



CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE

Chair Pete Woll called the 2/28/2022 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; Lech Naumovich, Supervisor; Verdell Jackson, Supervisor; Scott Rumsey, Supervisor; being a quorum of the Board.

Board members absent: No board members absent.

Also, in attendance were Ginger Rigdon, Samantha Tappenbeck, Ginger Kaufman, Flathead Conservation District (FCD) Staff, Sean Johnson Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Gordan Ash, Associate Supervisor.

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: Financial

The following bills were reviewed:

(Check Detail dated 2/14/2022)

1. Fisher's Technology \$249.50

(Check Detail dated 2/16/2022)

1. BCBS \$2,132.17
2. Byte Savvy \$100.00
3. River Design Group \$29,498.35
4. Susan Hulslander, CPA \$458.00
5. Water & Environmental Tech. \$1,622.00
6. VISA (Donna Pridmore) \$45.50
7. VISA (Samantha Tappenbeck) \$1,490.01

Consent Agenda Item 3: Correspondence

- None

Verdell Jackson motioned "to approve the consent agenda as presented." Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment

310's

Sethre, FL-2021-099, Church Slough, riprap: Donna Pridmore explained that the applicant would like to extend the existing riprap an extra 50 feet. The district approved a permit for bank stabilization in 2014.

Donna Pridmore motioned to “approve as proposed.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Youth Camp Sponsorship Request: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that we received a request for sponsorship to attend a Land to Hand Camp on Bees and Butterflies. The funding is available through the Education Grant Program budget line. The registration fee is \$255.00.

Lech Naumovich motioned “to approve the sponsorship for \$255.00 for the Land to Hand camp.” Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Travel Approval: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that she is seeking approval of travel expenses to attend the Water Policy Interim Committee (WPIC) meeting in Helena on March 15-16th. Mark Siderius will also be attending and will be representing the Flathead River landowners on the panel discussion. Samantha asked the board to cover the cost of his travel as well.

Pete Woll motioned “to approve the travel for Samantha Tappenbeck and Mark Siderius to the WPIC meeting March 15th and 16th for up to \$1000.00” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion pass unanimously.

Flathead River Erosion Study Funding: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that we sponsored a grant application on behalf of the Flathead River Commission to study erosion on the Flathead River. Through the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Watershed Management Grant, we have secured \$32,500.00. The district intends to apply for additional funding and will be applying for the DNRC HB23 Grant. We will be applying for the full \$20,000. Samantha asked the board to consider supporting the study through funding from the settlement fund. She estimated this cost to be \$20,000. Pete Woll inquired if there was another source of funding available within our own budget. The staff can look within our budget for these funds.

Samantha Tappenbeck went on to explain that preliminary cost estimates suggested that the study would cost between \$75,000- \$100,000 to get the full benefit of the study and the full range of results required.

The board then discussed if the integrity of the study would be compromised if we did not receive additional funding.

The timeline is tight as the Request for Proposal (RFP) for study design goes out on Monday, March 7, 2022 with the deadline for responses being March 25, 2022.

The board felt that this would be an important study to fund. They would like to see if there is another budget line item to pull the money from. Tabling will allow time for responses from the RFP which will potentially inform the exact cost needed from the budget by the next business meeting.

Lech Naumovich motioned “to table until the next business meeting.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Personnel Policy: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that the board conditionally approved the personnel policy on 1/24/2022 pending review by the attorney. The review has come back with minimal changes. The suggestions were not relevant to Flathead Conservation District. Samantha recommends we approve the policy as is.

John Ellis motioned “to approve the personnel policy as put out by the personnel committee without the suggestions on page 13 of the meeting packet.” Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

January End of the Month Report: Donna Pridmore asked if the board had any questions on what was provided in the board packet.

John Ellis asked why we overspent on computer assistance. Samantha Tappenbeck explained that we had several multi-year license renewals including Microsoft 365, that we did not factor in when we were doing the budget.

John Ellis suggested that we not fund anymore Watershed Management Support program applicants so that we can use these funds for the Flathead Erosion Study.

