



CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE

Chair Pete Woll called the October 25, 2021, Business meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the conference room.

Board members present: Pete Woll, Chair; Lech Naumovich, Secretary/Treasurer; Donna Pridmore Supervisor; Verdell Jackson, Supervisor, being a quorum of the Board.

Board members absent: John Ellis; Vice Chair; Scott Rumsey, Supervisor. Absence is excused.

Also, in attendance were Hailey Graf, Samantha Tappenbeck, Virginia Rigdon and Ginger Kauffman, FCD Staff; Gordon Ash, Associate Supervisor; Kenny Breidinger, FWP; Cathy Mitchell; Sean Johnson, NRCS; Emily Harkness, Associate Supervisor; Terese Kashi-Lipinski.

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

- October 12, 2021, 310-Meeting Minutes

Consent Agenda Item 3: Financial

The following bills were reviewed:

(Check Detail 10/13/2021)

1. Center for Native Plants \$363.48
2. Flathead Beacon \$528.00
3. SWCDM \$424.92

Consent Agenda Item 4: Correspondence

- Montana State Fund (Work Comp) – As a result of no losses for 2019, Flathead CD will receive a dividend of \$337.73

Lech Naumovich asked that Check Detail 10/19/2021 be removed from the consent agenda.

Lech Naumovich motioned “to approve the Consent Agenda.” Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Check Detail 10/19/2021

1. VISA (Hailey Graf) \$820.34
2. VISA (Samantha Tappenbeck) \$144.51

Discussion held regarding VISA charges, amounts and detail. Lech Naumovich requested more detail/explanation for individual VISA charges; specifically, those over \$500.

Lech Naumovich motioned "to approve the 10/19/2021 Check Detail as presented." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

310's

Brisendine, FL-2021-057C, Stillwater River, complaint/motion correction: To correct the motion made on 10/12/2021: Verdell Jackson motioned "the activity has been initiated on a perennial stream without a valid permit. The applicant is to submit an after the fact application and must include any trail work they are going to install. The application was received 10/5/2021, however it did not include trail work. If any additional work is to be done, the landowner must submit a new application." Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mitchell, FL-2021-099, Stillwater River, debris & vegetation removal: Verdell Jackson explained that the landowner wants to remove an old car from the bank of property located just north of Church Drive. He noted that he did not see any problem with removing it. There is a trail approximately 4-feet wide down the bank toward the river, and the landowner wants to level out an area below the bank for a picnic area. The concern is how much land they want to disturb.

The landowner emailed an application addendum just prior to the meeting; however, the information did not include dimensions and was not clear. Kenny Breidinger stated the removal of the car is ok, but the disturbed area should be reseeded. The trail is reasonable, and they will surface it with gravel. The area they want to level and turn into lawn, however, is very large and close to the river.

Cathy Mitchell stated that the information submitted today was a google map with a line showing the area they want to level, which is 31,412 sq feet. She added that the car will be pulled out, the bank will not be touched, and no trees will be removed. She noted that an area directly north of the project area on her property would remain untouched.

Lech Naumovich noted that the type of seed to be used was not included in the application. Cathy responded that they would plant something that does not have to be irrigated. The applicant said she did not know specifically what type of grass she would plant and that she would be open to discussion on such.

Kenny Breidinger described the area that they visited on the onsite inspection. He stated that the mean high-water mark was visible and that there was a very short rise before flattening out to a bench. Then the area slowly rises until it gets to a steep bank. Hailey Graf displayed a map on the shared screen which showed the location of the floodplain relative to the project. Hailey then displayed the application on the shared screen and noted that the application stated that a floating dock might be added in the future. The Board clarified that this application would not permit a floating dock and a new application would be needed if one were to be added in the future.

The landowner stated that they want an area to enjoy just like neighboring properties. Lech responded that projects are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and noted that the application is not complete as critical portions of the application are missing. Board members noted the following missing items: a seed prescription, a map ground truthing exactly where the proposed flattened area will be, the distance of the flattened area from the edge of the water and top of the bank, details on the width of the trail/road and material to be used, water runoff strategies for the road, and erosion measures that will be implemented during construction and until the grass can take root.

