



FLATHEAD

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE

Lori Curtis, Vice-Chair called the July 27, 2020, Business meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. in the conference room via Zoom.

Board members present: Lori Curtis, Vice Chair; Donna Pridmore, Secretary/Treasurer; John Ellis, Supervisor; Verdell Jackson, Supervisor; Ronald Buentemeier, Supervisor; Lech Naumovich, Supervisor, being a quorum of the Board.

Board members absent: Pete Woll, Chair. Absence is excused.

Also, in attendance were Hailey Graf, Samantha Tappenbeck and Ginger Kauffman, FCD staff; Mikaela Richardson, Big Sky Watershed Corps Member; Kenny Breidinger, MFW&P; Mitch King, Montana's Outdoor Legacy Foundation; Bill Whitsitt; Janessa Cortney & Kevin Nolen TD&H Engineering; Kimberly Robinson and Trent Smith; Mike and Patti Woods; Marc Liechti, APEC Engineering; Dan Brosten; Melanie Jutzi, Randy Overton, Water Source Hydrology.

MINUTES

John Ellis motioned "to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2020 Board meeting as presented." Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Lech Naumovich motioned "to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2020 Budget meeting as presented." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Notice from Flathead County Election Department that the election for supervisors of the Flathead CD has been cancelled as Pete Woll and Donna Pridmore were elected by acclamation. New terms will begin 1/1/2021.

FINANCIAL

The following bills were paid on July 8, 2020:

1. Byte Savvy \$530.00
2. Montana Sky Networks Inc. \$10.00
3. Montana State Fund \$351.09
4. Mountain States Leasing – Kalispell \$1,599.73
5. Mountain Trader \$80.00

6. Nicola Butcher, The Artsy Aubergine \$400.00
7. Safeguard Business Systems \$215.36

Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve the July 8, 2020 Check Detail.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The following bills were paid July 22, 2020:

1. CenturyLink \$314.98
2. Flathead Beacon \$528.00
3. VISA \$1823.01

Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve the July 22, 2020 Check Detail.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously

The following bills were reviewed:

1. MontanaSky Networks \$10.00
2. Susan Hulslander, CPA \$646.00

Lech Naumovich motioned “to approve the bills as presented.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

310's

Bayside Park & Marine Center, FL-2020-031, Swan River, dock: In Pete Woll's absence, Hailey Graf explained that Pete and Leo Rosenthal recommended approving the application with modifications. FCD and FWP recommend that the applicant consider replacing the 3-foot width with a 4-foot width to increase stability of the dock, but either size is acceptable.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve the application with modifications per the Team Member Report.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Bradley, FL-2019-066C, Unnamed, complaint: Ronald Buentemeier motioned “to continue to table.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Bradley, FL-2019-067C, Unnamed, complaint: Ronald Buentemeier motioned “to continue to table.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Brosten, FL-2020-024E, Flathead River, notice of emergency: Donna Pridmore explained that the landowner installed a new product to stabilize the streambank. Both Donna and Kenny Breidinger questioned if the project should have been done under an emergency. Discussion held regarding the product not fitting within the Adopted Rules, the project not being secured at the bottom and the possibility of the entire project moving due to flows, how the product may break down, if vegetation will establish between the pads and lack of roughness to break wave energy, and the possibility of setting a precedent.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve the notice of emergency with no further action required by the applicant.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Brosten, FL-2020-025, Flathead River, bk stabilization/flood protect/fill, improve existing structure: Donna Pridmore stated that the landowner submitted a 310-permit application for work that was done under notice of emergency #FL-2020-24E.

The board discussed the possibility of reviewing the new product through a 5-year study as an experimental project, with a review each spring after high water and photos taken for documentation. The Board could then decide if the project is acceptable, to continue to study the project, or take other action. Kenny added that nothing more like this should be allowed/permitted and agreed that a long-term study should be set up to evaluate its effectiveness. Lori Curtis noted that it is good plan for going forward, but that it does not set a precedent for being an acceptable project.

Kenny Breidinger voiced concern regarding the visibility of the project, that others would want to do the same, questioned its durability, and noted that it is much less of a natural streambank. Kenny asked the board not to permit any more projects like this until a long-term study is completed.

