



FLATHEAD

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE

Chair Pete Woll called the February 24, 2020, Business meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the conference room.

Board members present: Pete Woll, Chair; Lori Curtis, Vice 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 and Samantha Tappenbeck, Flathead CD staff; Mikaela Richardson, Big Sky Watershed Corps AmeriCorps Member; Sean Johnson, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

MINUTES

Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2020, 310-Stream Permit meeting as presented.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

FINANCIAL

The following bills were reviewed:

1. CenturyLink \$311.35
2. Daily Interlake \$31.10
3. MACD \$17,000.00
4. Mountain States Leasing \$1,599.73
5. NW Montana Fair \$355.00
6. Stonykill Films \$250.00
7. Susan Hulslander, CPA \$1,493.00
8. VISA \$3,141.81
9. MontanaSky Network \$10.00

Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the bills as presented.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one was present to comment on items not listed on the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

End of Month Budget Report (January): The January End of Month Budget Report was reviewed with the Board.

Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the End of Month Budget report as presented.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Furniture & Equipment Disposal Request: The Furniture & Equipment Disposal request was reviewed by the Board.

Dean Sirucek motioned “to approve the Furniture & Equipment Disposal request.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Personnel Hiring: Hailey Graf explained that the Bookkeeper application process closed on February 14th and eight applications were received. The applications were reviewed by the committee and she had contacted references.

Pete Woll closed the meeting at 7:12 P.M. for Board discussion. Pete Woll reopened the meeting at 7:37 P.M.

Hailey Graf will move forward with scheduling three interviews and contacting additional references.

Trumbull Creek Project Engineering: Hailey Graf explained the Trumbull Creek Request for Qualifications period closed on February 14th. Responses were received from RESPEC, and River Design Group/Water & Environmental Technologies. The responses were reviewed and ranked by the committee.

Pete Woll closed the meeting at 7:40 P.M. for Board discussion. Pete Woll reopened the meeting at 7:57 P.M.

Ronald Buentemeier motioned “to direct Hailey Graf to contact the proposed candidate and ask for clarifications as we move forward with the direct negotiations process.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Whitefish Lake Institute (WLI) Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Memorandum of Agreement (MOA): Hailey Graf provided copies of the AIS Decontamination Station Agreement with WLI and stated that on 1/27/20 the Board approved to support WLI in the amount of \$10,000.00. She noted that the agreement needs to be approved and signed to move forward. Ronald Buentemeier asked that wording be added that the agreement is only for one year. He noted that any subsequent requests for funding must be submitted to and approved by the Board.

John Ellis motioned “to amend section C of the agreement to strike the words *share annual report documentation regarding* and replace with *WLI will submit an itemized expense report for the operation of the Whitefish Lake decontamination station.*” Verdell Jackson seconded.

Discussion followed. Dean Sirucek asked if the financial report requested is already included in the annual report. Lori Curtis explained that there are financials in the annual report; however what John is asking for (staff expenses) is not as the City of Whitefish, not WLI, now deals with that and that specific information is not provided to WLI by the City of Whitefish.

Motion failed. *Lori Curtis abstained from voting.*

Ronald Buentemeier motioned “to approve the Cooperative Agreement with WLI for \$10,000 as proposed.” Dean Sirucek seconded. Motion carried. *Lori Curtis abstained from voting.*

Workplan Updates: Hailey Graf provided copies of the draft Workplan, explained minor updates that were made, and asked the board to approve as a *temporary* document to help direct district staff.

Hailey described that both the Workplan and Long-Range Plan (1964) need to be updated to help determine district priorities, goals and budget for this next fiscal year and beyond. She suggested a work session/meeting be held prior to the 2020/2021 budget meeting to develop plans that will help guide the direction of both Board and staff. The Board agreed. Board and staff were encouraged to review the Work Plan in preparation for the work session/meeting.

Ronald Buentemeier asked that copies of the Work Plan be provided showing changes/proposed modifications using color or track changes. He added that it should also be stressed to new employees that this is a draft working document that will be further reviewed and updated.