John Ellis “motioned to approve the January end of the month budget as presented.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Flathead CD Staff: reported:

Staff Report: February 2022

Ginger Kauffman, Administrator; Ginger Rigdon, Administrative Assistant;
Samantha Tappenbeck, Interim Resource Conservationist

Office and Administration

Office Support

- Staff meetings were held weekly to review staff schedules, priorities, and project deadlines, and COVID policy updates
- The DNRC attorney reviewed the draft personnel policy. The draft personnel policy will be presented to the Board for approval at the February business meeting
- Samantha met with Flathead Basin Commission staff to discuss interest in leasing office space from FCD

310 – FCD has received five 310s to date. This includes permits and complaints. Ginger R processed the meeting minutes, 310-permits, and letters from 1/10/2022. She contacted applicants and landowners regarding onsite inspection dates, and emailed the onsite list to Supervisors, FWP and staff. Ginger R is currently processing the meeting minutes from, 310-permits, and letters from 2/14/2022.

Ginger R processes, scans, and files new 310's as they are received. Donna Pridmore continues to scan old 310 files as her time allows and is currently working on files dated 2006.

Bookkeeping – Secretary-Treasurer, Donna Pridmore, and Ginger K reconciled the December 2021 bank, revenue, capital improvement and credit card statements on 1/20/2022. Ginger K compiled and submitted the December End of Month Report to Donna on 1/24/2022 for review prior to the 2/14/2022 Board meeting.

Secretary-Treasurer, Donna Pridmore, and Ginger K reconciled the January 2022 bank, revenue, capital improvement and credit card statements on 2/16/2022. Ginger K compiled and submitted the January End of Month Report to Donna on 2/22/2022 for review prior to the 2/28/2022 Board meeting.

Ginger K processed payroll, payroll reports and payments on 1/19/2022 and 2/16/2022, which included February Federal & State tax reporting and payments. Ginger K continues to process daily bookkeeping items including payroll, invoices, credit card receipts, deposits, grant billing/vendor invoices, program payments, etc.

310-files dated 2008-2011 and bookkeeping/office files dated 2012/2013 were disposed of on 2/2/2022.

BSWC – Ben Schleicher terminated his position with FCD due to personal circumstances. Samantha met with Montana Conservation Corps staff to discuss options for replacement or reimbursement.

On-the-Ground Projects

Trumbull Creek – FCD was awarded \$25,000 in DNRC Watershed Management Grant funding to support the design of the crossing at Birch Grove Road. Samantha met with River Design Group, Flathead County Roads & Bridges, DNRC grant manager, and the FCD Projects Committee to determine next steps and needs moving forward. FCD has not secured enough funding to complete this project as proposed. Samantha is working with partners and the Projects Committee to explore additional funding opportunities. Samantha attended webinars about the American Rescue Plan Act Minimum Allocation Grant funding to determine project eligibility and

Study of Erosion on the Flathead River/SJ28 – FCD and the Flathead River Commission were awarded \$32,500 in DNRC Watershed Management Grant funding for a scientific study of erosion caused by boat wakes. Samantha worked with Flathead River Commission members and the FCD Projects Committee to develop a draft Request for Proposals. The grant-funded study will help fill information gaps and inform next steps and action taken by the Water Policy Interim Committee through SJ28. Following the previous WPIC meeting in January, Samantha

followed up on requests for additional information and coordinated with legislative staff, MACD, DNRC, and stakeholders to coordinate a panel discussion at the March 15-16 WPIC meeting.

Programs

Conservation Grant Program – Samantha finalized the contract extension for CG2021-08. Samantha also provided information and assistance to several landowners inquiring about application to the program.

Seedlings & Native Seed Program – Samantha worked with landowners to plan planting projects and place orders through the Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery and CHS Kalispell. To date, 14 orders have been placed for 1,581 seedlings. Of those, 640 seedlings were purchased with financial assistance from FCD. FCD also provided cost-share assistance for the purchase of 50 lbs. of native grass seed mix.

Pollinator Initiative – Samantha met with Lake County CD staff to discuss the timeline and plan for spring 2022. The seed will be mixed in bulk and pre-packaged into packets for dispersal at outreach events.

