



FLATHEAD

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell, MT 59901 | www.flatheadcd.org | 406-752-4220

CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE

Chair Pete Woll called the January 27, 2020, Business meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. in the conference room.

Board members present: Pete Woll, Chair; Dean Sirucek, Secretary/Treasurer; John Ellis, Supervisor; Verdell Jackson, Supervisor; Ronald Buentemeier, Supervisor; Lech Naumovich, Supervisor, being a quorum of the Board.

Also in attendance were Donna Pridmore, Associate Supervisor; Hailey Graf, Samantha Tappenbeck, FCD staff; Mikaela Richardson, AmeriCorps Member; Susan Hulslander, CPA; Patti Lechlitter, Three Rivers Bank; Breanne Carr, Morrison-Maierle; Sean Johnson, NRCS; Ginger Kauffman was absent.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Verdell Jackson motioned “to nominate Pete Woll as Chair.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Ronald Buentemeier motioned “to nominate Lori Curtis as Vice-Chair”. Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Lori Curtis motioned “to nominate Dean Sirucek as Secretary/Treasurer.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

MINUTES

Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the minutes of the January 13, 310-Stream Permit meeting as presented.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

Email: Workshops, Meetings

1. Soil Health Symposium 2020 Vision and Beyond, February 4-5, 2020, Billings Hotel & Convention Center. To register and get hotel information, go to <http://mtsoilhealth.org/>
2. Montana Water Summit, March 3-4, 2020, Helena <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/water/management/training-education/the-montana-water-summit-2020>

3. SAVE THE DATE: North America Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA) and Montana Invasive Species Council announce the NAISMA 27th Annual Conference *Transboundary Cooperation*, October 6-8, The Lodge at Whitefish Lake, Whitefish. <https://www.naisma.org/>
Concurrent sessions will present new techniques and technologies, standards, climate change impacts and adaptation strategies, biocontrol updates, forest pests, feral hogs, new invasive species on the horizon, aquatic invasive species management, education and awareness brands, Cooperative Weed Management Area successes, cross-jurisdictional strategies, and much more. Field trips to Glacier National Park, Flathead Lake and surrounding natural areas will also be held.

Email: Newsletters/Publications

1. National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)
eResource, Conservation Clips
<http://www.nacdnet.org>
2. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Success Stories, go to
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mt/newsroom/stories/e2ae21b4-e679-447d-bc20-dd96b4ece9be/>
3. DNRC Montana Invasive Species Council Bulletin
<http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/montana-invasive-species-program/misc>
4. Montana Watershed Coordination Council
Watershed News <http://mtwatersheds.org/app/>

Email: Funding/Grants

1. DNRC Watershed Management Grant cycle opens January 22.
Go to <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/resource-development/renewable-resource-grant-program/watershed-management-grant-program> for more information. Contact: Jorri Dyer, Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program Specialist Montana DNRC, 406-444-6839, Jorri.dyer2@mt.gov

FINANCIAL

The following bills were reviewed:

1. CenturyLink \$311.35
2. Daily Interlake \$25.00
3. Snowghost Design Inc. \$388.00
4. VISA \$786.45

Dean Sirucek motioned that “checks be paid as presented”. Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments.

310's

Bradley, FL2019066C & FL2019067C, Unnamed Stream, complaints: Ronald Buentemeier explained the need for an onsite inspection in spring.

Ronald Buentemeier motioned to “notify the applicant that the onsite inspection will be scheduled in spring with 30 days of notice.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motioned carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

District Accounts: Lori Curtis/Pete Woll/Lech Naumovich

Patti Leichliter, Three Rivers Bank CFO, and Susan Hulslander, CPA, were present at the meeting for a discussion of FCD’s accounts and possible updates. The board discussed FDIC concerns and account options and limitations. Pattie provided information on a new offer from Three Rivers Bank and Susan added that she could help FCD with any accounting changes.