Donna Pridmore motioned to “approve the application with modifications and conditions per the Team Member Report.” Lech Naumovich seconded.

After further discussion regarding specifics of the modifications and conditions, Supervisors and FWP agreed that due to the complexity of the project, the application should be tabled until the next meeting allowing time to work on details in the Team Member Report.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to withdraw the previous motion and table the application until the next meeting.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Brunskill, FL-2020-028, Flathead River, dock: In Pete Woll’s absence, Hailey Graf explained that during the onsite inspection attendees noted several landowners have put in docks, removed vegetation, and had attempted to control noxious weeds. She stated that there seems to be confusion in the community about what is required under the 310-law and what actions do or do not require permits. After discussion during the onsite inspection, and receiving letters and public comment from Bill Whitsitt, Mitch King with Montana’s Outdoor Legacy Foundation, and Flathead Lakers, the recommendation is to table the application, and host a public meeting regarding 310-permitting and actions to be taken regarding illegal/non-permitted structures that were previously placed.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to table the application until after a stakeholder meeting can be held.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Butts, FL-2019-056C, Unnamed, complaint: Lech Naumovich motioned “to table until further information is received.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Butts, FL20-20002, Unnamed, well/cistern: Lech Naumovich explained that a letter was sent to Mr. Butts asking for more information on the application.

Lech Naumovich motioned “to table until a complete application is received.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Kimberly Robinson asked if there is a deadline for submittal of the application. Lech stated that there is no deadline, and that he spoke with Mr. Butts today, who will be submitting additional information.

Cliffton, FL-2020-022, Bowser Spring Creek, bridge/culvert/bank stabilization/channel alteration: Verdell Jackson explained that a culvert and land-bridge had washed out and fencing near the stream will be removed. Verdell reviewed the considerations in the Team Member Report.

Verdell Jackson motioned “to approve the application with modifications per the Team Member Report.” Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Dugan, FL-2020-037, Flathead Lake, fill: In Pete Woll’s absence, Hailey Graf explained that this is not a project and not under our jurisdiction. Kenny Breidinger agreed and stated this is on Flathead Lake, it is not a stream.

Donna Pridmore motioned “this is not a project.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to authorize Hailey Graf to sign for Lech Naumovich and Lori Curtis who are attending via zoom.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Flathead Properties LLC, FL-2020-038, Flathead Lake, fill: In Pete Woll’s absence, Hailey Graf explained that this is not a project under our jurisdiction as it is on Flathead Lake and not a stream.

John Ellis motioned “this is not a project.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

FNF/Big Mtn Winer Sports, FL-2020-009, Haskill Creek tributary, culvert: Lori Curtis motioned “to table the application until an onsite inspection can be scheduled.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Kusler, FL-2020-029, Flathead River, dock addition: In Pete Woll’s absence, Hailey Graf stated that Pete and Kenny Breidinger recommended approving the application with modifications per the drawing that was provided on 7/9/2020, after the onsite inspection. Kenny explained this is a previously permitted dock and that the applicant is changing it from a straight dock to an L-shaped dock. Additional drawings were provided because no measurements were included in the applications; it does meet criteria for a floating dock.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve the application with modifications per drawing submitted 7/9/2020.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PacifiCorp, FL-2020-035, Swan River, bank stabilization/excavation/temp construction access/debris removal: An onsite inspection was scheduled for Wednesday, August 12, 9:30 A.M. at the site.

Ptarmigan Owner Association, FL-2020-039E, Unnamed, notice of emergency: Lori Curtis explained that Ptarmigan filed an emergency, then contacted her, and she visited the site.

Pfarmigan is now withdrawing the notice of emergency as no perennial stream is running through the property.

Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the request to withdraw the Notice of Emergency, as there is no perennial stream at the site.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Spartan Holdings, FL-2020-033, Stillwater River, bank stabilization/utilities/road construction/pond/outfall: An onsite inspection was scheduled for Tuesday, August 18, 1:15 P.M. at the site.

Weber, FL-2020-034, Flathead River, bank stabilization: An onsite inspection was scheduled for Thursday, July 30, 9:30 A.M. at the site.