Verdell Jackson motioned "to approve removing the car and we approve the area with the following modifications. The property next to the river line is to be moved back 20 feet, grass is to be planted in that area that would meet the requirement that it would not be to be watered and is compatible with the other grass that is there. We request information from the applicant regarding what will be done there, and the type of grass that will be planted." Donna Pridmore seconded.

Discussion held regarding how much of the project is within the jurisdiction of the district. Kenny Breidinger explained that in our adopted rules, jurisdiction is defined as the land directly adjacent to the stream which when physically altered or modified has the potential to affect the state of the stream. Kenny added that better guidance should be provided to the applicant on where the immediate streambank is.

Staff pulled up Google maps and Lech stated that the aerial is instructive to the reach of the river and riparian habitat, and landforms that are influential to hydrology. The change in vegetation and hydrologically defined areas could also be seen. He added that this is a tricky situation, and we need to give the applicant clarity. If vegetation is removed at the top of the slope, the dirt will go into the stream. Moving forward, we don't have a complete application from the applicant, and we need to provide the applicant with information on where our jurisdictional reach is.

Cathy added that there is no intention of removing any vegetation from the high bank. The only vegetation in that area that will be removed is for the road to be put down.

Verdell Jackson withdrew his motion, and Donna Pridmore withdrew her second.

Verdell Jackson motioned "the FCD will hire a professional to do a hydrological survey of the site and to determine our jurisdiction per the Adopted Rules." Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board explained to the landowner that the district will contact a company to do a technical review of the project and will need to access the property with the landowner's permission. The review will be paid for by the district. The landowner asked to be contacted with information on who will be doing the review.

NEW BUSINESS

End of Month Budget Reports (July, August): Lech Naumovich reviewed the July and August Reports with the Board.

Lech Naumovich motioned "to approve the July and August End of Month budget reports as presented." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Times Discussion: Donna Pridmore asked for discussion/thought about beginning the meetings earlier for the winter. Upon discussion board members present were in favor of beginning meetings at 5:30 P.M., however, Scott Rumsey and John Ellis need to be contacted for their input.

Discussion followed regarding office closures around the holidays.

Lech Naumovich motioned "to close the office on the November 26, and December 27-30." Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion held regarding district meetings around the holidays.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to move the November business meeting to November 29." Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Lech Naumovich motioned "to cancel the December 22 business meeting." Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Montana Drought Management Plan: Hailey Graf explained DNRC is working on updating the Drought Management Plan and asked anyone interested in being involved in the process to contact her.

CHS Account: Samantha Tappenbeck explained she has been working with CHS to put together a cost-share program for the native grass seed mixes. The district budgeted \$2500 this fiscal year, and under the cost-share program FCD would provide \$3 cost-share per pound of native grass seed mix. The district would set up an account with CHS and CHS would invoice the district once a month. The application was signed by Chair Pete Woll.

REPORTS

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

Office and Administration

310 – Virginia processed ten new 310-Permit Applications. To date the district has received 101 310's; this includes permits, complaints and notice of emergencies. Virginia and Ginger processed the 9/27/2021 meeting minutes and are currently working on 310-permits and letters. After the 9/27/2021 meeting Virginia contacted applicants and landowners regarding onsite inspection dates, and emailed the onsite list to Supervisors, FWP and Staff. Virginia also added ZOOM meeting link information to the district website. Hailey coordinated with landowners to provide the virtual meeting attendance information. Hailey consulted with Caitlin Overland regarding legal advice on 310 violation processing. Donna Pridmore continues to scan old 310 files and help with 310 paperwork as her time allows.

At the direction of the board and Chair, Hailey sought legal counsel on behalf of FCD regarding the intersection of the SMZ Law and the 310 Law, submitted the record of files for the Brunskill case, and coordinated communication with Rocky Mountain Law Partners regarding the White application.

Bookkeeping –Donna Pridmore and Ginger reconciled September bank statements, revenue sheets and VISA's on 10/19/2021. Ginger is currently working on the September End of Month Report.

Ginger has begun compiling documentation for the Annual Financial Report, which will be completed by Susan Hulslander, CPA, and is due to the Department of Administration by the end of December.

Ginger processed payroll, payroll reports and payments on 10/13/2021. The next payroll is 10/27/2021 and will include Federal & State tax reporting and payments. Ginger set up 2021 2022 budget and grant information in Quickbooks. She continues to process daily bookkeeping items such as payroll, invoices, credit card receipts, deposits, grant billing/vendor invoices, program payments, etc.