Ronald Buentemeier motioned “that the committee communicate with the bank and come back with a written proposal”. John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Pollinator Film Screening: Samantha Tappenbeck provided information on an opportunity for FCD to host a film screening of a documentary titled, “The Pollinators.” Samantha provided cost estimates for three different locations. The board discussed the film and possible locations for hosting the screening.

Pete Woll motioned “to support the film screening.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carries unanimously.

The board further discussed advertising, co-sponsors, and involving the Flathead Beekeepers Association. Samantha agreed to explore additional options and notify the board once a venue had been selected.

AIS Funding Request: Lori Curtis submitted the following information and request: Conservation Districts throughout the state of Montana have been taking action in the fight against Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). Several CDs have partnered with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and are successfully operating entire watercraft inspection stations.

One of the greatest AIS threats lies here in the Flathead Basin in the form of Zebra and Quagga mussels. Historically, the FCD has supported AIS through the Flathead Basin Commission and the Whitefish Lake Institute answering specific requests. This funding has supported a variety of AIS efforts, but AIS has never been a consistent line item in FCD’s budget.

In 2017, WLI purchased a decontamination unit and associated equipment, and has run the Decontamination Station ever since. The station was initially problematic as it had no permanent location. Watercraft users faced inconsistent locations and information making it difficult to follow decontamination rules and protocols. In partnership with WLI, the City of Whitefish in 2019 made a permanent home for the decontamination station near City Beach. A number of improvements have been and will continue to be made to the site, including installation of a water hydrant, improved water drainage, a storage building, and more. WLI is raising all of the funding through grants to complete that work this year. The City has also taken over staffing the decontamination station with City

Beach “Rangers” -employees who also do watercraft inspections and carry out other non-AIS duties at City Beach. This has significantly reduced the cost of the program. WLI provides funding annually to pay for the Decontamination Station staffing. Also new in 2019, FWP now requires all complex ballast boats as well as boats that have been in infested waterways to be decontaminated prior to launching in Montana waters. As a result, all FWP watercraft inspection stations now have decontamination capabilities that are covered under the Montana funding bill.

Because the WLI/City AIS program and Decontamination Station serve Flathead County but are not covered under the state funding bill, and because the FCD does not have the opportunity to otherwise take an active role in AIS, I recommended and the FCD approved adding a \$10K line item to the budget to support these AIS efforts. In partnership with FWP, WLI has—since 2012—written the annual recommendations for this AIS program including Decontamination Station operations, AIS prevention efforts at the watercraft inspection stations, and managing the existing Eurasian Watermilfoil infestation at Beaver Lake. As noted in the initial budget request, WLI is therefore the most reasonable entity to receive FCDs AIS dollars and contribute those funds to the areas of greatest need. For 2020 and the foreseeable future, that \$10K will help WLI fund staffing for the Decontamination Station. This serves as the request-of-record to allow WLI to invoice for the 2020 \$10K AIS fund.

Verdell Jackson asked about past support. Lori noted FCD has supported/funded the Browning station in the past and funded Flathead Basin Commission requests. Lori also noted that this is the only decontamination station that is not funded by the state.

Ronald Buentemeier motioned “to support WLI with \$10,000 requested for the AIS decontamination facility.” Dean Sirucek seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The board further discussed funding mechanisms for AIS across the state and suggested that WLI provide an annual report and statistics from the decontamination station. Lori noted that an annual report is completed on the whole program; this will be provided to the district per the MOA.

Conservation District Landowner Award: Lech Naumovich provided copies of a proposal for the Flathead Land Steward-of-the-Year Award and described his intent for proposing the program. The board discussed the feasibility and administration of the proposed program as well as the nomination process and eligibility for the award. Dean Sirucek suggested a date be set for the award and Hailey Graf recommended April 13th, to highlight FCD’s birthday.

Ronald Buentemeier motioned “to try a program that recognizes landowners that have been stewards of their land”. Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Staff will work with Lech to put together formal program guidelines and a draft ad for the Beacon for review and consideration by the Board.