West 2nd Street Residents LLC, FL-2020-036, Whitefish River, road/dock/utilities/structure: An onsite inspection was scheduled for Tuesday, July 28th, 3:00 P.M. at the site.

NEW BUSINESS

Phone Polls: Phone polls were done 7/8/2020 regarding the following 310’s:

Siderius, FL-2020-023, Unnamed, bank stabilization, storm drain outlet to slough: Not a project under our jurisdiction. Approved by Pete Woll, Lori Curtis, Ronald Buentemeier, John Ellis, Donna Pridmore.

Grob, FL2020030, Briggs Creek, culvert, road construction, remove old bridge: To approve the application as submitted. Approved by Pete Woll, Lori Curtis, Ronald Buentemeier, John Ellis, Donna Pridmore.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve the phone polls as presented.” Ronald Buentemeier seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

310-Administrative Grant #CDA-21-2032: Hailey Graf explained that the district has received a new 310-Administration grant in the amount of \$2,750.00.

John Ellis motioned “to approve and accept 310-Administrative Grant #CDA-21-2031 between Flathead Conservation District and Montana DNRC.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Hailey Graf explained that the final report for last fiscal year’s 310-Administration Grant #CDA-20-1981 is now completed and must be signed and sent to DRNC. The grant totaled \$2,500.00 and all funds were expended.

Ronald Buentemeier motioned “to approve the final report for 310-Administration Grant #CDA-20-1981.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

DNRC 223-Grant #23G-19-3639: Hailey Graf explained that the district needs to submit the Vendor Invoice in the amount of \$400.00 to DNRC for reimbursement.

John Ellis motioned “to approve the DNRC Vendor Invoice in the amount of \$400.00 for Grant #23G-19-3639.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

MT Biological Weed Control Coordination Project (MBWCCP) Funding Request:

Hailey Graf explained that the district received a request for funding from MBWCCP. Supervisors asked Hailey to contact MBWCCP for additional information and ask if they could give a presentation to the Board.

Education Grant Application: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that Melanie Jutzi, with Kid Kare Child Care Center, submitted an education grant application in the amount of \$1321.47 to support development of a program called Konservation Kids. Funds would go toward purchasing curriculum/books for the educators, educational activities, displays, and gardening supplies. The curriculum would cover a variety of topics including biology, natural history, and natural resources.

Melanie explained Kid Kare is the preschool that services Kalispell Regional Medical Center. Kid Kare would like to provide curriculum to the staff to teach students the importance of conservation. She noted that they have a small garden area, which the children enjoy, and teachers and community members help in.

Samantha noted that the application includes a list of items they would like to purchase, the prices and links to items listed. Lori Curtis stated the cost of the items seems reasonable and was pleased to see community members and parents participating.

Lech Naumovich motioned “to approve the Education Grant application from Kid Kare in the amount of \$1321.47.” Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

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

Office and Administration

310 – Ginger processed five 310-Permit Applications and one Notice of Emergency. Ginger and Hailey coordinated with landowners to cover essential work during the COVID-19 pandemic and to safely arrange for onsite inspections. Hailey attended the Brunskill and Kusler onsite inspections and coordinated with landowners to provide the virtual meeting attendance information.

Bookkeeping – Ginger compiled documentation and worked with the CPA and auditor to complete the Work Comp audit on July 2nd. Ginger processed payroll on July 8th and July 22nd along with federal and state taxes for July. Ginger worked with Donna Pridmore to reconcile bank statements for June and worked on the End of Month Budget Report for June.

Annual Budget – Ginger, Hailey and Samantha met July 9th to work on the preliminary budget sheets. Staff and Board met on July 14th to work on the preliminary 2020/2021 budget and to review associated program goals. Ginger will prepare and submit preliminary budget sheets to the County by July 24th.

District Office – Hailey coordinated with NRCS and DNRC on office protocols to ensure employee and public safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. The office is currently open to the public by appointment. Masks and hand sanitizing are required for entry. Employees are encouraged to telework when possible.