Staff received medical insurance renewal information on 10/12/2021. A meeting will be scheduled with the insurance company to review options, and information will be provided to the Board for approval.

District Office

- Spectrum Services were finally installed, and staff began testing the transfer of files to the SharePoint from the local network
- Staff attended the Area V Conservation District meeting on October 4th
- Following the direction of the board, Hailey finalized the office building lease updates with Tim Birk
- At the request of the board, Hailey researched the use and need for the stream gage at Hungry Horse Reservoir. She determined that this stream gage is used only for monitoring reservoir levels and the board agreed not to contribute funding towards its operation and maintenance
- As directed by the board, Hailey researched vehicle procurement options and will present information during the January Business meeting
- Hailey ordered new nametags for all staff and supervisors

- Weekly staff meetings were held each Monday at 2 PM. These meetings are used to review staff schedules, project deadlines, and COVID policy updates.
- Hailey met with Pete on October 20 to review the Business Meeting agenda and provide project and office management updates

On-the-Ground Projects

Study of Erosion on the Flathead River – Hailey provided information to Kenny Breidinger, FWP, and Jason Mohr, staff for WPIC, in preparation for the WPIC meeting. Hailey also contacted Mark Lorang to inquire about the feasibility, logistics, and budget for an erosion study. Mark described that a study could be done in partnership with WPIC this coming summer if funds are available. The WPIC meeting was held in Helena on October 12-13. Hailey attended the meeting in-person and had the opportunity to communicate directly with legislators and state-level partners, which proved to be very valuable. Based on recommendations from the WPIC and with approval of the board, Hailey began drafting an application to the Watershed Management Grant program for funds to support the erosion study. The next WPIC meeting will be held on January 18-19.

Krause Creek Restoration Project – Construction will take place November 1-12. Construction will include building beaver dam analogues, planting willows, and conducting pre-project monitoring. In preparation for construction, Hailey coordinated with Rick Moore, Service Forester with DNRC, to collect willow switches for planting. She also coordinated with River Design Group for material purchasing and delivery.

Volunteers are needed to help with construction and can [sign up through Sign Up Genius](#). To recruit volunteers, Virginia and Samantha created a registration page through Sign Up Genius. Staff shared the registration page and project information with agency partners, FVCC, local landowners, on social media, and in the FCD newsletter.

Trumbull Creek – Hailey met with River Design Group and Flathead County Public Works to discuss alternatives for the Birch Grove Road Crossing. During that meeting, participants agreed that the estimated cost of the crossing would be much higher than originally expected and additional funding and a contract extension would be needed. After discussion with the DNRC grant manager, and with approval of the board, Hailey began the application process for a Watershed Management Grant to address funding shortfalls.

Browns Meadow Ranch – Construction of a hardened water crossing, and off-site watering facilities took place in late summer. Unfortunately, the cost of building the crossing were much higher than anticipated. To address this issue, Hailey worked with the ranch manager and MACD to propose a budget amendment to DEQ. Approval for the additional funds is anticipated by the end of the month. Hailey also helped the ranch manager with final reporting for their Ranching for Rivers grant and worked with DEQ to calculate the nutrient load reduction estimates.

Cow Creek Restoration Project – Hailey, Samantha, and Virginia attended a partners' meeting on September 28th to discuss alternatives for continuing work on the Duffy property. During that meeting, partners decided that additional monitoring would be

valuable to assess the effectiveness of past projects and the potential impact of adjacent neighborhoods and a city stormwater retention pond. They also discussed the potential for conducting a reed canary grass abatement project and the need for funding. Hailey agreed to research funding opportunities. Samantha and Hailey met with Franz Ingelfinger onsite on October 15th to evaluate potential planting opportunities.

Demonstration Garden – Staff continued regular maintenance and seasonal projects in the garden. Hailey worked with Ron to prune all the evergreen trees, Samantha and Virginia sprayed for knapweed and thistles following the first hard frost, and Fiona, Virginia, and Donna took all the accumulated noxious weed cuttings to the county landfill.

