



133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell, MT 5990
www.flatheadcd.org | 406-752-4220

CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE

Chair, Pete Woll, called the February 27, 2023, Business meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the conference room.

Board members present: Pete Woll, Chair; John Ellis; Vice Chair; Donna Pridmore, Secretary/Treasurer; Scott Rumsey, Supervisor; Roger Marsonette, Supervisor; Gordon Ash, Supervisor; Angela Jacobs, Supervisor; being a quorum of the Board.

Board members absent: None.

Also, in attendance were Samantha Tappenbeck, Jessie Walthers, Ginger Kauffman, FCD Staff; Thomas Myers; Bill Meyers; Camisha Sawtelle, DNRC Attorney; Sean Johnson, NRCS; Leo Rosenthal, FWP.

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda Item 1: Signature Authority

- Authorization for Samantha Tappenbeck to sign on behalf of Supervisors attending the meeting virtually.

Consent Agenda Item 2: Minutes

- 1/23/2023 Business Meeting

Consent Agenda Item 3: Financial

Check Detail 12/21/2022:

1. Charter Communications \$162.95
2. Flathead Audubon Society \$1,102.20
3. Lake County CD \$250.00
4. MACD-EO \$90.00
5. Sandra Babich \$3,081.44
6. Steitzhof Merinos \$2,061.00

Check Detail 2/15/2023:

1. Fisher's Technology \$287.00
2. Grizzly Security ShredEx \$76.00
3. Houseworth Consulting \$114.40
4. Susan D. Hulslander, CPA \$3,231.00
5. Tetra Tech \$4,850.00
6. Whitefish Lake Institute \$1,200.00

Check Detail 2/21/2023:

1. Charter Communications \$162.95

Check Detail 2/22/2023:

1. VISA – Donna Pridmore \$648.22
2. VISA – Pete Woll \$125.00
3. VISA – Samantha Tappenbeck \$696.20

Consent Agenda Item 4: Correspondence

John Ellis motioned “to approve the consent agenda as listed.” Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

NEW BUSINESS

November & December 2022 End of Month Reports: Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve the End of Month Reports for November and December 2022.” Scott Rumsey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Request for Agenda Item: Bill Meyers and his brother, Thomas Meyers, requested Scott Rumsey recuse himself from potential permits for their property. Bill referenced a retaining wall project in 2007, noted that then they were laying the foundation for a bigger marina, and felt Scott showed bias and prejudice at that time. Bill requested a pre-application meeting for a project.

Donna Pridmore asked if he has submitted an application for his project. Bill replied no but they (he and his brother) have engineered drawings with several designs, have had offers on their property, and wanted input from the board on if there is a preference of how they might approach configuring the docks. Bill stated he will not submit designs prior to the meeting because it is private information that a sale may be contingent on. He added he would submit plans when they are ready to do the application. He added that he wants to get a sense of what people think would be a good idea as they are looking at possibly donating a particular portion of property to the State of Montana to become a public dock.

Thomas Myers felt it was unfair to not be given a permit in 2007. He thought it was not a coincidence that when Mr. Rumsey left things changed, and they were able to build the wall, and that Scott should recuse himself.

Scott Rumsey stated his employment at that time was a Fish Wildlife and Parks fisheries biologist, and a team member (as Kenny Breidinger and Leo Rosenthal are currently). Scott stated decisions that were made prior were as they would be made now. Boards are made of individuals that have different perspectives. I did not solely determine to deny your project in the past, and I wouldn't do that in the future, and don't have that authority. It is a parliamentary

procedure done through a vote. Scott stated that he doesn't understand all the issues they have with him; they are welcome to their opinion, but Scott disagrees with it and is not willing to back off from the board when it comes to their project. Scott further stated that he is an elected individual and that he has the purview to review projects like anybody else, and that he is not the sole decision maker on this board. I disagree with some of your claims and am not even going to debate it with you. John Ellis stated Scott was not even a decision maker/Supervisor on that application. Scott added I was a team member but did not have a vote. John noted that there have been occasions where the Fish Wildlife and Parks representative has wanted to deny a 310 application, but the district does not have to have their approval, and FWP can appeal the decision. Scott added there is an arbitration procedure.

John Ellis and Roger Marsonette each stated that they had not heard any evidence of Mr. Rumsey acting improperly or beyond the scope of his role as a Fish Wildlife & Parks representative, and that if they are requesting blanket recusal that they need to present evidence of improper conduct.

Samantha Tappenbeck reviewed the minutes from the March and April 2007 meetings when the project was addressed, and the decision was made (by the board) April 2007 regarding the wall. Recommendations from the team, made up of Pete Woll, Dan Bangeman, Scott Rumsey, were provided to the Board after the site visit on 3/12/2007. Bill Meyers noted that the motion passed in April was not for what they had originally proposed.

