



---

## **CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE**

Vice-Chair, John Ellis, called the August 23, 2021, Business meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the conference room.

**Board members present:** John Ellis, Vice Chair; Donna Pridmore, Supervisor; Verdell Jackson; Supervisor; being a quorum of the Board.

**Board members absent:** Pete Woll, Chair; Lech Naumovich, Secretary-Treasurer. Absences are excused.

Also, in attendance were Hailey Graf and Ginger Kauffman, FCD Staff; Fiona Handler, Big Sky Watershed Corps Member; Gordon Ash, Associate Supervisor; Scott Rumsey, Supervisor; Emily Harness, Associate Supervisor; Kody Coxen; Associate Supervisor

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **Consent Agenda Item 1: Signature Authority**

- Authorization for Hailey Graf to sign on behalf of Supervisors attending the meeting virtually.

### **Consent Agenda Item 2: Minutes**

- July 12, 2021, 310-Meeting
- July 26, 2021, Business Meeting

### **Consent Agenda Item 3: Financial**

The following bills were reviewed: (Check Detail 8/17/2021)

1. BCBS \$3,971.72
2. CenturyLink \$324.79
3. Forestoration Inc. \$3,406.80
4. MT Biological Weed Control Coord. Project \$20.00
5. River Design Group \$5,114.60
6. WGM Group \$13,993.25
7. Whitefish Lake Institute \$775.40

Verdell Jackson motioned “to approve the consent agenda.” Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Authorization for Legal Counsel:** Hailey Graf reported that the Brunskill's are proceeding with legal action and the district has been served.

Verdell Jackson "motioned to authorize Caitlin Overland as FCD legal counsel and to sign the acknowledgment and waiver of service for *Brunskill v. FCD*." Scott Rumsey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**310-Administrative Grant #CDA-22-0016:** Ginger Kauffman reported that the district has received a 310-Administrative grant from DNRC in the amount of \$4,615.38.

Verdell Jackson motioned "to approve, sign and send back the 310-Administrative grant #CDA-22-0016 agreement to DNRC for their signatures" Scott Rumsey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Bad Rock Canyon Proposal:** Hailey Graf explained that a draft letter of support of FCD of the Bad Rock Canyon proposal was included in the meeting packet. FWP is seeking public input on a proposal to purchase CFAC land for Bad Rock Canyon Wildlife Management Area. The property is held in trust under Flathead Land Trust.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to submit a letter of support for the proposal on behalf of Flathead CD." Scott Rumsey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

## **REPORTS**

**Flathead CD Staff:** Hailey Graf, Samantha Tappenbeck, Ginger Kauffman, and Fiona Handler reported:

### ***Office and Administration***

310 –Ginger processed nine new 310-Permit Applications, and three Complaints. She posted the 8/9/2021 meeting agenda to the website and emailed the agenda/virtual meeting link. She is currently working on meeting minutes, 310-permits and letters from the 8/9/2021 310-meeting. Ginger contacted landowners/applicants regarding onsite inspections, and emailed an onsite inspection list to Supervisors, FWP & Staff. Hailey coordinated with landowners to provide the virtual meeting attendance information.

Ginger is working with Donna Pridmore who has been coming into the office to help process 310 related documents and reports.

Hailey, John Ellis, and Donna Pridmore consulted with the Flathead County Attorney's office on various technical issues regarding 310-permit administration. Issues included work-stop orders, options for reaching non-responsive residents, and proper filing of violation paperwork.

Hailey met with Jason Garber to discuss the upcoming, September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 310 Training Day. Hailey continued planning the event which will include several site

visits with hypothetical scenarios set up, designed to facilitate discussion. Scenarios will include emergency action, a complaint and potential violation, and challenges with making jurisdictional determinations. Training participants will meet at the FCD office at 9 AM on September 2<sup>nd</sup> and training is expected to be completed by 4 PM.

Bookkeeping – Ginger processed payroll and associated reports and payments on August 4<sup>th</sup>; the next payroll is August 18<sup>th</sup>. Federal & state tax reports and payments for August will be processed with the August 18<sup>th</sup> payroll. Ginger continues to process bookkeeping items such as invoices, credit card receipts, deposits, grant billing/vendor invoices, program payments, payroll, payroll payments and reports etc.