Professional Development: Samantha Tappenbeck provided information on a training she would like to attend.

John Ellis motioned “to approve Samantha to attend professional development training for \$140.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

End of Month Report (December): Ginger Kauffman provided; Hailey presented

Lori Cutis motioned “to approve the End of Month Report for December.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Flathead CD Staff:

Office and Administration

310 Permits – Ginger is currently working on the DNRC 310 Report. At the end of the year, a report form comes from the DNRC requesting information on the types of 310's the district received and the decisions for each. DNRC uses this information to provide administrative grant funding to districts. In 2019 Flathead CD processed 59 310-Applications, 1 Notice of Emergency and 12 Complaints, for a total of 72.

Bookkeeping – Ginger processed payroll on 1/8/2020 and 1/22/2020 along with associated payments and reports. She also completed all necessary bookkeeping for 2019 taxes and filed documentation with the CPA. Ginger worked with Dean Sirucek to reconcile the November and December bank statements and revenue sheets and completed both End of Month Budget Reports.

District Office – Ginger created all necessary files and file structures for 2020 and transferred 2019 files to file storage. Ginger is also coordinating with Grizzly Security ShredEx to shred and dispose of old, sensitive documents.

Workplan – All staff are collaborating to update and revamp the workplan to better reflect current district goals and staff responsibilities.

Personnel – Ginger and Hailey reviewed current workloads and outlined job duties for a Bookkeeper position. Hailey wrote a job announcement and the position is currently advertised through Flathead Beacon, social media, the website, FVCC job board, and the MT job service. The position closes on February 14 and we have received 1 quality application so far. Hailey will conduct further outreach and advertisement if too few applications are received.

Big Sky Watershed AmeriCorps Training – Hailey and Mikaela attended a three-day training in Bozeman, January 15-17. The training focused on team building, leadership training, program development and administration, and AmeriCorps service requirements.

On-the-Ground Projects

Cow Creek Restoration Project – This project is funded through a DEQ 319 grant and was implemented throughout summer and fall of 2019. In November and December, Hailey and Ginger compiled the match tracking documents and billing statements and Hailey completed and submitted the required annual report to DEQ. Samantha conducted an onsite visit of the project with DEQ representative Christina Staten.

Trumbull Creek Restoration and Aquifer Protection Project – This project is funded through a DNRC Renewable Resources Grant and we will be working on it through December 2021. With input from the Trumbull Creek review committee, Hailey wrote and released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). This will begin the process of contracting an engineer for the project. Responses to the RFQ are due by February 14. The committee will review the responses Feb 17-21 and will make a recommendation for moving forward at the next Business Meeting. Following that, negotiations will take place and Hailey will work with Caitlin Overland to write a contract. Final approval from the board will take place in March.

Krause Creek – This project was approved during the recent legislative session for funding through the DRNC Renewable Resources Grant program; however, funding has not been released for it yet.

Programs

Conservation Grant Program – Adjustments to the timeline and name of the Cost-Share Program were approved at the January 310 meeting. This Conservation Grant Program is currently open to FY20-21 applications until April 30th. Samantha and Hailey processed the contracts for the successful applicants for FY19-20, and will continue to coordinate with landowners as projects are implemented.

Seedling Program – Samantha is now managing the Seedling Program and has discussed the program and management needs with landowners. Six landowners have placed orders so far with more expected in the coming months.

Education Grant Program – This program is currently open for applications. So far, the District has funded one project at Glacier Gateway School to purchase a tower garden. Hailey and Samantha are continuing to conduct outreach for the program and coordinate with educators as they complete projects.

College Scholarship Program – Samantha updated the forms and guidelines for the 2020 scholarship season and distributed to local schools, posted on the website, and advertised in the Flathead Beacon (1/29/20 issue). We have received one application so far with more expected prior to the deadline of March 15th.