There was further discussion of the circumstances in 2007/2008 during review and consideration of a previous application. Thomas Myers and Bill Meyers presented their personal accounts of what transpired regarding the influence of Scott Rumsey as a member of the team as it related to the Board's decision, and the timing of the Board's ultimate decision relative to Scott Rumsey's retirement from FWP.

Gordon Ash stated that he would not base his vote or affirmation on hearsay, and went on to say that ultimately the Board made the decision, not Scott Rumsey acting as an individual. Future permit applications would be considered through the normal channels and the standard process.

Samantha again reviewed the 2007/2008 meeting minutes, stated that the team made recommendations to the board, and it was the board that made the full decision, and ultimately that is the case every time. There is a standard process which can be followed. The applicants had the option to go through the standard process of arbitration and it didn't go that way. Samantha stated that nothing would change moving forward about how we follow our standard process. Again, one board supervisor has one vote on the board. When necessary and appropriate, if there's a personal interest or a potential conflict of interest, then that supervisor should recuse themselves from decision on an application at that time. There is no mechanism in place that would allow us to do a blanket recusal from all future applications. It would set a very dangerous precedent and be inappropriate to do so. It has to be handled on a case-by-case basis. If there is a disagreement over that decision, then arbitration is the standard process we have to follow per the law.

Bill Meyers stated he understood that there was a standard process and asked for clarification on whether individual supervisors could recuse themselves at time of application. He added

they have 2 different engineered approaches to expanding the marina and wanted the board's feedback. Bill Meyers stated he wanted the opportunity for a pre-application review because he doesn't want to go through all this and then have to battle.

Donna Pridmore noted that if there is a field trip to your property with the full board, we would have a quorum, and that would have to be publicly noticed; that is our procedure. Donna asked if individual board members could call to set up a time to visit the property. Bill stated yes and asked that it not be just one person at a time, but a couple people at a time. He talked about possibly donating a portion to the state to provide public access, and that he is hoping to sell the property.

John Ellis later noted that the board cannot design projects.

Furniture & Equipment Disposal Request: Ginger Kauffman presented the Furniture & Equipment disposal request for an old filing cabinet that will not close.

John Ellis motioned "to approve the Furniture & Equipment disposal request dated 2/27/2023." Gordon Ash seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Youth Camp Sponsorship Requests: Jessie Walthers explained the district has received sponsorship requests total requested is \$3,633.00. If approved, funds would come from the Education Grant budget line, in which \$5700 remains until the end of the fiscal year. The three requests are:

- Dally Family: \$275.00 Land to Hand Camp, one child
- Deraleau Family \$1,650.00 Land to Hand Camps, two children
- Powell Family \$1,708.00, two children

The Board discussed the camps, funding amounts, and requests for funding. Staff encouraged standardizing funding amounts in the next fiscal budget.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to approve the Youth Camp sponsorship requests." Gordon Ash seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Annual Work Plan: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that a draft 2023 Annual Work Plan was presented for review at the 1/23/2023 meeting, and asked if there were any comments, edits or changes.

Gordon Ash motioned "to approve the annual work plan as presented." Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Staff Travel Authorization: Samantha Tappenbeck explained there is a water quality focused rotunda event at the capitol in Helena on March 9-10, and the Flathead Basin Commission is the lead on this event. She stated she would like to attend and provided an estimate of travel expenses in the meeting packet. She added that Flathead CD will have a table at the event, highlighting results of Flathead River Erosion/Wake Energy Study.

John Ellis motioned "to approve up to \$400 for Samantha to attend the Water Quality rotunda event in Helena." Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Samanta noted that funds would come from the legislative budget line, and Donna Pridmore added that the legislative budget for this next fiscal year may need to be raised.

Rotunda Event Funding Request: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that the Flathead Basin Commission (FBC) has requested funding support from partners participating in the Water Quality Rotunda Event for lunch expenses and has provided a budget. She noted that FBC can cover the expenses but are still reaching out to partners, and that FBC has a commitment from Flathead Lakers for partial funding.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to contribute \$500 to the rotunda lunch from the Watersheds Other budget line.” Scott Rumsey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion held regarding timing of Flathead CD to submit an opposition letter to combining Flathead Basin Commission and Upper Columbia Conservation Commission to the legislature.

Forestry Expo (FFE) Donation Request: Samantha Tappenbeck explained a request has been received for donation to the Family Forestry Expo event. She noted that the district has provided donations consistently for many years. In 2022, the district requested detailed budget information and how donation funds from FCD would be spent from FFE, so Deb Starling provided a budget and breakdown expenses with their donation request letter. Discussion held regarding where funds should be spent.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to allocate \$3500 toward the workbook printing for Family Forestry Expo.” Scott Rumsey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board clarified that \$3000 will come from Partner Programs and \$500 from Conservation Practices, Other budget lines. In-kind via running the Riparian station and additional funding was discussed. Pete Woll noted that if FFE has a short fall they can request additional funding.