### District Office

- Weekly staff meetings were held each Monday at 2 PM.
- John, Donna, Verdell, and Hailey met on August 9 to review and discuss potential updates to the FCD Personnel Policy.
- Hailey met with John on August 18 to review the Business Meeting agenda and provide project and office management updates.
- Hailey drafted a new job description for the Administrative Assistant position and reviewed it with Ginger. Virginia Rigdon, the new Administrative Assistant will begin work on August 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Hailey met with Staff, individually, to discuss mid-year performance review check-ins.
- Hailey continued working with Spectrum to get new internet and phone services installed.
- Hailey followed up with Tim Birk regarding the office lease and drafted another lease extension through October 13, 2021.
- Samantha drafted a letter of support that FCD provided to Lake County CD that indicates FCD's financial contribution to a shared Big Sky Watershed Corps position to continue this program in 2022.
- Samantha submitted an application to the BSWC program for a 2022 Member.

### *On-the-Ground Projects*

Cow Creek Restoration Project – Hailey compiled all deliverables required for DEQ grant close out and wrote the final project report. Ginger completed the final vendor invoice and billing statement. Hailey submitted the final report package to DEQ on July 27 and received approval of the submission on August 5. This approval marks the successful completion and closeout of the Cow Creek Restoration Project DEQ 319 Grant.

Hailey, Samantha, and Fiona conducted vegetation monitoring of the riparian plantings on August 11 and 17. This monitoring was done to assess the survival rate and vigor of plantings to help inform future restoration efforts.

Trumbull Creek – Hailey coordinated a site visit on July 8<sup>th</sup> for FCD Supervisors and DNRC grant managers, Jorri Dyer and Jason Garber. The intent of the site visit was to familiarize everyone with the project goals and confirm applicability of the environmental assessment completed by DNRC. Hailey and Ginger also completed the billing statement, match tracking, vendor invoicing, and reporting for the quarterly report.

Krause Creek Restoration Project – Hailey attended a kickoff meeting with the selected contractor and the landowners. Design considerations, priorities, and potential outcomes were discussed. Preliminary design, wetland delineation, and permitting will take place throughout August and September. Construction is tentatively scheduled for the first two weeks of November.

Demonstration Garden – Hailey coordinated with Forestation to construct the lawn alternatives demonstration area. This construction included a U-shaped extension to the exiting path. The new path has flagstone steppingstones surrounded by topsoil which will be planted with groundcover plants in the spring. Inside the U-shaped area will be spayed for weeds and seeded with micro-clover while the outside area will be seeded with native grasses. The final interpretive sign for water conservation and lawn alternatives will be installed next spring once the area is seeded.

Hailey, Samantha, and Fiona continued to do maintenance in the demonstration garden including hand pulling weeds, weed whacking, weed spraying, mulching, and mowing.

### ***Programs***

Seedlings & Native Seeds Program – Samantha coordinated with Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery and CHS Kalispell to set up systems for invoicing Flathead CD for landowner orders through this new program. Samantha also provided program information to interested landowners and consultation on seedlings for conservation practices.

Watershed Support Program – Samantha and Fiona met with the fencing contractor and Ashley Creek landowner (Lipinski) on August 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss fence design and installation. Samantha consulted with NRCS and Montana Trout Unlimited on floodgate designs used in past restoration projects and worked with the fencing contractor to update the bid. Fiona completed an interim report for the MWCC Grant that provides matching funds to support this project.

Pollinator Initiative – Fiona conducted monitoring on 6 different pollinator plots that were planted in the spring of 2021 or in 2020. Leftover 2020 seed was acquired from Lincoln CD and used to create seed packets to promote the program. Fiona tabled at the Pollinators in the Park event on July 30<sup>th</sup> and Maker’s Market in Somers on August 11<sup>th</sup>, where she distributed 2020 seed packets to people interested in participating in the Pollinator Initiative.

Rain Garden Initiative – Fiona and Emilie Henry taught a class about Rain Gardens at the Center for Native Plants. They are discussing plans for gardens with a handful of new participants.

Septic Maintenance Reimbursement Program – This program is administered and managed by a BSWC Member with MACD but advertised at the local level through Flathead CD and Lake County CD. FCD received and directed calls about the program and participated in the monthly check-in meeting. Fiona helped Jillian Henrichon with the septic booth at the fair.

## ***Education and Outreach***

### Workshops and Events

- Pollinators in the Park – FCD hosted an event on **July 30<sup>th</sup>** at Woodland Park and showed the documentary film, “The Pollinators”. FCD and partners tabled at the event. FCD distributed 12,500 sq ft worth of wildflower seed to promote the Pollinator Initiative. Several partners donated raffle items. Approximately 60 people attended the event.
  
