Lewis and Clark Conservation District

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REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
July 9, 2026 10:00 am
Augusta Community Center, Augusta Montana
And Zoom conferencing

Call to Order—The meeting was called to order by chair Jeff Ryan at 10 am. In attendance were Jeff Ryan, Sarah Howe-Cobb, Stan Frasier, *Karl Christians* and *Becca Boslough King* . Also in attendance were *Andy Welch*, Becky Ayre, Andrew Kretschmer, Chris Evans, Madison Colyer, Bayley (SRWG), and Joe Kremer-Herman. Italics denote Zoom attendance.

Introductions–Introductions were made.

Public Comment–Andy Welch from Northwestern Energy was on Zoom. Andy wanted to run through collaborative types of projects that NWE does that affect the CD operations. Infrastructure and Maintenance improvement projects are some of the types of projects that the CD might be concerned about. They would also potentially engage with the CD on permits from landowners for docks, restoration, etc.

FERC projects vary significantly across the nation on shoreline boundary management. Those in Montana have been pretty laid back up til now, but probably will be changing that in the near future. Jeff Ryan asked if any project that comes to the CD if there's any encroachment into the water, we should run that by Andy. Boat landings, piers, large retaining walls, large anchored boat docks, etc. should be an engagement. Simple floating docks, not as much. The docks at American Bar on Upper Holter are so large, they had to be authorized through FERC.

Jeff asked for clarification on the large retaining wall requests that recently came through the CD, with the original applications requesting a fairly sizable encroachment into the reservoir. Andy said that it was likely that they would be involved "generally" at or below the high water mark. Jeff asked about the difference between the Black Sandy and White Sandy projects and why one worked with NWE and one didn't. Andy said that it had to do with some old surveying issues and property line issues.

Gas and electric transmission projects are some projects that NWE will also engage with the CD as necessary.

They have 2 technical advisory committees, the Missouri Fisheries and Wildlife Committees. The goal is to minimize or offset effects from NWE's projects. They use a collaborative approach to look at projects. Jeff asked about the process of the technical advisory committees and how applications are made through those. Andy said that they try to handle all of those during their annual meetings, sometime between hunting season and the Christmas holiday season. Applicants need a sponsor who sits on the committee. They work a lot with Allen McNeal to help

develop the projects. Projects can be really small to really comprehensive. Jeff mentioned the Brushy Toe demo project on Little Prickly Pear Creek. He asked if that would be a type of project that the group would fund.

Wild Tech hasn't had a whole lot of projects in our area, but they did provide some funding to the Beaver Creek project. The main criteria is that proposed projects show some sort of connection to their goals. There is a one mile buffer up the tributaries.

Sarah asked if NWE has done any projects with the Gibson Dam/Sun River area. Andy said that around 2011/12 they did some work when Steve Leathe was there, where a landowner had been doing a lot of digging around and needed to do some work to restore. They have worked some with the SRWG, but they don't engage a whole lot in the Sun River Watershed.

310 Permit Applications

CP-01-26 Trout Creek LLC-Karl went on the onsite along with Joe. There's no violation as far as Karl is concerned. Motion Karl Christians to determine this a non-violation, second by Frasier; motion carried.

CP-02-26 Little Wolf Creek Ranch LLC-Dam on Little Wolf Creek-Joe hasn't heard back from them as of yet. Joe sent the complaint letter to the owner of record as well as the physical address.

CP-03-26 Sherman-Blue Cloud Creek. Joe attached DEQ's photos and their report. The complaint that the CD received was from FWP. Their pilot thought that he saw some settling ponds. Van Sherman responded to Joe and they discussed the operation, and Sherman said that there's no operation work going on right now. DEQ has determined this to be a violation of the Water Quality Act, to cease and desist all operations. Inspection by the CD is pending.

LC-32-26 Byrne Missouri River/Holter Application was submitted for an area near the York Bridge. Permit expired before they could finish the project, so this application is to finish the work under the first permit. In the original application he did have a dock request, but the first application was unclear as to the plans for the dock. The team recommended waiving the 15 day waiting period to facilitate the revegetation as quickly as possible. Jeff asked if the silt fence was properly installed. DEQ apparently has reviewed and approved the fence. The plan is to hydroseed. Motion by Frasier to approve, waiving the 15 days, second by Howe-Cobb; motion carried. Joe will follow up on the possible violation.

LC-33-26 Rosenthal Silver Creek up by Marysville. The applicant would like to install some beaver exclusion fencing upstream and downstream from a few culverts. Motion by Ryan to approve, second by Frasier; motion carried.

LC-34-26 Schachtner Marsh Creek This one and LC-35 were both designed by Allen McNeal, they are planning to remove a culvert and change how they move cattle. There is a bridge crossing involved as well. Pending inspection on both.

LC-35-26 Grady Marsh Creek-Pending site visit.

LC-36-26 NWE This is horizontal drilling beneath Park and Threemile Creek. Original application was for section one, but they opted to resubmit for the rest of the project in one go. Motion by Ryan to approve as submitted, second by Frasier; motion carried.

Rules-There was no engagement about the updated rules for the implementation of the 310 law at the public hearing, so the board can adopt as they've been drafted. Motion by Ryan to approve the new rules, second by Frasier; motion carried.