Youth Camp Sponsorships – Samantha provided camp sponsorship information to a local organization (Land to Hand) that offers summer youth camps and assisted with request for sponsorship for one student.

Education and Outreach

Living in the Flathead Guidebook and Website

Flathead CD is working with a group of partner agencies and organizations on a booklet and companion website that is intended to be a guide to living in the Flathead. Topics will include living with wildlife, living with wildfire, weed control, responsible recreation, living by water, and more. Funding for this project has not yet been secured. Samantha drafted content for the 'Living by Water' and 'Living on the Land' sections.

Advertisements – FCD ran advertisements in the Flathead Beacon for 310 Permits (2/10/22) and the College Scholarships Program (2/24/22).

Website – Over the past 28 days, the website was viewed by 834 unique users. Our site was reached through organic search (60.4%), direct access (32.5%), social media (5.1%), and referral from other sites (2%). The most viewed posts/pages beyond the FCD homepage were blog posts about why dead trees are important to retain on the landscape, Meeting Minutes, Meeting Agendas and Stream Permitting.

Social Media – Over the past 28 days, the FCD Facebook page gained 2 new followers, posts reached 2,082 people, and there were 193 post engagements. Over the last 30 days, the FCD Instagram page gained 11 new followers, posts reached 178 accounts, and there were 55 post interactions.

eNewsletter – The Local Dirt was distributed on February 7 to 669 people directly and posted on Facebook. The February issue included information about upcoming events, available programs,

and a blog post about the importance of dead trees on the landscape. It was opened 385 times by 281 people and clicked 143 times by 72 people. The most-clicked links were the Montana Soil Health Symposium, the Conservation Speaker series hosted by Lake County CD and information about the blog post on Life After Death: The Importance of Dead Trees.

Partner Meetings & Support

- Ginger R attended the CDAWG meeting on 1/25/2022 and 2/22/2022. This group was formed to help the CD's market themselves.
- Ginger R and Samantha Tappenbeck met with several agencies for planning for the Family Forestry Expo 1/26/2022
- Ginger R and Samantha Tappenbeck met with partners for advertising for the Family Forestry Expo on 1/31/2022
- Samantha Tappenbeck and Ginger R attended the Flathead River Commission Meeting on 2/1/2022 and 2/15/2022
- Samantha and Ginger R attended a meeting on 1/25/22 with partners from DNRC, Flathead Lakers, MSU, and USFWS to discuss development and implementation of a River Conditions Tool for local watersheds
- Samantha met with partners on the Living in the Flathead Guide on 2/7/22 and 2/15/22
- Samantha met with agency partners on 2/10/22 about plans for the 2022 Land Stewardship Series (formerly Small Acreage Landowner Workshop)
- Samantha met with Sean Johnson regarding FCD collaboration and priorities for 2022 NRCS Local Working Group meeting
- Samantha attended Nutrient Work Group meetings on 2/9/22 and 2/23/22