Ronald Buentemeier motioned “to temporarily adopt the changes that are proposed in the 2020 Work Plan while we review the whole process, and that the final Work Plan needs to be available by the end of August”. Dean Sirucek seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Pollinator Film Screening Event: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that *The Pollinators* film screening event will be held Friday, March 27, 6:00 P.M. at the Flathead Lake Brewing Company in Bigfork, downstairs at The Cellar. The director of the film will be in attendance for a question and answer session after the film presentation. Samantha noted that she is working to get the word out with posters, advertising in the Flathead Beacon, and that several partners are advertising the event via their mailing lists. She asked that the Screening License be signed so it can be sent with the check. Chair Pete Woll signed the license.

NW Montana Fair: Samantha Tappenbeck asked that the Vendor Application be signed for the booth at the 2020 fair this summer so it can be sent with the check. The booth will again be in the Search & Rescue building. Chair Pete Woll signed the application.

District Accounts: Lori Curtis explained that the Board will be voting to move ahead with reallocating the deposit account to the new Three Rivers Bank account which was presented to the Board at the January business meeting.

Ronald Buentemeier asked that the Agreement be reviewed by Caitlin Overland, Flathead County Attorney's office.

Lori Curtis motioned "to approve the change in our deposit reallocation based on Caitlin's approval of our doing so". Lech Naumovich seconded.

John Ellis motioned "to amend the motion to strike the words *based upon* and substitute the words *contingent upon*." Verdell Jackson seconded. Amended motion carried unanimously.

Lori Curtis motioned "to approve the change in our deposit reallocation contingent upon Caitlin's approval of our doing so". Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Flathead CD Staff: Hailey Graf, Ginger Kauffman, Samantha Tappenbeck, Mikaela Richardson provided the following report:

Office and Administration

310 Permits – Ginger processed one 310-Application and one Complaint in January, and two 310-Applications as of 2/20/20.

Bookkeeping – In Ginger's absence, the CPA processed payroll on 2/5/20, and Ginger processed payroll on 2/19/20 along with associated payments and reports. Ginger worked with Dean Sirucek to reconcile the January bank statements and revenue sheets and completed the End of Month Budget Report.

District Office –Ginger is 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.

Trainings – Ginger registered for the QuickBooks self-paced training course and Hailey attended the first Supervisor Jumpstart Training session.

Personnel – The application period for the Bookkeeper position closed on February 14th. We received seven applications. Staff and the hiring committee reviewed and ranked the applications in preparation for making a recommendation to the board for interviews.

Big Sky Watershed AmeriCorps Training – Mikaela attended a training in Bozeman on February 12-14th focused on environmental education. During that training she was also certified as a Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) instructor.

On-the-Ground Projects

Cow Creek Restoration Project – Staff and project partners are planning a meeting on March 11 to discuss spring planting, project maintenance, and outreach activity plans.

Trumbull Creek Restoration and Aquifer Protection Project – The Request for Qualifications response period closed on February 14 and we received two qualified responses. Hailey and the project committee reviewed and ranked the responses in preparation for making a recommendation to the board for negotiations and contracting. Hailey began writing a contract for review by the County Attorney.

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 – Samantha coordinated with FY19-20 contracts to place seedling orders. The Conservation Grant Program is currently open to FY20-21 applications until April 30th. Samantha provided program information to six landowners interested in applying for FY20-21 funding for projects including reforestation, riparian buffer improvement, bank stabilization, windbreaks, and livestock fencing.

Seedling Program – Seven landowners have placed orders so far with more expected prior to the program deadline of February 28.

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 – We have received one application so far with more expected prior to the deadline of March 15th. Samantha and Mikaela will promote the Scholarship Program at the Flathead County Science Fair on February 27. Applications will be reviewed, and awards allocated at the March Business meeting.

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. Samantha developed draft program goals and guidelines and priority area proposal for consideration by the Board.

Pollinator Initiative – Hailey, Samantha, and Mikaela are working to prepare program outreach materials and promotional items for the Free the Seeds Event and Workshop. Hailey and Samantha met with a representative from Flathead Electric that is interested in installing a pollinator garden with their solar array. Samantha conducted outreach to the Flathead Valley Beekeepers and will attend their meeting on February 25 to discuss

the program and upcoming events. Staff developed promotional materials and coordinated with partners to support The Pollinators film screening event on March 27.

Rain Garden Initiative – Hailey and Mikaela met with Hailey Moore from the Center for Native Plants to begin design of a rain garden plant list. The plant list will be a resource for landowners to use when designing and constructing rain gardens.