Watershed Support Program – Samantha worked with Dean to organize and host a meeting on 1/17/20 with partner agencies and organizations to determine restoration priorities and opportunities for collaboration on implementation of this program. In preparation for that meeting, Samantha worked with Dean to rank and prioritize potential restoration project sites that were identified using aerial imagery during development of the Watershed Restoration Plan. Samantha is now working to develop program goals and guidelines to bring forward for consideration by the Board.

Pollinator Initiative – Hailey, Samantha, Mikaela, and Donna Pridmore attended the Area V Pollinator Initiative Training hosted in Ronan on 1/21/20. This training covered the details of the program that was successfully developed and implemented by Lake County CD, and provided information and resources for Area V CDs to develop their own Pollinator Initiative Program.

Rain Garden Initiative – The goal of this program is to reduce Nonpoint Source Pollution through education and by facilitating construction of rain gardens throughout the county. This program is partially funded through a grant from the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Montana. In partnership with the City of Kalispell, Hailey and Mikaela are working to create education materials and plan education events. Mikaela will also be coordinating with interested landowners regarding rain garden construction in spring. Hailey also attended a planning meeting with Karin Hilding, an engineer for the City of Whitefish, to discuss a prospective rain garden at the Whitefish Armory near Cow Creek.

Education and Outreach

Workshops – Samantha and Hailey coordinated with partner organization for the upcoming Landowner Stewardship Seminar Series. This seminar series will take place over seven weeks and will include presentations by numerous partners on topics such as soil health, pasture management, forestry & fire preparedness, wells & septic systems, and noxious weed management.

Advertisements – We ran advertisements in the Flathead Beacon for the Land Stewardship Seminar, Education Grant Program, and College Scholarship Program.

Website and Social Media – Hailey and Samantha continued to manage the website and Facebook page to update information on available programs, relevant conservation issues or practices, and upcoming events. Over the last 30 days, the website had 736 users and 1,715 pageviews. The most frequently viewed pages included the Bookkeeper job announcement and the Nonpoint Source Pollution information page. The Facebook page reached 1,133 users and had 138 post engagements and 5 new followers.

eNewsletter – The Local Dirt was distributed on 12/6/2019 and 1/6/2020. The newsletter included upcoming events, available programs, blog posts, a partner profile, a success story, and 310 permitting. The current mailing list includes 120 people. The January issue was opened by 189 times and had 40 total clicks.

Upcoming Events – Hailey, Samantha, and Mikaela are preparing for several upcoming events including a Northwest Montana Association of Realtors (NMAR) conference January 29-30th, and Free the Seeds Event March 7th. Staff will host a table at the NMAR event with information on streamside best management practices, the 310 Law, and local water quality issues. Mikaela will also be putting together interactive Jeopardy games for both events. At the Free the Seeds Event, staff will teach a pollinator workshop and host an informational table.

Partnerships

- Samantha attended the Montana Ag Forum on December 10th.
- Samantha attended the River2Lake Initiative meeting on December 11th.
- Samantha hosted a booth at the Flathead High School Career Fair on December 12th.
- Samantha and Hailey attended the River Steward Program meeting on December 17th.
- Hailey and Samantha attended the Flathead Basin Commission Onsite Wastewater Treatment Committee meeting on December 18th.

- Hailey is coordinating with Ray Nickless, National Weather Service, and Valerie Kurth to host a presentation on the new Inundation Mapping Tool for Flathead River. The presentation will be on March 13th and will include a demonstration of the real-time mapping capabilities.
- Mikaela and Hailey attended the Flathead CORE meeting on January 23 and shared information on the Pollinator Initiative and upcoming events.
- Samantha, Mikaela, and Hailey attended Conservation Roundtable meeting on January 8th.
- Samantha attended the Interagency Meeting on January 15th.
- Hailey attended a Family Forestry Expo planning meeting on January 21st.
- Mikaela attended the Women and Water Lunch on January 23rd.