On-the-Ground Projects

Cow Creek Restoration Project – FCD staff and project partners are maintaining the plantings as necessary through weed spraying and fencing repairs. Ryan Richardson with River Design Group did two drone flights to collect high-resolution, geo-referenced photos for monitoring. Hailey continued project management and coordination with landowners.

Trumbull Creek Restoration and Aquifer Protection Project – Hailey completed and submitted the quarterly status report and match tracking report on July 15th. Hailey and the Trumbull Creek Committee reviewed information from the Conservation Districts Bureau and continued to work through the contracting process.

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.

Demonstration Garden – Hailey planted two Douglas-fir and two ponderosa pine trees to replace trees that did not survive from last year. Staff continued maintenance of the site, including mowing, hand pulling weeds, and weed spraying. Hailey and Samantha also researched and developed a plan for a solarization demonstration that will become a lawn alternatives demonstration area next spring.

Programs

Conservation Grant Program – We currently have 13 open contracts, seven in FY19-20 and six in FY20-21. These contract periods overlap because of recent adjustments to the program timeline. FY19-20 contracts began Jan 1, and FY20-21 contracts began July 1. Funded practices include weed control, a rain garden, reforestation, native seeding, wildlife habitat improvement, riparian buffer improvement, bank stabilization, and windbreaks. Samantha finalized FY20-21 contract packages and distributed to landowners for their records. Samantha developed a new database for tracking contracts and program summary data.

Seedling Program – This program is currently closed and will open for orders on September 1.

Education Grant Program – This program closed to applications during the month of June in order to close out the fiscal year. Staff anticipate two applications in July and additional applications this summer and fall. Samantha is working to update the template contract and database to improve contract tracking.

College Scholarship Program – Nine applications were awarded to Flathead County high school seniors in 2020. Several students have submitted thank-you notes and indicated their interest in attending a future meeting.

Watershed Support Program – FCD contracted with Geum Environmental Consulting to complete phase one of an assessment of upper-middle Ashley Creek to determine potential restoration projects, sites, and feasibility. The phase one assessment was completed by June 1 and deliverables include a GIS map package and landowner database ranked by restoration potential and potential project ideas. Samantha and Mikaela are planning outreach and program implementation. Samantha developed a program webpage and application. FCD staff will host a partner meeting with NRCS, FWP, and Flathead Lakers on July 28 to review the assessment and strategize outreach, collaboration, and opportunities to leverage program funding.

Pollinator Initiative – 24 landowners are participating in this program 0.45 acres-worth of seed has been distributed to 11 of these landowners for planting this spring. Staff worked with landowners to provide information on site preparation and planting guidelines. Hailey, Samantha, and Mikaela conducted site visits and provided technical assistance to landowners on site preparation and maintenance.

Rain Garden Initiative – Mikaela worked with landowners to construct rain gardens in Kalispell and Whitefish. One of those landowners wrote an article about his rain garden and positive experience participating in the program, which ran in the Daily Interlake on 7/13. Samantha embedded the Rain Garden Initiative story map webpage on the FCD website. Mikaela continued to update program materials and resources.

Education and Outreach

Workshops and Events – Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most events, including Family Forestry Expo, Earth Day, Arbor Day, and Rolling Rivers Trailer presentations, were canceled or postponed. It is our hope that these valuable events can be rescheduled for fall. The FCD schedule of educational workshops is unchanged but staff have responded to COVID-19 conditions and restrictions on gathering sizes by converting to live webinars as needed. See Upcoming Events below for the complete schedule of workshops/webinars.

- On 7/1, FCD hosted a DIY Pollinator Habitat Webinar that was attended by 25 members of the public. Hailey presented.
- On 7/15, Flathead Rain Garden Initiative partners co-hosted a webinar on rain gardens that was attended by 15 members of the public. Mikaela presented on behalf of FCD, and Emilie Henry presented on behalf of City of Kalispell.

Advertisements – FCD ran advertisements in the Flathead Beacon on July 8 for the Rain Gardens Webinar, and on July 22 for 310 permit information. We used Facebook to advertise webinar events and “boosted” the events in order to reach more people. We reached 8,900 people (263 event page views) for the DIY Pollinator Habitat Webinar on July 1, and 7,300 people (283 event page views) for the Rain Gardens Webinar on July 15.