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

➤ **Programs**

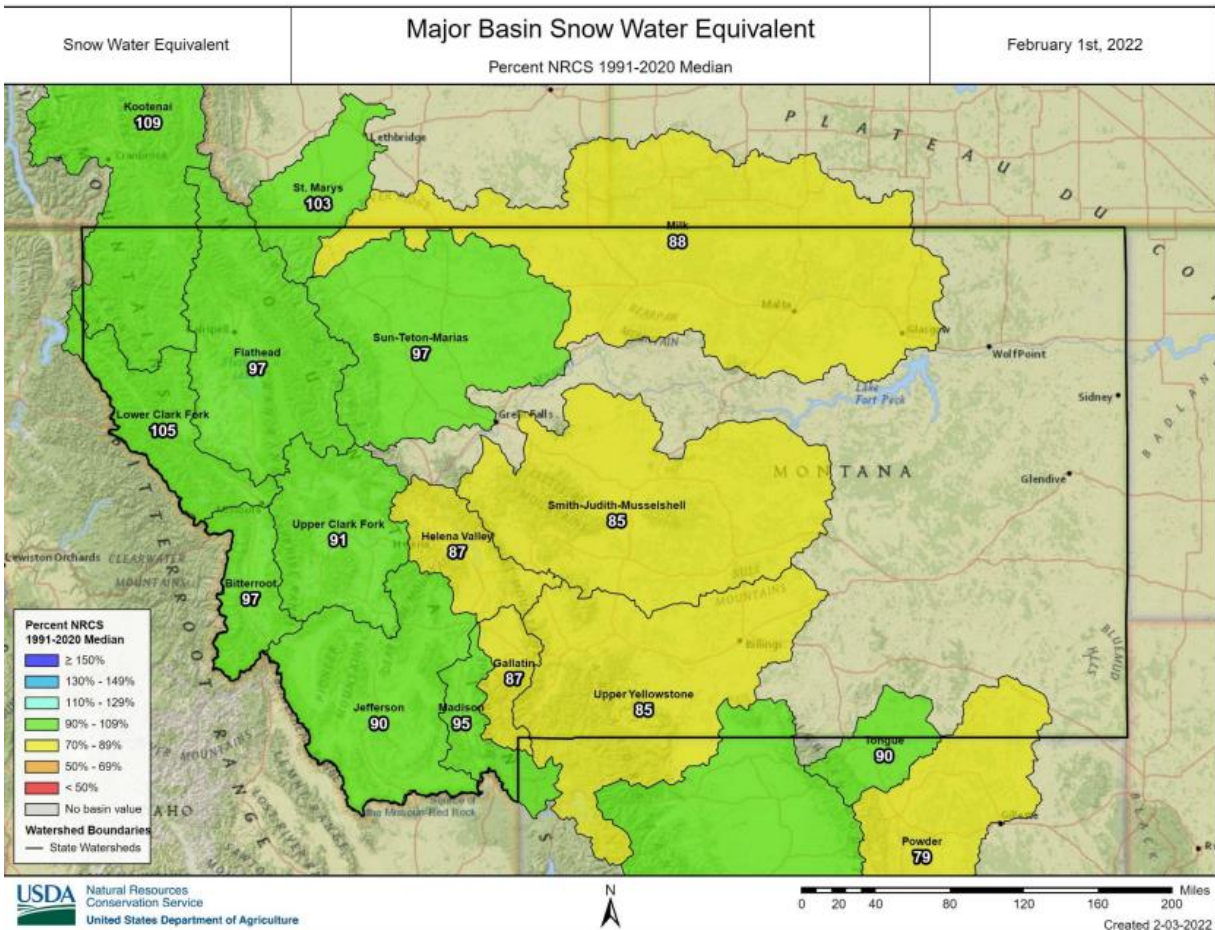
- EQIP
 - Completed the competitive ranking process for all EQIP applications on Friday 2/25
 - We should know by 3/11 which applications are funded initially
 - Additional money is always requested afterwards to fund additional applications
- Joint Chief's (JC)– FY22 Funding
 - Awarded JC funding and accepting program applications through March 4th for 2022
 - Very strong application turnout so far
- CSP
 - All CSP applications will go through the competitive ranking process by March 4th
 - We should know by March 18th on which applications are initially funded

➤ **Review Items**

- Completed a 15-minute radio spot with Mike West from the FS on the JC Project on 2/18 on KGEZ

- Firesafe Flathead Meeting – 2/24
- **Upcoming Items**
 - Local Working Group Meeting
 - Scheduled for March 31st from 1:00-3:00 at FVCC
 - A big thank you to the FCD Board for approving funds to be utilized both for room reservation and light refreshments!
- **Miscellaneous**
 - Drought
 - Flathead County is in pretty good shape, but SE corner is showing more drought status than in January.
 - Eastern MT still hasn't fully recovered from the drought although things are slowly trending in the right direction.
 - Snow Survey
 - The Flathead Basin is at 97% of normal so far as of February 1st.
 - January was at 107%