Natural Resources & Conservation Service (NRCS): Sean Johnson

➤ **Programs**

○ EQIP

- Long Range Plan submitted for review
 - Working on minor changes from review by state office staff
- Developed a TIP for Ashley Lake forest health
 - Received very positive reviews by area and state office staff
 - Getting reviewed from 2/18-2/20 for official approval by state leadership team

○ CSP

- Working through new CSP-GCI program applications

➤ **Review Items**

- Met as part of the Watershed Protection Program among other partners for FCD
- 2018 Farm Bill Training in Billings
 - Quite a few changes coming in program delivery
- Met in Missoula to help review all Missoula Area TIPs that were submitted

➤ **Upcoming Items**

- Notification of potential TIP approval following 2/20 leadership meeting
- River Stewards meeting to review Ashley Creek TMDL
- Meeting with FS in Libby for the development of a Joint Chief's agreement between FS and NRCS
- Meeting with DNRC service foresters to discuss newly updated contract for service foresters to help write NRCS management plans

➤ **Miscellaneous**

- Kalispell office listed as a potential location for a pathways intern this summer

➤ **Water Supply Outlook Report**

- Maps on following page

Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD): Pete Woll reported Monthly phone call next Monday.

Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB): Dean Sirucek reported FCPB had a meeting on 1/8/20 and discussed two small zone changes and a large development for guest cabins on 20+ acre property along Lake Five. They went ahead with positive recommendation to commissioners

Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB): John Ellis reported No meeting this month; City Council turned down apartments proposed near schools due to pushback from neighborhood to get kicked back from Planning Board to the Council.

Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC3): Lori Curtis reported Next UC3 meeting is scheduled for 1/29/20 at Flathead Electric Cooperative.

Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC): Hailey Graf reported HBWC recently had a meeting on January 15 and the meeting minutes are available on FCD's website. The next meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2020.

Flathead Basin Commission (FBC): Dean Sirucek reported The next FBC meeting will be on 2/19/20. FBC received an EPA grant that will be utilized for leachate monitoring.

Clark Fork & Kootenai River Basins Council (CFKRBC): Verdell Jackson reported CFKRBC recently had a meeting and discussed opportunities to change the working relationship between the Council and DNRC.

MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF

MACD Survey: Hailey reminded the board that comments regarding the MACD reorganization can still be submitted.

Workplan: Hailey Graf provided a background on FCD's long-range plan and current workplan. She suggested FCD reevaluate the long-range plan and use it to inform annual workplans for the staff and the budget. The board discussed the intent of the current workplan, time management for staff, and need for the long-range plan to be updated. Staff will update the annual workplan for review at the February Business Meeting and will begin working on the long-range plan for review before the June budget meeting.

The board also discussed the issue of unapproved permit modifications. Ronald Buentemeier provided examples of when modifications were made by landowners or contractors and suggested amendments to the Team Member Report to help ameliorate the issue. Lech suggested additional modifications to the permit letter. Staff will draft some example amendments and will distribute to the board for further discussion at the next meeting.

Ronald Buentemeier also brought forward his concerns over FCD's involvement with water rights and reiterated that FCD cannot consider water rights as a factor in making 310 permit decisions. The board discussed recent 310 permit applications and agreed to continue the discussion at the next 310-Stream Permit Meeting.

Lech Naumovich described to the board that he had recently been contacted regarding a complaint. The board briefly discussed the process for handling public inquiries and complaints.

The next 310-Stream Permit meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 10, 2020, 7:00 P.M. in the conference room of the USDA building at 133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell, MT.

Adjournment: Lori Curtis motioned “to adjourn”. Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:54 P.M.

Submitted By:

Hailey Graf
Resource Conservationist

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

<u>2/10/2020</u>	<u>Pete Woll</u>	<u>Chair</u>
(Date)	(Signature)	(Title – Chair etc.)