



FLATHEAD

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE

Chair Pete Woll called the October 26, 2020, Business meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. in the conference room.

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

Board members absent: John Ellis, Supervisor. Absence is excused.

Also, in attendance were Hailey Graf, Samantha Tappenbeck and Ginger Kauffman, FCD staff; Mikaela Richardson, Big Sky Watershed Corps Member; Christina Schroeder, ACOE; Bill Whitsitt; Roger Noble; Water & Environmental Technologies; Josh Sonju; Shawn McDonough; Kevin and Brittain Kulow.

MINUTES - Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the minutes of the September 28, 2020, meeting as presented.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE - None

FINANCIAL

The following bills were paid (Check Detail 10/14/2020):

1. Byte Savvy \$55.00
2. Mountain States Leasing \$1,599.73
3. Mountain Trader \$80.00
4. NACD \$750.00

The following bills (Check Detail 10/21/2020) were reviewed:

1. Anders Business Solutions \$105.
2. CenturyLink \$319.49
3. Flathead Beacon \$528.00
4. VISA \$1604.46

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

The following bills (Check Detail 10/26/2020) were reviewed:

1. Greg Dennison \$2,268.75

2. MontanaSky Networks \$10.00
3. Sally Cameron-Russell \$330.38

Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the bills as presented.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Signing Authority - Lori Curtis motioned “to have Hailey Graf sign for the supervisors not attending in person.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

310

Brosten, FL-2020-025, Flathead River, bank stabilization/flood protection/improve existing structure/fill: Donna Pridmore stated that she, Hailey Graf, and Pete Woll met with the attorney and DNRC to discuss the application and how to move forward. Donna explained that Brosten submitted the application as an addendum to Notice of Emergency FL-2020-024E, and not as a new application. Hailey stated that Dan Brosten wants to toe in the lower part of the project and will submit a 310-permit application in the spring.

Hailey provided a chart from Laurie Zeller, DNRC, noting actions that can be taken by a conservation district when a Notice of Emergency is submitted.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to close application #FL-2020-025 and add it as an addendum to notice of emergency #FL-2020-024E. Any additional work needed requires a new 310-permit application.” Ronald Buentemeier seconded.” Motion carried unanimously.

Butts, FL-2019-056C, Unnamed, complaint: Lech Naumovich motioned “to table until the next meeting or until information is received.” Donna Pridmore seconded Motion carried unanimously.

Bynum, FL-2020-051E, Walker Creek, notice of emergency: Lech Naumovich explained that the bridge collapsed when a propane truck tried crossing it. The landowner hired a construction company to reconstruct the bridge; treated wood was not used. Spacing between planks was discussed and Kenny Breidinger noted that the bridge has steel I-beams underneath. Kenny added that the stringers could have been a bit higher, but that the landowner does not need to remove the bridge. As-built dimensions were not submitted. Lech and Kenny recommended the landowner re-seed bare soil with native seed.

Lech Naumovich motioned “to approve the Notice of Emergency.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Griffin, FL-2020-060C, Garnier Creek, complaint: Lori Curtis motioned “to send the standard complaint letter.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Heckerman, FL-2020-053, Mount Creek, culvert/bank stabilization/cattle crossing: Donna Pridmore explained how the geo textile fabric will be used in the crossings. Kenny Breidinger stated that this is an impacted section of stream due to cattle, however, the cattle are now fenced out.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to approve the application with modifications per the Team Member Report and to waive the 15-day waiting period.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Heil, FL-2020-042C, Blaine Creek, complaint: Hailey Graf explained that the technical review request was approved by DNRC, and that she had sent out a request for cost estimates along with the scope of work. A final report and presentation of findings is required. Two responses were received. Hailey reviewed the responses with the Board.

Lori Curtis motioned “to accept the River Design Group cost estimate for the Blaine Creek/Heil technical review.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Heil, FL-2020-044E, Blaine Creek, notice of emergency: Hailey Graf explained that the technical review request was approved by DNRC, and that she had sent out a request for cost estimates along with the scope of work. A final report and presentation of findings is required. Two responses were received. Hailey reviewed the responses with the Board.