Website and Social Media – Over the past 30 days, the website was viewed 1,857 times, and the most viewed pages and posts were a blog post about local fishing ponds, the Workshops and Classes webpage, and stream permitting information. Over the same period, posts on the Facebook page reached 10,958 people, had 1,575 post engagements, and 66 new followers. The most engaging posts were about installation of the first rain garden through the Rain Garden Initiative, and status updates on Demonstration Garden practices (pollinator plots and cover crop mix).

eNewsletter – The Local Dirt was distributed on 7/6/2020 and included upcoming events, available programs, a partner profile, and 310 permitting information. The current mailing list includes 250 people. As of July 17th, the July issue was opened by 118 people (222 times) and had 22 total clicks. The top three clicked links were FCD Workshops and Classes, the FCD Calendar, and the Flathead Pollinator Initiative.

Upcoming Events – Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff scheduled workshops and outreach events at the Demonstration Garden. In response to current guidance on public gatherings, workshops have been redesigned to be hosted virtually as webinars.

Schedule of upcoming workshops:

- August 12: Soil Health
- September 2: Gardening for Water Conservation
- September 16: Noxious Weeds
- September 26: Fall Planting for Pollinators

Partnerships

- Mikaela assisted with trail maintenance at Lone Pine State Park.
- Mikaela assisted Cynthia Ingelfinger (Whitefish Lake Institute) with ongoing monitoring and sampling of lakes through the NW Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network.
- Hailey met with Farm Hands Nourish the Flathead to discuss program opportunities to support small, diversified farmers.

Hailey provided an update on the Trumbull Creek project and described associated contracting issues. Mikaela updated the Board on past and upcoming webinar workshops. Samantha reported that maintenance continues in the demonstration garden. Two pollinator plots are in different phases of development and are teaming with pollinators and insects. A cover crop mix was planted and has been mowed leaving roots in the soil. A windbreak was planted and weed management has been undertaken. Educational signs that will include QR codes linking to a web page are being designed.

Natural Resources & Conservation Service (NRCS): No report.

Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD): In Pete Woll's absence, Hailey Graf reported that MACD recently hired a new director, Rebecca Boslough, and that MACD is working to hold the Area meetings virtually in the fall.

Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB): Dean Sirucek reported the July 8th meeting included two subdivision plats for Schwartz on Shepherd Trail and a zone change on Murr Lane which went forward with positive recommendations to the County Commissioners; and a 38-lot Phase 2 Country Estates subdivision on Hwy 35 which was recommended as do not pass to the County Commissioners. A discussion regarding Ag zoning will be held in the fall.

Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB): No report.

Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC3): No report.

Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC): The next meeting will be held October 14th, 6:00 P.M. at FH Stoltze Land & Lumber.

Flathead Basin Commission (FBC): Lech Naumovich reported that the FBC meeting was held virtually with 25 attendees. Funding cuts were discussed, and a dashboard is being created for maps regarding septic leachate risk which will make it more accessible to the community. Additionally, Lech will be co-chairing a sub-committee for education and outreach.

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

MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF

Resolution process: Hailey Graf provided copies of the MAC Resolutions Process Guide -7/7/2020 to the Board.

Long Range Plan (LRP): Copies of the 1964 LRP and the 2020 NRCS plan were provided. Hailey and the board discussed necessary updates to the LRP, particularly section *E. Conservation Problems and Treatment*.

Thank-you: Hailey Graf reported that as a thank-you to Caitlin Overland for all her hard work on the Stalowy case, a tree will be planted, in season, in the demonstration garden in her honor with a plaque. Caitlin will also receive a letter expressing the districts gratitude. Hailey asked supervisors to sign and noted that the letter will be forwarded to Laurie Zeller, DNRC, County Commissioners etc.

The next Business meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 24, 2020, 6:00 P.M. in the conference room of the USDA building at 133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell, MT.

Adjournment: Verdell Jackson motioned “to adjourn.” John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 P.M.

Submitted By:

Ginger Kauffman
Administrator

Hailey Graf
Resource Conservationist

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

8/24/2020	Pete Woll	Chair
(Date)	(Signature)	(Title – Chair etc.)