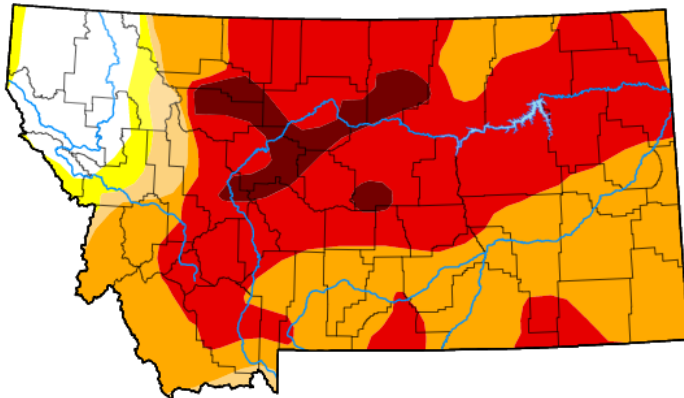
February Water Supply Outlook Report



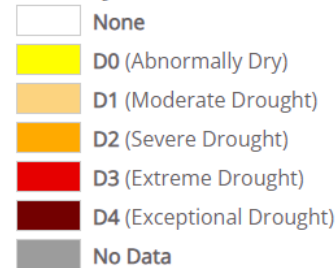
February Drought Monitor

Map released: Thurs. February 17, 2022

Data valid: February 15, 2022 at 7 a.m. EST



Intensity



Authors

United States and Puerto Rico Author(s):
Brad Pugh, NOAA/CPC

Pacific Islands and Virgin Islands Author(s):
Richard Heim, NOAA/NCEI

Department of Natural Resources, Conservation Districts Bureau:

INTRODUCTION

For those of you who I have not had the pleasure of meeting yet, I am one of the new Conservation District Specialists with the Conservation District Bureau of DNRC. As a CD Specialist I will be representing CDs in Western Montana and will be your main point of contact within DRNC. Specifically, I will be representing all CDs in Area 5 and approximately half of Area 6 including Beaverhead, Ruby Valley, Madison, Gallatin, and Park County Conservation Districts. I look forward to working with both Supervisors and Staff to forward the mission of Conservation Districts across the state. Please consider me a resource for program support, district operations guidance, and any education or training needs you may have. Each month I intend to submit a written report that can be included as a DNRC partner report during your monthly board meeting, in case I am unable to attend your meeting in-person. In each report, I will provide a brief summary of what the Conservation District Bureau has been working on, upcoming deadlines and events, and any other pertinent information. This report is meant to be a companion to the monthly CDB newsletter, *Conservation Matters*, but for the sake of printing will not include any hyperlinks.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The Water Policy Interim Committee (WPIC) and the Environmental Quality Council (EQC) met Jan. 19 and 24, respectively, and discussed interim study bills that directly affect conservation districts.

SJ28 – Study of Erosion on Flathead River – started as a CD resolution in 2020 and is currently a study bill assessing the impacts of boat wakes on streambank stabilization and erosion. During the recent WPIC meeting, Flathead CD provided a very informative and well-

received presentation on streambank stabilization. MACD, CDB Staff, and the Flathead River Commission also attended the meeting to provide general information and support.

HJ27 – Study of Conservation District Funding – is a study that will hopefully lead to more dependable funding for CDs. To support the EQC discussion on January 25, Gallatin and Garfield CDs and DNRC presented information on the successes and challenges of CDs across the state. These presentations lead to a great discussion with the committee legislators and, hopefully, a greater understanding of conservation district funding needs across the state.

310 Q&A BOOKLET UPDATES

The 1999 Quick Reference to 310 Legal Opinions booklet is a great resource if you have questions about the nitty, gritty details of administering the 310 Law. It covers topics like issuing permits to applicants who are not the landowner, issuing maintenance permits for irrigation diversions, issuing permits on federal or state property, and many other nuggets of wisdom. It's also laid out in a question-and-answer format which makes it really user friendly. Unfortunately, it hasn't been updated since 1999. For this reason, Caitlin Overland, Jason Garber, and I are in the process of updating it. Please take some time to go through the 1999 version and let us know if there's an issue your district deals with that should be included in the updated version. The booklet can be found on the DNRC/CDB website under CD Resource Documents. If you have any trouble finding it or would like a direct link emailed to you, please let me know.