Programs

Pollinator Initiative – Fiona fielded submissions from participants signing up to participate in 2022. Fiona distributed seed to participants for fall seeding. Fiona and Samantha assisted with seeding a pollinator plot on the Flathead Electric Coop's solar array property on October 26.

Rain Garden Initiative – Fiona is organizing a meeting with Forestation and representatives from the City of Kalispell to create a plan for building 10 rain gardens next year.

Seedlings Program – The Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery began accepting orders for spring 2022 on September 15th. Samantha worked with landowners to place orders and facilitated financial assistance to those placing orders at or below the MCSN minimum order size. To date, 10 orders have been placed for 1,265 seedlings.

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 worked with MACD, DEQ, and the Flathead Lakers to put on a workshop about sources of and solutions to nonpoint source pollution on October 2nd. To date there have been 140 applicants, and 109 septic systems have been pumped.

Watershed Support Program – Samantha conducted a site visit on October 5th with an upper Ashley Creek landowner interested in the program.

- Installation of riparian fencing at the Lipinski Kashi property was completed October 11-14. Samantha and Fiona visited the project site during installation to meet with the fencing contractor and take photos. Samantha coordinated with the landowner about submitting receipts and worked with Ginger and Fiona to initiate the payment process. Fiona worked on the final report for the MWCC Watershed Fund Grant that provided matching funds for the Lipinski Kashi project.

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. This is

something we've discussed in the past among the partners on the Land Stewardship/Small Acreage Landowners Workshops, and it has gained traction and urgency with the recent influx of newcomers. Topics will include living with wildlife, living with wildfire, weed control, responsible recreation, living by water, and more. We are in the early stages of development and recently submitted a grant application for RAC funding to support development, design, and printing. The Board approved up to \$5,000 in match funding towards the grant application.

Workshops and Events

- Solutions to Pollution Workshop – October 2nd, Lawrence Park in Kalispell. The workshop was intended to cover sources of nonpoint source pollution in our watershed, and solutions through best management practices and program resources. Only one person from the public attended, so a video was filmed instead. The workshop was hosted by the BSWC Member serving with MACD and Lake County CD and sponsored by Flathead CD. The Flathead Lakers and DEQ also provided partnership and financial assistance for the workshop.

Advertisements – FCD ran advertisements in the Flathead Beacon the Seedling Program on October 21 and for 310 Permits on October 28. We boosted advertisements for stream permitting and for the Krause Creek restoration project volunteer recruitment on social media to reach a larger audience.

Website – Over the past 28 days, the website was viewed 2,947 times by 1,728 unique users (90% new vs. returning). Our site was reached through organic search (68%), direct access (28%), social media (2.4%), and referral from other sites (1.5%). The most viewed posts/pages beyond the FCD homepage were blog posts about the life history of larch trees, FCD Meeting Agendas, and Stream Permitting.

Social Media – Over the past 28 days, the FCD Facebook page gained 23 new followers, posts reached 12,892 people, and there were 977 post engagements. The FCD Instagram page gained 21 new followers, posts reached 384 accounts, and there were 147 post interactions.

eNewsletter – The Local Dirt was distributed on October 5th to 679 people directly and posted on Facebook. The October issue included information about upcoming events, available programs, a blog post, and 310 permit information. It was opened 565 times by 242 people and clicked 51 times by 34 people. The most-clicked links were to information about the Seedlings Program, the blog post about goats as a weed management tool, and a zoom presentation on biocontrol.

Partnerships

- Staff attended the Flathead CORE meeting on 9/29
- Hailey hosted an information gathering meeting for Church Slough residents on October 24th to learn more about the bank stabilization issues they are experiencing and discuss permit requirements and potential restoration options
- Hailey attended the Montana Drought Management Plan meeting on October 14

- Staff attended the MACDEO statewide employee training on October 20-21; Hailey and Samantha presented.