Resolution to Transfer Funds: Ginger Kauffman explained that during this fiscal year budget process the Board allocated \$5000 to be transferred from Fund 7201 to the Capital Improvement (CIP) Fund 7235 for purchase of a vehicle, and the county requires a Resolution to transfer those funds.

John Ellis motioned “to approve the Resolution to transfer funds in the amount of \$5000 from Fund 7201 to CIP Fund 7235.” Roger Marsonette seconded. Motion passed with one no vote.

USGS Foys Bend Gage Agreement: Samantha Tappenbeck explained the district has received the annual funding request and agreement for the operation and maintenance of the seasonal staff gage at Foys Bend. The Agreement is from March 1, 2023, to September 30, 2023, and the request is for \$3296.00. Samantha noted that funding is allocated under the Watershed Other budget line.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve the Joint Funding Agreement for Water Resource Investigations in the amount of \$3296.00 for the staff gage.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Flathead CD Staff: Attached.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Report & MOA Review: Attached.

Discussion held regarding need, cost, use of, and a partnership for a no-till drill in Flathead County. Samantha Tappenbeck noted that a big issue would be storage and maintenance of a drill. She added that grants may be available for purchase, upgrades, and program management. Pete Woll asked that this issue be addressed at a later time.

Sean Johnson, NRCS, reviewed the Civil Rights Responsibility for Partners Checklist and MOA between NRCS, Flathead CD and DNRC with the Board. It was noted that the last review of the MOA was done in 2020, and this MOA is due at the end of NRCS's fiscal year, which is September. The Local Work Group was discussed as part of the MOU. The Board requested additional time to review the MOA, and to place it on the next business meeting agenda.

DNRC Conservation Districts Bureau: Attached.

Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB): Attached.

Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB): John Ellis stated the only item on the February agenda was a zoning text amendment concerning fences and retaining walls. John noted that he is no longer on or attending the WCPB meetings. Samantha Tappenbeck asked if Flathead CD should remove this item from the agenda as it is no longer a city-county planning board, and Flathead CD no longer has a seat on that board with the settlement of the donut lawsuit. John recommended removing it from the agenda and noted that vacancies come up every 2 years.

Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC): Samantha Tappenbeck reported there was a stakeholder meeting today to discuss, with the City and Whitefish Lake Institute (WLI), the water-use in Haskill Creek and the diversions down into the Viking Creek wetlands. They are interested in adjusting those diversions. Jessie Walthers noted that the main issue is the water that spills over from the Haskill Creek reservoir. Current controls are manual and there is mutual interest in a telemetry system to regulate that. The city has some funding earmarked toward it, and WLI will apply for grant funding to subsidize the system and more data collection.

Flathead Basin Commission (FBC): Scott Rumsey reported the legislature is looking at consolidation of FBC and UC3, and noted they are aware that Flathead CD submitted an objection letter.

Flathead River Commission (FRC): Donna Pridmore reported that the spring flood control meeting will be held at the office of emergency services with several agencies and stakeholders. Samantha Tappenbeck noted that Mark Siderius is potentially interested in being an Associate Supervisor for the district, to ensure that Flathead CD has a seat at the table for the Office of Emergency Services working group.

MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF

Personnel Evaluations: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that each year evaluations are done for district staff and added that a 6-month staff evaluation for Jessie Walthers was held last week. Samantha provided copies to Pete Woll and John Ellis and will schedule a review of the Conservation Program Manager 6-month Performance Evaluation between the Chair, Vice Chair, and RC. She also asked to schedule her RC Performance Evaluation with the Chair and two additional Board Supervisors.

CD Insurance Coverage: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that the Montana Associate of Counties (MACo) will no longer insure special districts, which includes conservation districts, through a group policy. Rocky Mountain Insurance Services is attempting to build a group plan to offer to conservation districts, and districts need to provide information for development of a group policy. She noted that PayneWest Insurance is not able to offer a group policy but is working to put together an individual plan to offer to Flathead CD.

CD Funding Survey: Samantha Tappenbeck explained MACD is working to secure increased and sustainable funding for conservation districts. They have requested districts complete the 2023 CD Funding Survey to identify priorities for additional funding if secured. Board review and consensus is requested. Contact Samantha with any questions. The survey is due March 1st.

Letter of Support: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that the district has received a request for a letter of support from Flathead Basin Commission, as they are working on an application to the EPA Toxic Reduction Grant Program. The letter is due this Friday if the Board is interested. Donna Pridmore stated she would agree to support if it is specific to the Flathead drainage. Samantha noted that she has not seen the application, or if specific items would address the Flathead basin. Pete Woll recommended Donna and Samantha work on a draft that specifically references our watershed, then email to the Board for review.