Review Governance Calendar for July/August-The board reviewed the calendars for July and August.

Minutes—Motion by Ryan to approve the minutes as sent, second by Frasier; motion carried.

Financial Statement & Outstanding Bills–Motion by Ryan to approve as sent and pay the outstanding bills, second by Howe-Cobb; motion carried.

Supervisor absences–John is haying, Jeanette is on a river float, Elena is headed for Ireland: all excused

Correspondence
Evans share the correspondence with the board

Reports
NRCS—They've been working on the FY26 applications and that they are already receiving for FY 27. They have a new chief. They are continuing the ongoing concepts, but are working on expanding outdoor access. Within Montana, they've launched a media campaign to get people into the office to start planning for next year. Sarah asked about advertisements to hang in the Augusta area.
DNRC—written report in packet.
SRWG—Madison said that they've gotten through the crazy event list for this year, so they have a bit of a break in July. They'll be working with Alan Beck again on Smith Creek, where he had willow planting done. They'd like to get to the third bend, which is the biggest. They are looking for volunteers. She thanked the CD for the Backpack sprayer. The Weed Whacker Rodeo is this weekend, free food, good prizes. The Muddy Creek 50% design will be done sometime in July. The Floweree Canal PER should be done hopefully in November.They had a mid-season check in call for water management and users in June. Madison and Bayley(???) have been organizing some Bashin' Trash activities. They're going to do a July 25 event, 9 am to 3 pm, at the Craig boat launch. Joe has a flyer. Evans will put it up on Facebook and the website. They floated part of the river from 287 Bridge to just before Broken O's main office recently. They'd like to float above 287 but haven't identified exactly where to put into the river. They've done some site visit field days, taking a look at diversions and identifying if they're fish barriers. Grant-wise, they are still seeking some funds. They have a board meeting on the 16th at 11 am at the Do Bar in Great Falls, and their BBQ and the Ballpark is August 6th.
MRCDC—Written report in the packet.
LHWG & Helena CORE—Joe said that the Watershed Festival is August 8th. The CORE Summer Walk Series starts today. The one the CD is doing will be at the Brushy Toe Project site with the Rolling Rivers Trailer.

WQPD—They provided a copy of the last meeting minutes. They really would like our CD to be back on their board.
Weed District—no report
MACD—Motion to move the website to MACD by Howe-Cobb, second Frasier; motion carried REsolution Motion by Christians to approve the resolution, second by Howe-Cobb; motion carried.

Supervisor Reports
Ryan-Generator is functional, Ryan noted the newsletter article about Drake.
Christians-Karl said they got a little over 4 inches of rain at their place, more than at the Denton place. He's busy haying. They went up to Holter for the 4th. He was shocked at the waves and the boat traffic. He'd like to have a meeting to talk about the boat traffic and wake issues, especially on Holter. They are going to look into doing the collars for the cows to assist in grazing management.
Frasier-Stan said that he's been working on a fence around the yard. The fence is in and it's working. He said that he got about 2.5 inches of rain. Stan said that he killed 11 mice in his car over the last few weeks. The wiring has something palatable on it.
Howe-Cobb-Sarah had some interesting news about the Augusta School greenhouse. They had to move the building to put in a field and track area for the school. They are going to refurbish and start using it. Sarah said that she and Mike and one of the teachers from the school are going to start a noxious weed education program with some of the sixth graders. Sarah said that with all the rain Gibson is doing great, but the headwaters of Smith and Ford Creeks must have missed some of the precipitation. She asked the group if they think that the drought is actually over. The consensus was that no, the drought is not over. Things are better, but it's not over.
Boslough King-Becca said that she was sorry that she couldn't make it in person. She doesn't have a ton of updates, but was interested in hearing about the resolution. There was some discussion about the MLA/SMZ issue that might be coming for the next legislative session.

Staff Reports
Evans provided a written report and gave some highlights about the convention planning and the Supervisor Training Workgroup activities.
Joe's highlights were the Brushy Toe project tour, in some of the worst weather. Joe went to the Rangeland Tour over in the Gold Creek area. They'd had a "stream restoration" section on their agenda, but it consisted mostly of water gaps. They also had some interesting activities using sprinkler irrigation to simulate the return flows of flood irrigation. He got a handout and gave it to Chris Evans in case anyone is interested. He's been doing a lot of site visits and had the trailer at the Old Salt Festival. This year it wasn't in the kids area.

Old Business
Records Review-Motion by Frasier, second by Ryan to dispose of the records.
Status of Personnel Policy draft-Still waiting on DNRC for the updated Personnel Policy.
Status of Procedures manual-Nearly complete, pending any changes

New Business
Need to create a policy for electronic records-See email from SOS-Since so many of the district

records are moving solely to electronic format, the board will need to create a policy defining which records are the official records. Records retention rules still apply, and a migration plan will be necessary.
Operations Plan quarterly report-Evans had a copy of the quarterly report for operations in each packet.

Other Business
The meeting adjourned at 12:04.

Announcements
Next meeting—August 13, 2026, at Lambkins Restaurant, in the big room in back, at 9:30 am.

Approved by _____ Date 8/13/26

Recorded by _____ Date 8/13/26