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

➤ **Programs**

- Environmental Quality Incentive Program (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 October 29th 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 mid-November on which proposals are selected for FY22 funding.
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
 - Signup deadline of October 29th

➤ **Review Items**

- New Soil Conservationist, Christine Burke, started in Eureka on October 12th. She will be primarily working in Lincoln County but will come down to assist in Flathead as well
- COVID update call with partners on 10/7
- Met with NRCS area and state forester in Wedge Canyon on 10/5 to discuss potential hurdles in treating that dense lodgepole regen
- Attended MACD Area 5 meeting virtually with FCD staff

➤ **Upcoming Items**

- NRCS will be assisting with Krause Creek Restoration on 11/4, 11/10, and 11/12
- Last updated was that due to NRCS travel restrictions, we will not be attending the MACD State Convention and attendance virtually will not be expected either

➤ **Miscellaneous**

- Small wildlife off of Patrick Creek on 10/18
 - Fire season isn't quite over just yet
- Drought
 - Most of Flathead County is currently in Moderate status.
 - Some slight changes in status across MT but much of eastern MT still in bad shape but a slight overall reduction of Exceptional

Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD): No report

Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB): Verdell Jackson reported several subdivisions were presented to the FCPB, and discussion was held regarding private rentals.

Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB): John Ellis was unable to attend. Lech Naumovich stated he attended virtually in an unofficial capacity. He explained that WCPB discussed a large-scale development at the base of the mountain, and he noted that as a resident, septic impacts should be addressed.

Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC): No report.

Flathead Basin Commission (FBC): No report.

MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF

Flathead Planning & Zoning Board Terms: Pete Woll explained that Verdell Jackson's term on the Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB) ends 12/31/2021. Flathead County Planning & Zoning is requesting FCD provide a recommendation to fill the vacancy no later than November 12, 2021.

Lech Naumovich motioned "to reappoint Verdell Jackson as the FCD representative on the FCPB." Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

310 Motion Guidance: Hailey Graf explained that that the *310 Motion Guidance for Supervisors* document will be provided at 310-meetings for board reference. The Board agreed that it would be helpful.

Team Member Reports: Supervisors discussed filling out and signing Team Member Reports, board discussions after doing an onsite inspection and how it relates to permits. The Board voiced issues with the Team Member & Inspection Reports. Hailey Graf will contact Caitlin Overland for guidance.

Personnel Policy Updates: The Board agreed to table until a full board can review and discuss updates.

MACD Convention: Hailey Graf provided the convention will be held the week of November 15th, and Pete Woll, John Ellis, Hailey Graf, and Virginia Rigdon tentatively will be attending. Hailey added that Resolutions were provided in the meeting packet, and the board needs to decide how to vote on the resolutions and who will take the motions forward to convention. Pete Woll noted that the Chair generally makes the motion for the district (which has one vote), and if he cannot then John Ellis could make the motion.

This will be put on the November 310-meeting agenda to provide supervisors time to review the resolutions.

Veteran's Day Holiday: Hailey Graf explained that November 11th is Veteran's Day and a holiday for the district. The Krause Creek project will be ongoing during that time, and some of the staff will be working on the project. She asked that staff be given permission to work that holiday and receive holiday pay.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve holiday pay to staff for November 11th.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Dues/Benefits Program: Ginger Kauffman reported that the NACD dues invoice for FY 2021/2022 has been received. FCD has budgeted \$750 for this fiscal year, which NACD considers to be in the *Silver* level (\$501-774) of payment. This year NACD is offering a new benefits program. Conservation Districts that pay in the *Gold* level (\$775-\$1,775) will have access to insurance benefits listed on the NACD website.

The Board expressed interest and asked Staff to look further into the insurance options

Lech Naumovich motioned “that Flathead CD allocate \$775.00 for NACD dues for FY 2021/2022.” Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Watershed Support Program (WSP) Project Completion and Payment: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that the Lipinski-Kashi project has been completed, and that the landowner has submitted a work completion form along with paid invoices. A final inspection of the project for irrigation repair and riparian fencing has been done. Samantha requested the board provide payment in full for the approved project cost in the amount \$7550 and noted that payment will be split between the Watershed Support Program and the MWCC grant.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve \$7550 for the WSP to Terese Lipinski-Kashi.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The next 310-meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 8, 2021, 7:00 P.M. via ZOOM.

Adjournment: Lech Naumovich motioned “to adjourn. Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:12 P.M.

Submitted By:

Virginia Rigdon
Administrative Assistant

Ginger Kauffman
Administrator

Hailey Graf
Resource Conservationist

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

11/08/2021
(Date)

John Ellis
(Signature)

Vice Chair
(Title – Chair etc.)