CDB STRATEGIC PLANNING

We would like your input to guide our ongoing strategic planning effort. If you have any ideas or comments on how the Bureau can better support your work and mission, please let me know. For example, what trainings, resources, or support does your district need? You can email me directly at hailey.graf@mt.gov or I'd be happy to set up a phone call or meeting with your district.

UPDATES, EVENTS, AND MORE

- **Updated CD Directory:** If you have not received a copy of the updated CD Directory and would like one, please let me know and we will mail one to you. Alternatively, the directory can also be found on the DNRC/CDB website.
- **Mileage rate for 2022:** The IRS announced that the mileage reimbursement rate is 58.5 cents per mileage, up two and a half cents from 2021. This mileage reimbursement rate applies to Supervisors and CD employees effective January 1, 2022.
- **Supervisor Elections:** Supervisors up for election in 2022 must submit their paperwork by March 14th. A Declaration for Nomination and Oath of Candidacy form must be submitted to the county election office. Be sure to fill it out as a non-partisan candidate. There will be no filing fee as this is a non-paid position.
- **310 Surveys:** Surveys are due by February 1st to Jason Garber, CDB Stream Permitting Coordinator. If your district has not submitted this survey yet, please do so. Jason can be reached at jason.garber@mt.gov or 444-4340.

- **RRGL Planning Grants:** February 18th is the deadline for RRGL Planning Grant Applications. If your district has a project that may qualify for this program and is interested in applying, CDB staff can help!

As always, if you have any questions, concerns, program development ideas, or projects that you need assistance with, please reach out. I'm still learning the ropes of my new position; but if I can't help, I'll at least point you in the right direction or find someone who can. For now, I can be reached directly at hailey.graf@mt.gov. Once I have a phone set up, I will provide that number for your convenience.

-Hailey Graf

DNRC – Conservation District Bureau
Conservation District Specialist,
Western Montana
hailey.graf@mt.gov

Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB): Verdell Jackson reported that the board discussed a project on the old Thornton Motor Sports site on 93 North. APEC Engineering has proposed to create 28 residential lots on 40.6 acres. This will be a zone change.

Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB): Nothing to report.

Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC): Nothing to report.

Flathead River Commission (FRC): Donna Pridmore reported that the FRC elected officers at the last meeting. She also explained that the board discussed how to present to WPIC and what is needed from the Flathead River Erosion Study.

Flathead Basin Commission (FBC): Lech Naumovich reported that in the upcoming meeting Samantha Tappenbeck will be presenting to the board on the Flathead River Erosion Study. There will also be a discussion on emergency response and preparedness in the Flathead Valley. The board will also be updated on the preliminary peer review of the Septic Leachate Study.

MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF

Water Policy Interim Committee (WPIC) requests for SJ28: At the meeting on March 16th there will be a panel discussion from stakeholders statewide who are experiencing erosion as a result of boat erosion in their areas.

WPIC committee members want the Flathead Conservation District to send a list of recommended outcomes that we see coming from this study bill. She explained that she communicated to committee members that we are looking for information from the study bill before we can provide recommendations. However, at the May WPIC meeting we will provide this list with the caveat that a lot more information needs to be gathered from the study bill in

order to have a clear understanding. Samantha Tappenbeck will draft this list and present this to the FCD board for the March business meeting.

Special Meeting on Thursday: Samantha Tappenbeck reminded the board of the upcoming special meeting on March 3rd.

Home and Garden Showcase: Samantha Tappenbeck reminded the board about the upcoming Home and Garden Showcase on March 5th and 6th.

Tentative Request for a Lease of Office Space: The Flathead Basin Commission has tentatively requested space for a new employee. If we do go forward with this request Samantha Tappenbeck will put together a lease agreement and present it to the board at the next appropriate meeting

The next 310 permit meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2022, at 7:00P.M. via ZOOM.

Adjournment: John Ellis motioned “to adjourn.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:27 P.M.

Submitted By: Virginia Rigdon
Administrative Assistant

Reviewed By: Samantha Tappenbeck
Interim Resource Conservationist

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

<u>3/28/2022</u>	<u>Pete Woll</u>	<u>Chair</u>
Date	Signature	Title – Chair etc.