McDonald Creek: John Ellis stated that until today, he had not realized that the motel in the McDonald Creek area is a huge operation. He stated there are flags all over the old cabins and motel rooms. It looks like they are about to engage in a big project and some of those (buildings) sit right on the bank. He recommended the district send an educational letter letting them know if the structures are removed or they build something new that they first need a 310 permit. John asked Samantha Tappenbeck to email him a copy of the letter and he will add some specific remarks about the projects in the McDonald Creek area.

Scott Rumsey wondered if the district could let other agencies know that we would appreciate their cooperation in letting people know about other permits. Donna Pridmore agreed that a follow up should be done with Flathead County Planning & Zoning. Pete Woll asked Roger Marsonette if he would contact that office.

Home & Garden Show: Jessie Walthers encouraged Supervisors to sign up to help in the booth for the upcoming Home & Gardens Show.

The next 310-Permit meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 13, 2023, 7:00 P.M. in person and via ZOOM.

Adjournment: John Ellis motioned “to adjourn.” Roger Marsonette seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:12 P.M.

Submitted By:

Ginger Kauffman
Administrator

Reviewed By:

Samantha Tappenbeck
Resource Conservationist

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

3/27/2023
(Date)

Pete Woll
(Signature)

Chair
(Title – Chair etc.)

Staff Report: February 2023

Samantha Tappenbeck, Resource Conservationist
Jessie Walthers, Conservation Program Manager
Ginger Kauffman, Administrator

Office and Administration

310

- The office received 17 new 310's; 2022 total 310's to date = 29
- Processing of 310's
- Scanning of older 310-files continues.
- 310 Survey/Report for 2022 was submitted DNRC 2/15/2023
- Assembled 310 Application & Informational Packets
- RC and Admin worked on draft changes to the 310 Permit Attachment document and identified proposed changes to streamline 310 Permit processing

Bookkeeping

- Processed daily bookkeeping items including payroll, payroll reports & payments, invoices, credit card receipts, deposits, grant billing/vendor invoices, program payments
- Updates to district files are made as needed
- W2, W3, 1099, 1096 forms for 2022 were processed by the CPA office

Office Support

- Staff meetings held weekly per staff availability
- Staff & Board reviewed 2023 CD Operations Audit on 2/17/2023
- Staff discussed reorganization of office space and furniture to meet needs and better utilize space

Big Sky Watershed Corps

- Meeting with Lake County CD and FCD with BSWC Camryn Gamble for work plan tasks and upcoming event planning 2/3/23
- Camryn joined us in the FCD office February 22-25: worked on preparations for outreach events including Free the Seeds and Home & Garden Show, Demonstration Garden Planning, the outreach event calendar for 2023, and creating an inventory of education and outreach supplies.

Projects

Trumbull Creek Restoration & Aquifer Protection Project

- Project is inadequately funded and will require \$150K-\$160K in additional funding for the project as designed
- Grant #: RRG-20-1750 extended through 12/31/2023
- Met with DNRC grant managers to amend contract WMG-22-0089A and discuss options for grant contract extension beyond 12/31/23 for RRG-20-1750
- Re-submitted Q3 and Q4 quarterly progress reports and amendment request for DNRC grant WMG-22-0089A due to issue with DNRC grant management website

- Planning to host landowner meeting to review project designs and answer questions/address concerns

Study of Erosion on the Flathead River/SJ28

- Data collection period is complete, huge volume of data has been uploaded, and analysis and reporting by Tetra Tech is underway
- Final report is near completion and will be provided to FCD by February 28, 2023
- Attended Half Moon Slough Working Group meeting re: no-wake petition; Attended Fish & Wildlife Commission meeting to hear discussion and decision regarding Church Slough no-wake petition and Working Group recommendation

Krause Creek Restoration Project

- Project completed in fall 2022
- Final report in progress to close out DNRC grant RRG-21-1782
- Correspondence with landowners and River Design Group regarding downcutting and erosion around bridge structure downstream from project reach
- Provided assistance to landowners to submit 310 Permit application for stabilization of bridge structure

Programs

College Scholarships

- Outreach conducted for college scholarships, communication with high school teachers we are working with for programs, and other program partners
- Ad placed in Flathead Beacon in February

Conservation Grant Program

- Consultations with several interested landowners for this year's upcoming grant cycle in person at the office and over email.
- 2023 Grant application available on FCD website and featured in eNewsletter

Education Grant Program

- Communicated with several teachers for possible grant applications including:
 1. A Rain Garden at Glacier High School
 2. Invasive Weed Pull Supplies with Glacier High School Science Club Teacher
 3. Pollinator Garden Planning at Somers Middle School

Pollinator Initiative

- Discussions with program partners for upcoming season
- Shared pollinator outreach education items with teacher from Somers Middle School, for garden building resources and education on bees and other pollinators
- Planning for summer Kids Pollinator Workshop

Rain Garden Initiative

- Planning for Rain Garden Workshop in May at Center for Native Plants, prepared flyer, ticketing and press release for event.
- Held Zoom meeting with Sarah Connor from Glacier High School for planning a rain garden at the school with botany class; possible spring or fall installation

- Several phone and in office consultations for rain gardens, homeowner agreements, planning site visits for when the snow melts.