Lori Curtis motioned “to accept the River Design Group cost estimate for the Blaine Creek/Heil technical review.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Hodge Creek Reserve HOA, FL-2020-052E, Hodge Creek, notice of emergency: Verdell Jackson provided photos and explained that beavers had plugged up the flow of water, so the landowner put in a temporary 3-inch pipe. Kenny Breidinger added that the pipe will not work for long, and that the landowner will submit a 310-permit application for a permanent solution.

Verdell Jackson motioned “the emergency action is modified. Within 90 days, a 310-application must be submitted for a permanent system.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Kulow, FL-2020-059, Whitefish River, improve existing. structure/steps: An onsite inspection was scheduled for Tuesday, November 10, 9:00 A.M. at the site.

McDonough, FL-2020-056, Unnamed, head gate/debris removal: Pete Woll explained that the stream had an old diversion put into a fishpond. The diversion has two culverts to divert the water. The landowner went to the water rights office and was informed that to meet the water right he would be required to place sandbags to turn the water into the culverts.

Pete Woll motioned “to approve the application as submitted and waive the 15-day waiting period.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

MacDonald, FL-2020-054, Flathead River, dock/gangway/gravel/wetland alteration/bank stabilization: Pete Woll and Kenny Breidinger explained that the project is in the Eagle Bend area. The landowner has two properties with docks already in place. The gangways to the docks were too short, so the landowner repaired and extended them and wants to fill under the gangways where erosion occurred. Placement of shrubs was approved to help stabilize the bank.

Pete Woll motioned “to approve the application with modifications per the Team Member Report.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

MT Outdoor Legacy Foundation, FL-2020-055, Flathead River, vegetation management: The onsite inspection was cancelled due to high water.

Pete Woll motioned “to table until the water goes down and the site is walkable.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Povich, FL-2020-057, Wolf Creek, bridge/debris removal” Pete Woll explained the project is to install a bridge to access the other side of the stream where they plan to build a home. Leo Rosenthal noted that there will be minimal debris removal in the channel and channel shaping. Work will be done during low flow.

Pete Woll motioned “to approve the application as submitted per the Team Member Report.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Pete Woll motioned “to waive the 15-day waiting period.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Tuttle, FL-2020-058, Whitefish River, bridge: An onsite inspection was scheduled for Monday, November 9, 11:00 A.M. at the site.

NEW BUSINESS

Flathead County Planning Board appointment: Hailey Graf explained that Dean Sirucek’s term ends 12/31/2020, and the Planning Board is requesting a letter of recommendation by 11/13/2020. Verdell Jackson stated that he would be interested in the appointment.

Lori Curtis motioned “to provide a letter of recommendation for Verdell Jackson to be the Flathead CD representative on the Flathead County Planning Board.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Furniture & Equipment Disposal Request: A list was provided to the Board for prior review. Hailey Graf requested approval to dispose or donate old office equipment and furniture.

Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the Furniture & Equipment disposal request.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Copier Maintenance Service Agreement: Hailey Graf explained that the current Maintenance Service Agreement ends 12/31/2020. The new Maintenance Service Agreement runs 1/1/2021 – 12/31/2021. There are no changes from the 2020 Agreement

Lori Curtis motioned “to approve the Maintenance Service Agreement with Anders Business Solutions.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

FCD Booklet and Board Pamphlet: Hailey Graf presented a proposal to the board to have an informational booklet designed that could be given out to legislators, partner

organizations, and the public. Hailey stated that two cost estimates for the booklet design were received and reviewed both proposals with the Board.

Lori Curtis motioned “to move forward with the Flathead CD information booklet and pamphlet and go with Greater Than Image for no more than \$1800.” Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously. *Lech Naumovich abstained from voting.*

Krause Creek Project Modifications: Hailey Graf presented a proposal to the board to modify the Krause Creek Project methods from mechanical creation of an inset floodplain to the use of Post Assisted Log Structures (PALS) and Beaver Dam Analogues (BDAs). She explained that the modification would allow the project to be completed within a truncated timeline and within budget. The modifications would achieve the same outcome and resource benefits.