Education and Outreach

Workshops and Events – Hailey presented information on best management practices for living by water to participants of the Land Stewardship Seminar Series. Twenty-five people attended the seminar and the information was well received with great discussion about landowner assistance programs and local river morphology. Samantha presented to the Kalispell Rotary Club about Flathead Conservation District, our mission and history, activities, and available programs.

Advertisements – We ran advertisements in the Flathead Beacon for 310 permits and The Pollinators film screening event.

Website and Social Media – Hailey added a new webpage that will eventually host information on the Pollinator Initiative Program. Samantha and Hailey will continue to add information to that page as program details are solidified. We are using a new program to track website traffic which is more user friendly, however, data for February is not yet available. The Facebook page reached 1,483 users and had 192 post engagements and 4 new followers. The most viewed posts included information on the College Scholarship Program and pollinator-friendly lawn alternatives.

eNewsletter – The Local Dirt was distributed on 2/3/2020 and included upcoming events, available programs, blog posts, a partner profile, and 310 permitting information. The current mailing list includes 160 people. The February issue was opened by 91 people (287 times) and had 31 total clicks. The top three clicked links were the blog post, Seedling Program, and Workshops & Classes.

Upcoming Events – Hailey, Samantha, and Mikaela are preparing for several upcoming events including:

- Presentation to the Flathead Valley Beekeepers (Feb 25)
- Judging and hosting a booth at the Flathead County Science Fair (Feb 27)
- Teaching a pollinator workshop and hosting an informational table at the Free the Seeds Event (Mar 7)
- Hosting a Lunch & Learn event through the Northwest Montana Association of Realtors to present information on streamside best management practices, the 310 Law, and local water quality issues (Mar 11)
- Hosting *The Pollinators* film screening event (Mar 27)

Partnerships

- Hailey and Sean Johnson coordinated on updating the Working Agreement between the local NRCS office and FCD.
- Hailey, Mikaela, and Samantha attended the Flathead Basin Commission general meeting on February 19 at the Kalispell Wastewater Treatment Facility. Hailey also attended the Flathead Basin Commission Onsite Wastewater Treatment Committee meeting.
- Hailey continued coordinating with the National Weather Service, USGS, and Army Corps for the Flathead River Inundation Mapping Presentation that will be held on March 13 at the Kalispell Fish Wildlife and Parks conference room.
- Samantha, Hailey, and Mikaela attended the Flathead River Steward meeting to collaborate with local partners in planning stream restoration projects on Ashley Creek and other impaired waterways.

Natural Resources & Conservation Service (NRCS): Sean Johnson reported

➤ **Programs**

- Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
 - Long Range Plan approved
 - Developed a TIP for Ashley Lake forest health
 - Reviewed by State Leadership Staff last week
 - Waiting to hear if it was approved or not
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
 - No official sign-up announced yet but will occur sometime after May 29th
 - Interest starting to build in county for CSP

➤ **Review Items**

- Presented at CHS growers meeting on 2/20 on NRCS programs
 - Well received presentation, on both EQIP and CSP
- NRCS/DNRC meeting to discuss new contract to allow NRCS to pay DNRC for service foresters to write our Forest Management Plans
- Joint Chiefs project meeting in Libby with FS
- River Stewards meeting to discuss Ashley Creek
 - Potential road tour for middle March of impacted sites

➤ **Upcoming Items**

- Notification of potential TIP approval following 2/20 leadership meeting
- FireSafe meeting on 2/27
- River to Lake (R2L) Meeting on 3/12
- River Stewards Ashley Creek road tour – March 17 or 18
- Meeting in Choteau March 11-12 to review FY21 TIP proposals for Missoula Area

➤ **Miscellaneous**

- New templates have been released for cooperative working agreements between NRCS/FCD
- Kalispell office listed as a potential location for a Pathways intern this summer
- **Water Supply Outlook Report**
 - Maps
 - Flathead Basin – 109% of historical average
 - Sub-basins range from 122%-64%

Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD): No report.

Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB): Dean Sirucek reported that three zoning changes, two Floodplain variance requests, and the Flathead County Trails Plan went forward to the County Commissioners with positive recommendations.

Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB): John Ellis reported that the City of Whitefish amended regulations concerning retaining walls.

Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC3): Lori Curtis reported the UC3 met January 29th at the Flathead Electric Cooperative in Kalispell. The main meeting was preceded by an orientation for new members. The new Annual Report for the prior year was discussed. Tom Woolf discussed the results of the AIS Summit last December

A 2020 Strategic Direction will be developed as a result of the discussion at this meeting on our focus and strategic direction. The Response & Preparedness Committee and Watercraft Inspection Committee were disbanded, the Early Detection & Monitoring Committee and Education and Outreach Committees will continue. It was decided that UC3 will become more involved legislatively and formed a Legislative Committee to include Lori Curtis, Bryce Christaens from Missoula County Weed District, Phil Marson from the Flathead Lake Biological Station, Rob Rish from Swan Valley Connections, and Kate Wilson from DNRC. The next meeting is April 22nd, location to be determined.

Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC): No report.

Flathead Basin Commission (FBC): Dean Sirucek reported the February 19th meeting included budgets, legislative issues, stormwater project funding, septic leachate projects, and Flathead Lake Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) model analysis.

Clark Fork & Kootenai River Basins Council (CFKRBC): No report.

MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF

NRCS Working Agreement: Copies of the NRCS Working Agreement were provided and Sean Johnson explained that after filling in the blanks, he will send the agreement to the state where it will receive a formal agreement number. The state conservationist will then sign it and send it back for final Flathead CD signature. Hailey Graf added that all the conservation districts in Montana are receiving this same agreement.

Ronald Buentemeier asked about closing public meetings in the future to allow NRCS staff to discuss specifics of applications and contracts for NRCS programs and noted that this would allow the Board to stay informed. Sean explained what he can disclose during a public meeting.

Team Member Report (TMR) and Permit Package Updates: Hailey Graf explained updates to the draft Team Member Report and Permit package and asked the Board and staff to review for further discussion at the 310-meeting.

Furniture and Equipment: Hailey Graf explained that with the hiring of new staff, additional furniture and equipment will need to be purchased and the office will be re-arranged to accommodate workspace and to allow better flow. Security measures for office computers were briefly discussed.

Watershed Support Program: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that a Restoration Priorities meeting was held in January with partner agencies and organizations to discuss opportunities for Watershed Support Program funding that would be applied to address specific water quality issues and maximum the impact of the funding by collaborating with the partners. Attendees included Samantha Tappenbeck, Flathead Basin Commission staff, DEQ, DNRC representatives from Helena, Flathead Lakers, FWP, and NRCS. The group identified potential projects within the watershed and identified criteria for setting priorities. They discussed opportunities to collaborate, and any on-going efforts. Samantha reviewed the prioritization criteria and stated that the areas determined highest priority were upper and middle Ashley Creek. She noted that Ashley Creek is impaired by multiple pollutants, has interest from multiple partner agencies and organizations, there are on-going efforts among the partner groups, and there is landowner interest.

Samantha provided copies of the draft Watershed Support Program Guidelines, reviewed the guidelines, and asked the Board to further review the draft. She noted that if the board wants to move forward with the program it could be placed on the next meeting agenda.

The board discussed possible opportunities for outreach and projects as well as program administration strategies for the current fiscal year and future years.

College Scholarship Program: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that college scholarship applications are due March 15th, and that packets will be sent to supervisors for review prior to the March business meeting.

Supervisor Resignation: Dean Sirucek stated he will be submitting a letter of resignation effective the end of February, however, he would like to remain on the Planning Board for the next few months as an Associate Supervisor (Associates may serve on Boards as representation for the conservation district). Dean noted that Donna Pridmore, who is currently an Associate Supervisor, could finish his term ending 12/31/2020. Donna would also have opportunity to file with the Election Dept. for the position of Supervisor in the upcoming election. Dean noted that he will also have to be replaced as Secretary/Treasurer for the district, and that he is currently on the DEQ Statewide Advisory Committee. This will be placed on the March 310-meeting agenda.

The next 310-Stream Permit meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 9, 2020, 7:00 P.M. in the conference room of the USDA building at 133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell, MT.

Adjournment: Verdell Jackson motioned "to adjourn". Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:14 P.M.

Submitted By:

Hailey Graf
Resource Conservationist

Samantha Tappenbeck
Conservation Program Manager

Ginger Kauffman
Administrator

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

<u>3/9/2020</u>	<u>Pete Woll</u>	<u>Chair</u>
(Date)	(Signature)	(Title – Chair etc.)