Seedlings & Native Seed Program

- Processed four orders for seedling nursery
- Consultations on seedling program and grass seed cost-share program for interested participants via phone, email, and office walk-in inquiries
- Inquired with Nursery for final days for ordering seedlings this spring. Last day will be April 1, 2023

Watershed Support Program

- Program funding is currently allocated to support of the Trumbull Creek Restoration & Aquifer Protection Project and the Flathead River Erosion Study

Youth Camp Sponsorships

- Received three sponsorship requests for Land to Hand and Ravenwood Camps

Education & Outreach

Education Events

- Stories in the Snow - Snowshoe Nature Tour held on 2/25/23, hosted by FCD and Flathead Audubon at Owen Sowerwine Natural Area
- Tabling events:
 - CHS Annual Meeting, Hilton Garden Inn, Kalispell, 2/16/23
- 2023 education event planning:
 - FCD staff met to schedule 2023 events and develop education events/programs
 - Coordinated presentation at 2023 Flathead County Science Fair
- Rolling Rivers Trailer:
 - Scheduled spring presentations at three schools/events (Russell Elementary, Heritage Way Academy, Viking Creek Wetlands 5th Grade Field Trips)
- Legislative outreach:
 - Samantha and Supervisor Rumsey plan to attend the CD Awareness Day in the Capitol Rotunda and Legislative Meet & Greet in Helena on 1/24/23
 - Opportunity to provide comment on CD Budget Proposal at committee meeting on 1/25/23

Demonstration Garden

- Developing priorities for upcoming growing season, maintenance planning, and possible events in the garden
- Meeting with Forestration and Center for Native Plants staff to discuss priorities, challenges, and needs for upcoming season
- Outreach to engage and recruit support for Demonstration Garden management:
 - Flathead County MSU Extension Master Gardener Program
 - Kalispell Public Schools, Director of Work Based Learning – development of student internship

Advertisements

- Flathead Beacon:
 - College Scholarships (2/8/23)

- 310 Permits (2/22/23)

Website

- Updated links for new Conservation Seedling Nursery and 2023 program dates and application links
- Updated website archive of meeting agendas, posted 2023 meeting agendas
- Website visited by 1000 users (↑21.1%); Impressions = 38K; Total Clicks = 673

Social Media

- Facebook: Page followers = 864 (↑1%); Post Reach = 3,783; Post Engagement = 713
- Instagram: Page followers = 684 (↑6.3%); Accts Reach = 356; Accts Engaged = 30

The Local Dirt eNewsletter

- Distributed on 2/6/23 to 774 recipients

Partnerships

- Flathead CORE Meeting 2/1/23
- Flathead River Commission Meeting 2/1/23
- Meeting with NRCS and CHS, local Ag reps 2/3/23
- Nutrient Work Group meeting: 2/13/23
- Fish & Wildlife Commission Meeting 2/22/23
- Family Forestry Expo Planning Meeting 2/22/23
- Haskill Creek Water Use Meeting 2/27/23
- Spring Pollinator Program Meeting 2/28/23

Photos



Left: Dillon Tabish, FWP presents information at the Half Moon Slough Working Group meeting. Right: Attendance at the CHS Annual Producers Meeting.

NRCS DC Report – 2/27/2023

Sean Johnson

➤ Programs

- EQIP and Joint Chief
 - All applications ranked, waiting on funding decisions to be made by March 17th for initial allocations
- CSP
 - No active applications for FY23

➤ Review Items

- Met with FCD staff and agronomists Andy Lybeck and Amy Gardner to discuss agriculture in Flathead County and where NRCS and FCD can have a role in assistance
- FireSafe Flathead Meeting on 2/15
- Attended demonstration of CharBoss, a biochar machine the FS is looking to purchase locally to create biochar from forestry operations

➤ Upcoming Items

- Announcement for the admin position was announced
 - No word yet on when we will be reviewing the applications through the selection process
- New NRCS forester, Parker Olson, scheduled to start on Monday March 13th. He was an intern that is being converted over to a permanent position. He interned in Missoula two summers ago and in Fort Collins last summer and wrapped up his degree in December at CSU.