- 2021 Flathead Waters Cleanup – FCD and the Flathead Basin Commission co-hosted a county-wide waterways cleanup event on **August 14<sup>th</sup>**. Nearly 200 volunteers signed up to collect trash from local streams, rivers, and lakes and over 100 participants attended the afterparty, hosted by Sacred Waters Brewing. This very successful event received enormous community support, with many participants and organizations requesting it become an annual event.
  - Total # volunteers that participated: 174
  - Total # of volunteer hours spent: 576
  - Total pounds of trash collected: 2,640 (1.3 tons)
  - Total cubic feet of trash collected: 143
  - Total miles of riverbank/lakeshore improved: 94
  
- Center for Native Plants Native Roots speaker series: All About Rain Gardens – Fiona co-hosted a rain gardens workshop with Flathead Basin Commission staff on **August 19<sup>th</sup>**
  
- 2021 NW Montana Fair – **August 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>**; FCD hosted an unstaffed booth due to concerns over safety at large events during the ongoing pandemic. We usually share a large booth space with Flathead NF and Glacier National Park, but both have pulled out of the Fair this year. The FCD booth was located in the Grandstand Building and provided information about our mission and work, brochures about our programs, statistics from the Flathead Waters Cleanup, and other informational and promotional items.

Advertisements – FCD ran advertisements for the Flathead Waters Cleanup event in the Flathead Beacon print edition on the August 12<sup>th</sup>, and through online advertisements by the Flathead Beacon in the week prior to the event. Fiona hung 50 posters at various business to advertise the Flathead Waters Cleanup event. We also boosted advertisements for the Flathead Waters Cleanup event on social media to reach a larger audience. FCD ran an advertisement for 310 permits in the Flathead Beacon print edition on August 26<sup>th</sup>.

Website – Over the past 30 days, the website was viewed 1,928 times, with 79% new (vs. returning) visitors. Viewers of the website were most frequently referred from Facebook. The most viewed posts/pages beyond the FCD homepage were the Septic Maintenance Reimbursement Program, the Flathead Waters Cleanup event, and blog posts about the life history of larch trees, free family fishing ponds, and spotted knapweed management.

Social Media – In August we posted information about past and upcoming events hosted by FCD, AIS Inspectors appreciation week, the eNewsletter, and the FCD pollinator garden. The FCD Facebook page gained 46 new followers, posts reached 24,066 people, and there were 2,497 post engagements. The FCD Instagram page gained 61 new followers, posts reached 8,731 accounts, and there were 388 content interactions.

eNewsletter – The Local Dirt was distributed on August 4<sup>th</sup> to 681 people directly and also posted on Facebook. The August issue included information about upcoming events, available programs, a blog post, and 310 permit information. As of August 18<sup>th</sup>, it was opened 468 times by 245 people and clicked 29 times. The most-clicked links were to the FCD events calendar, a blog post about the Demonstration Garden, and a link to a zoom webinar.

### **Partnerships**

- Hailey and Samantha met with Montana Freshwater Partners to discuss possible wetland restoration projects and the use of wetland mitigation credit trading to fund future projects.
- Fiona and Samantha met with River Stewardship Program partners (FWP, NRCS, Flathead Lakers) to discuss ongoing projects, future outreach efforts on Ashely Creek, and opportunity for collaboration. FWP also provided a tour and update of the experimental cottonwood seeding plots at Foy's Bend.

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

➤ **Programs**

- EQIP
  - All three TIPs (Little Bitterroot, Wedge Canyon, Lower Valley Irrigation) deemed investment ready which means they will come online in FY22, pending funding availability
    - Started to make landowner contacts, take applications, and make site visits for FY22 sign ups
  - Application deadline of mid-October for any FY22 applications

