.

LHWG—Joe gave an update on their activities. Their next meeting is next Wednesday. He will be presenting on behalf of the CD. The Rain Barrel Workshop will be April 25th. The CD will be running the registration for the event. They haven't yet set a date for the Lake Helena Watershed Festival.

Helena CORE—Joe didn't attend the last meeting. The Beaver Creek project tour will be June 20th, and Joe will be doing the other one on July 30th.

MACD—Their Spring Board meeting is the week of June 10th. They are looking to sponsor/host a riparian grazing workshop on July 10th that they would like to involve the Conservation District in. They are looking for a location to have the workshop too. We haven't received payment from DNRC yet, so have not yet paid our dues.

Supervisor Reports

Jeff Ryan-Jeff has been working on finding willow to cut. Joe and Jeff met with Larry Urban last week to get permission to cut some cottonwood for the Ryan Blake project on Lake Helena. The landowner has equipment reserved for doing his trench and he has a plan to get some soil.

Karl Christians-Things are quiet in Karl's area, he is calving right now.

John Baucus-They are calving right now and will be lambing soon. He heard that BLM is planning some sort of cleanup project in the North Hills where the fire was a few years ago. They'll be doing some hand clearing.

Skyler Van Dyken-Calving is going pretty well (the last month), over 80% done. He heard the first meadowlark today.

Jeanette Nordahl-Jeanette said she spent all this week reviewing 47 grant applications for the Noxious Weed Trust Fund. She said she'll be back in Helena in April sometime.

Sarah Howe-Cobb-Weather is beautiful, calving is going well, the bear specialists are asking to see bears. She's looking at surgery in the next month or so. She is hoping to be able to come to a meeting soon.

Staff Reports

Joe Kremer-Herman-Joe has been busy. Working on the Pollinator Certification program still, about half done. Nonprofit board training with the SRWG. He went to the STAC in Missoula last week. The Area 6 employees meeting last week, the Montana wetlands council meeting this week. Karl asked if there were many people at the STAC meeting, and if there were many Conservation District supervisors. Maybe one.

Chris Evans -Written report.

New Business

There are a series of applications (CDB Project Grant, RDG Planning Grant and RDG Project Grant) for the Threemile Reservoir project and for the Feathered Pipe Ranch (a CDB Pollinator Grant).

Grant gave some background on his proposed project. The board has already approved sponsorship of the CDB project grant, but Grant is asking for approval of sponsorship of the RDG Planning grant and the RDG Project grant. Discussion centered around timelines. Karl Christians said that he would like to see some in-kind from the Gehring ranch since they benefit from the reservoir. **Motion by Ryan** to approve sponsorship of all of the applications, **second by Christians**; discussion centered around the Threemile project, centering on revised bids, potential for funding through TU and the Western Native Trout Initiative. Impacts of the potential failure of the dam were discussed, including the value of the irrigation, habitat for fish and wildlife. John Baucus indicated concern of the cost of engineering. Andrew said that he'd be happy to take a request for assistance from Grant to the NRCS for their program work. The area engineer may be able to assist. Tracy said that if they're getting funding from DNRC the CD might be able to request assistance from the DNRC engineer for at least reviewing the plan. **Motion carried.**

310 Permit Applications

CP-01-24 A. Schneiderhan-It appears that the bottom block is not embedded as was required under the permit application. Tabled pending an actual in-person on-site. Motion by Baucus, second by Ryan; motion carried. Evans will contact the landowner and set up a

site visit when the snow is off enough to view, or will obtain written permission to go on the site. She will attend that site visit as well.

CP-02-24 J. Schneiderhan-Motion to approve mitigative measures by Christians, second by Ryan; additional requirement to do a follow up site visit when the snow is off. Motion carried.

LC-01-24 Newman-Tabled pending on-site visit.

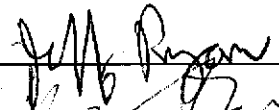

LC-02-24 Campbell-Tabled pending on-site visit.

LC-03-24 Grady-Tabled pending on-site visit.

Announcements

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3 pm.

Next meeting—April 11, 2024 at 1 pm, USDA Service Center, 790 Colleen Street, Helena MT.

Approved by  Date 4/11/24
Recorded by  Date 4/10/24