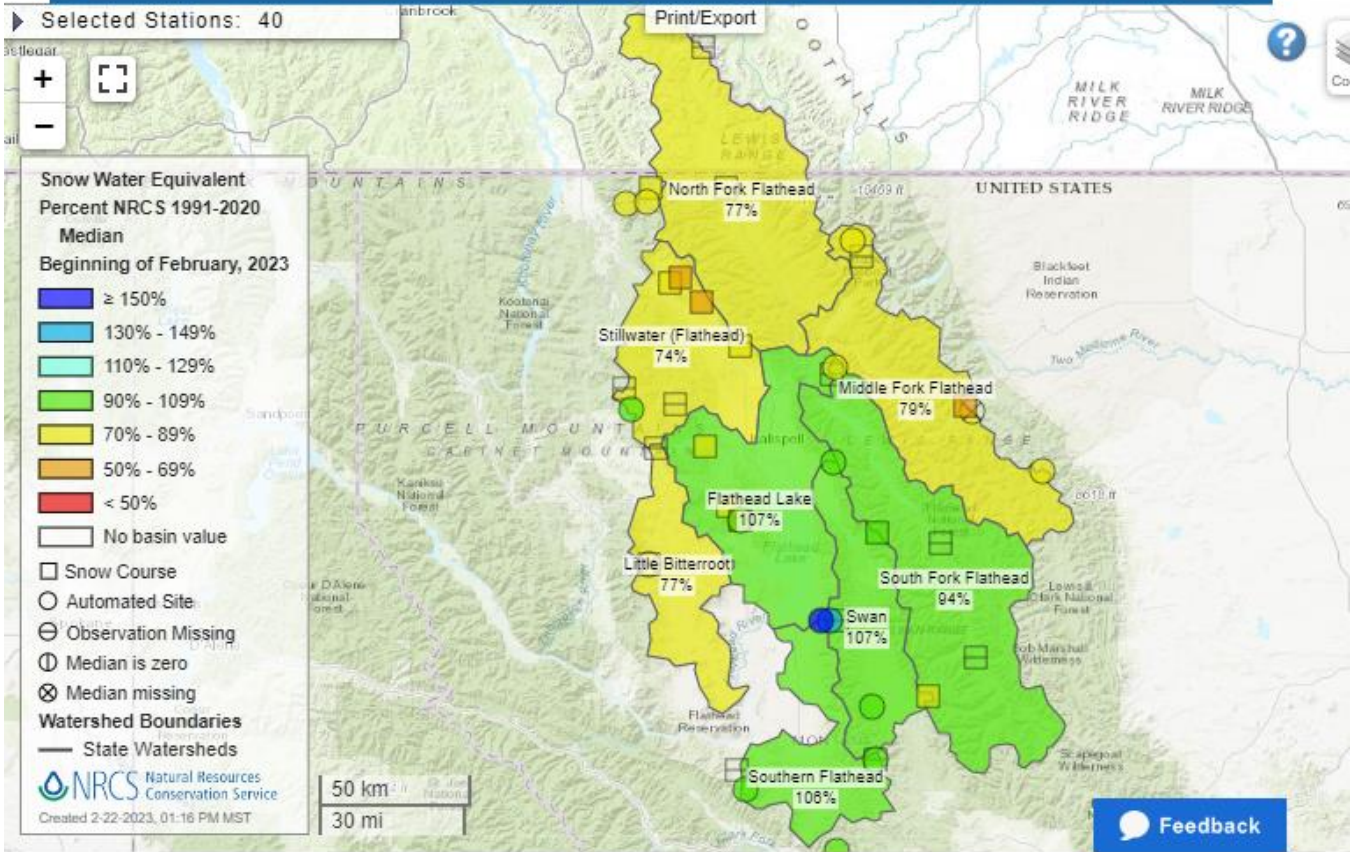
➤ Miscellaneous

- MOU Review
- Snow Report
 - A dry start to 2023 has dropped the overall Snow Water Equivalent of from 117% to 90% of normal as of February 1st. Sub-basins range from 74% - 107%
- Drought – Most of Flathead has moved from D0 to D1 in the last month
 - None – 5%, D0 – 27%, D1 – 44%, D2 – 20%, D3 – 3.71%, D4 – 0% - February
 - None – 8%, D0 – 31%, D1 – 24%, D2 – 25%, D3 – 11%, D4 – 0% - January
 - None – 12%, D0 – 21%, D1 – 26%, D2 – 25%, D3 – 16%, D4 – 0% - November

February Snow Report

United States Department of Agriculture

Quick Links Snow & Climate Monitoring Water Supply Climate Support Data Access Help About Us