- Joint Chief's – FY22 Funding
  - Joint Chief's proposal identified as one of top 3 in MT and sent to National Office for review. We are supposed to find out by the end of September on which proposals are selected for FY22 funding.
- **Review Items**
  - Attended Little Bitterroot Lake Association meeting on 8/4 to talk about the Little Bitterroot TIP. 49 people in attendance and have already received some calls for signups from it
- **Upcoming Items**
  - Little Bitterroot Lake Association – 8/4/21
    - Conduct outreach for Little Bitterroot Lake TIP
  - Pathways Intern, Kira, will end her summer with us on Friday August 13<sup>th</sup>
- **Miscellaneous**
  - Kalispell still working on hiring a new Soil Conservationist
    - Start date would be by Sept 30<sup>th</sup>
      - Multiple offers have been extended but cost of living has caused selected applicants to decline
  - Drought
    - All of MT now showing some official drought status. USDA has opened up drought programs to assist farmers, ranchers, and now the timber industry with compensation for losses incurred because of drought.
    - All of Flathead has moved into severe drought. Drought monitor map for end of July and most recent included for comparison of changes

**Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD):** Hailey Graf explained a summary of MACD activities for August was included in the meeting packet. Any questions can be directed to Hailey or Rebecca Boslough, MACD.

**Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB):** Verdell Jackson reported the West Glacier Vision plan was not approved, therefore it will be re-worked and re-submitted.

**Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB):** John Ellis reported the 93 South plan was forwarded to the City Council. John noted that FCD was added as a stakeholder, and the proposal is dependent on MT DOT. The 95 Karrow project is changing some buildings around, and the old Idaho Timber building will be taken down.

**Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC):** No report

**Flathead Basin Commission (FBC):** No report



## **MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF**

**FCD Building Lease Extension:** Hailey Graf explained that the lease extension has expired. Tim Birk is still coordinating with NRCS to update office leases. Discussions have been further complicated by federal COVID vaccine requirements.

Verdell Jackson motioned “to sign a new lease extension through October 13, 2021.” Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion held regarding length of the lease. Hailey Graf explained that she contacted Caitlin Overland regarding NRCS COVID requirements. Caitlin and Tara agree that since FCD is leasing space from a private individual FCD is not bound by NRCS rules.

**Personnel Policy Review:** John Ellis explained a copy was provided in the meeting packets. John asked supervisors to review proposed updates to the personnel policy. This will be further discussed at the September business meeting.

**Administrative Assistant Job Description:** Hailey Graf explained that the job descriptions are formal documents for each position. As the Administrative Assistant is a new position, Hailey drafted a proposed job description and explained that at the end of the 6-month period, it will be further reviewed and updated.

**MACD Supervisor Survey:** Hailey Graf explained that MACD is undergoing strategic planning and has asked that each district complete the survey. Survey questions were reviewed and answered by the board. Hailey will contact Pete Woll and Lech Naumovich for their comments, compile FCD answers and submit to MACD.

**Statewide Employee Training:** Hailey Graf reported a statewide employee training will be held October 20-21 in Red Lodge. A draft agenda has been received. John Ellis asked for an expense budget for the board to approve.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve all FCD staff to attend the Statewide Employee Training and to close the office for two days.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**MACD Convention:** Hailey Graf reported the Area V meeting will be held October 4<sup>th</sup> in Plains, and the 2021 MACD convention is scheduled for November 16-18 in Great Falls. Additional information will be forwarded as it is received.

**Nutrient Work Group (NWG) Survey:** Hailey Graf explained that Samantha Tappenbeck is representing conservation districts west of the continental divide on NWG and has distributed the survey to solicit input. The survey for western conservation districts is to provide input to DEQ on a change from numeric to narrative nutrient standards. John Ellis suggested supervisors complete the survey and submit to Hailey or Samantha.

**Watershed Support Program project budget:** Hailey Graf explained that Samantha has asked that this be tabled until next month until additional costs are received. This will be further discussed at the September 310-meeting.



**September 2<sup>nd</sup> 310-training day.** Hailey Graf explained that the 310- training day will run from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M, and the day will be spent outside. Complaints, violations, notice of emergency and standard applications will be discussed. Jason Garber, DNRC, Caitlin Overland, Flathead County Attorney’s office, supervisors and staff from other districts will be attending. Hailey asked if the Board would approve providing lunch, to which the Board agreed.

**Old office furniture:** Hailey Graf explained that approval is needed from the Board to remove excess and old items from the Furniture & Equipment list. The Board asked staff to submit a list for board approval at the September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The next 310- meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 13, 2021, 7:00 P.M. via ZOOM.

Adjournment: Verdell Jackson motioned “to adjourn. Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

Submitted By:

Ginger Kauffman  
Administrator

Hailey Graf  
Resource Conservationist

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

9/27/2021  
(Date)

Pete Woll  
(Signature)

Chair  
(Title – Chair etc.)