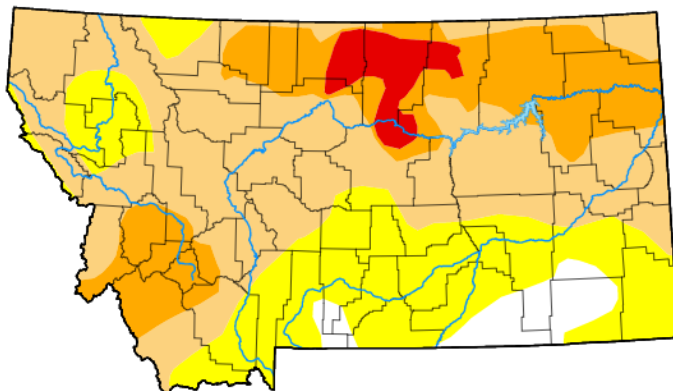
February Drought Monitor

Montana

Home > M

Map released: Thurs. February 16, 2023

Data valid: February 14, 2023 at 7 a.m. EST



Intensity

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

Authors

United States and Puerto Rico Author(s):
 Brian Fuchs, National Drought Mitigation Center



REPORT TO WESTERN CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
FEBRUARY 2023

CD FUNDING SURVEY

During this legislative session, MACD is continuing to work towards securing additional funding for Conservation Districts across the state. As part of this effort, we have an urgent request for information from the CDs for our legislators. We need details about your CDs priorities and preparedness to use additional funds if they become available. We have prepared a short survey and I have included it as part of this report. **I ask that you please take a few moments to complete this survey and return it to me as quickly as possible.** I want to make sure the voices of all my Conservation Districts are heard by our legislature.

CDB OFFICE HOURS

We will be hosting CDB Office Hours via Zoom on February 2nd and 16th at 2 PM. During both sessions we will focus on CD Funding, the aforementioned funding survey, and legislative updates about CD Funding. It's shaping up to be, "Funding February!" Please join our online discussion to hear the updates, give feedback, and ask questions.

CDB GRANTS: OPEN FEBRUARY 1 – MARCH 15

Pollinator Grants as well as Project & Capacity Grants are now open for application. The deadline for application is March 15th. Education Mini Grants will continue to be open on an on-going basis. If you would like to discuss a project or program idea or have me review a draft application, please let me know.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT AWARENESS DAY

Thank you to everyone who came to the Capitol Rotunda for Conservation District Awareness Day! This event was a huge success. Many of the legislators were impressed with your efforts and I had a great time seeing you all there. Keep up the good work!

WESTERN MT GRAZING & AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

Several weeks ago, I had the pleasure of attending the Western MT Grazing and Agriculture Conference, hosted by Lake County and Missoula CDs. Again, well done! This was a great event and I appreciated the opportunity to attend!

As always, please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions, concerns, or ponderings.

-Hailey Graf

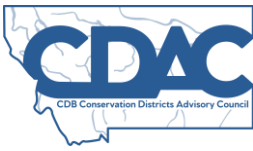


Hailey Graf

Conservation District Specialist
Conservation Districts Bureau

Phone : (406) 437-4435

Email: hailey.graf@mt.gov



Conservation District: _____

2023 projected annual operating budget (including all sources): \$ _____

2023 CD Funding Survey

MACD is working diligently to secure increased and sustainable funding to support and advance Conservation Districts. To ensure the priorities of all 58 districts are considered, funding is distributed equitably among them, and on-the-ground conservation is maximized, **please complete this short survey as soon as possible and submit by March 1, 2023. Timing is critical as funding bills are progressing quickly through the legislative process.** Discuss with your board and come to a consensus on priorities for CD staff, supervisors, and your district as a whole.

Results of this survey will be considered in DNRC's budget planning and may be provided to the legislature.

Instructions: Complete the following questionnaire under the premise your base budget could be up to \$80,000/year if it is currently under that threshold? If over, identify your conservation priorities for additional project funding. **Note that addressing staff attrition has been discussed as the priority for this funding through the interim and in hearings.** Submit to Kasydi Lucas, Kasydi.Lucas2@mt.gov.

Readiness: If increased funding becomes available next biennium, would your district be ready to increase capacity? If not, explain why.

Yes No _____

Need: If increased funding becomes available, estimate how much you would request from DNRC to supplement your current budget to address district expenses including operations, conservation priorities, and needs?

\$ _____

Check ALL that apply and provide as much detail as possible:

Other _____

Personnel:

- Increase staff wages
- Provide benefits and/or retirement for staff
- Increase staff hours for PT administrators
- Hire additional staff
- Other _____

Operations:

- Cover increased insurance costs
- Find new office space
- Purchase office equipment
- Communications (e.g., cell phone, Internet)
- Deferred maintenance on existing office and equipment

Professional Services:

- Bookkeeping and general accounting
- Taxes and payroll
- Auditing accounting
- Strategic planning services
- Grant writing and management
- Human resources support
- Project management
- Project development
- Graphic design and marketing
- 310 technical expertise (beyond what is currently available through CDB)

- 310 legal expertise (beyond what is currently available through CDB)
- Other _____

Programs:

- Develop/expand equipment rental program
- Develop/expand cost-share program
- Develop/expand invasive species program
- Operate a watercraft inspection station
- Develop/expand soil health program
- Develop/expand pollinator initiative
- Develop/expand fire/fuels mitigation program
- Develop/expand climate/drought resilience program
- Other? _____

Education & Outreach:

- Increase education to youth
- Increase education to adults
- Increase district marketing
- Implement existing program (e.g. Living on the Bank, Pull Your Share, etc.)
- Other _____

Training and Professional Development

- Supervisor training
- Project management training
- Accounting
- Conservation subject matter training (e.g. soil health)
- Staff professional development
- Supervisor recruitment
- 310 Law
- Other _____

Planning:

- Develop/update CD strategic plan
- Host local working group meetings
- Funding for emergency preparedness and response
- Funding for capital improvement projects
- Other _____

Travel:

- Supervisor travel expenses
- Staff travel expenses
- Volunteer travel

Reflecting on your responses above, what emerged as your districts top 3 funding priorities?

Priority 1: _____

Priority 2: _____

Priority 3: _____

If you'd like to provide additional detail, please continue to the next page. The more input we have the better.

1. Do you have staff? Yes No

Please list each staff position, hours worked per week, and pay per week.

2. Do you currently undergo internal and/or external audits of your financial records? Yes No

If yes: Internal or External

How often?

3. Does your district operate under a strategic plan? Yes No Annual work plan? Yes No

If yes, what year was it developed?

If no, please explain why (lack of funding, lack of interest, etc.)

4. What priorities are you not able to address due to lack of funding?

5. What is your estimated annual funding needed to be able to effectively address these priorities?

6. If increased funding is secured, would your CD request additional funding to supplement your existing budget?

Yes No If no, please explain why _____

7. If increased funding becomes available in July 2023, how soon would your district be equipped to begin working on the three priority items from the previous page and how much funding would you need for each priority?

8. Are there additional services CDB could provide that would add value and help your district operate more effectively? Please check all that apply.

9. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us regarding increased funding?

Submit to Kasydi Lucas, Kasydi.Lucas2@mt.gov.

Questions? Contact:

Conservation Districts Advisory Council (CDAC) Executive Committee Members:

Gayla Wortman, CDAC Chair, CCD gm.wortman@gmail.com, 406-788-3128

Steve Tyrrel, CDAC Vice Chair, LMCD tyrrel@midrivers.com, 406-855-7600

Rebecca Boslough-King, MACD: rebecca@macdnet.org, 406-443-5711

Stephanie Criswell, DNRC-CDB: steph.criswell@mt.gov, 406-444-6669 or 406-558-9912

Chris Evans, EO: chris@lewisandclarkcd.org, 406-449-5000 x3884

Thank you for your time!

This information is critical in determining how district funding should be disseminated in the most equitable way based on districts' needs!

Report to Flathead Conservation District re: Flathead Planning Board Meeting on February 8, 2023

Item 1: FZC-22-26

Apec Engineering/Mountarise Development LLC proposal to change zoning from R-25 to SAG-5 on 3 parcels N of KM Ranch Rd totaling 155 acres.

Public Hearing on this item has been closed.

Action: The Board voted unanimously to forward a negative recommendation on this item to the County Commissioners. Reason given by the Commissioner making this motion was that such a zoning change was extreme and did not fit the character of the area, believing the current zoning designation was appropriate.

Item 2: FPP-22-30

River Meadows Subdivision proposal to create 6 residential lots on 40 acres at 124 and 126 Glacier Flats Rd.

Public Agency Comment: A representative from Flathead County Municipal Airport Authority requested that plat notes be added because of the subdivision's proximity to the airport.

Public Comment: Several neighbors, including a former agricultural tenant remarked on the wetlands and high groundwater present on this property. Another neighbor questioned the long-term wisdom of turning all the farmland into subdivisions. The developer rebutted that the unusual shapes of the lots were the result of accommodating the wetlands, and that all adjacent septic permits had been approved.

Action: The Board voted unanimously to forward a positive recommendation on this item.

Item 3: FPP 22-31

Freedom Group of Montana LLC to create 12 lots on 15.4 acres off Helena Flats Rd south of Reserve Dr.

Public Agency Comment: The Flathead County Road and Bridge Department requested a 10 foot wider easement accessing the property. Also, the Evergreen School District requested a bike path as Helena Flats Rd is very busy and dangerous.

Public Comment: None

Action: Striking the bike path request but including the easement request, the Board voted unanimously to forward a positive recommendation on this item.

Item 4: FPP-23-32

Shadow Mountain Estates to create 20 lots on 15.4 acres at 403 Helena Flats Rd,

Public Agency Comment: None

Public Comment: One adjacent landowner stated concerns with 20 new septic systems just east of him which is upstream of his property in regard to groundwater.

Action: The Board voted unanimously to forward a positive recommendation on this item.

Submitted by Bill Yankee, Associate Supervisor