Lech Naumovich encouraged photo monitoring, and Leo Rosenthal noted that this method should not be used on streams where fish passage is a concern, however, Krause Creek is not a fishery so it shouldn't be an issue. The Board voiced support for the project. Hailey will communicate their support to DNRC and provide the Board with any updates.

End of Month Budget Report: The September 2020 End of Month Budget Report was provided to the Board for review.

Lech Naumovich motioned “to approve the September End of Month Budget Report as presented.” Lori Curtis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Flathead CD Staff: Hailey Graf, Samantha Tappenbeck, Ginger Kauffman, and Mikaela Richardson reported:

Office and Administration

310 – Ginger processed one 310-Permit Application and one Complaint. Ginger and Hailey coordinated with landowners to cover essential work during the COVID-19 pandemic and to safely arrange for onsite inspections. Ginger contacted landowners and applicants regarding 310-onsite inspections and processed 310-permits and letters. Hailey attended onsite inspections and coordinated with landowners to provide the virtual meeting attendance information.

Hailey and Ronald Buentemeier conducted an informal site visit on Hay Creek to discuss methods for flood prevention with a property owner. Following the visit, the property owner decided to conduct work in an area outside FCD's jurisdictional area. Hailey also provided information on the Conservation Seedling Program and advised the landowner on restoration of the riparian area along Hay Creek.

Bookkeeping – Ginger processed payroll on October 14. The next payroll will be done on October 28th along with federal and state taxes for October. Ginger and Donna Pridmore reconciled September revenue and bank statements. Ginger completed the September End of Month Budget Report. Ginger took compiled documents and information to the

CPA for the Annual Financial Report. A meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 6th, 10:00 A.M. via ZOOM regarding staff 2021 medical insurance renewal.

District Office – Hailey and Samantha conducted four interviews for the Big Sky Watershed Corps Member position. Mikaela's last day with the district will be on November 11th and the new BSWC Member will begin their term on January 11th.

Legislative – Hailey attended the Legislative Ad Hoc Committee meeting on October 16. Hailey will continue to attend these meetings and will provide pertinent updates to the board.

Trainings – Hailey and Ginger participated in a training hosted by MACD and DNRC on the Local Government Reimbursement program under the CARES Act. Samantha began a self-paced, Intermediate WordPress training through FVCC.

Area V Meeting – Pete, John, Lori, Lech, Ginger, Hailey, and Samantha attended the October 8th Area V meeting virtually via Zoom. During the meeting Hailey provided an overview of the Flathead River Erosion Study Resolution which received a positive vote and will move on for a final vote at the state-wide convention.

On-the-Ground Projects

Cow Creek Restoration Project – A Fall maintenance day was conducted on October 1st. Work included weeding, replacing weed matting, general fence repair, and installing vole protection tubes around trees. A new, downstream landowner is interested in expanding the Cow Creek restoration efforts to include his property. Hailey met with project partners and the new landowner to discuss feasibility and funding strategies. Hailey has also coordinated with DEQ about a potential contract extension under the existing 319-grant to cover the new property.

Mount Creek – The owner and manager of Browns Meadow Ranch contacted the office seeking technical guidance on modifying the cattle crossings to prevent further damage to Mount Creek. The cattle are currently fenced out of Mount Creek except at two crossings which are not hardened. Extremely soft soils have resulted in major damages to the streambanks. Hailey provided the landowner with information on the SWCDM program, Ranching for Rivers, and provided a letter of support with their application. Hailey also coordinated with NRCS for technical assistance on the hardened crossing designs. Their application was approved and work to harden the crossings will begin as soon as 310 permitting is finalized.

Programs

Conservation Grant Program – There are currently 13 open or recently completed 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 Jul 1. Funded practices include weed control, a rain garden, reforestation, native seeding, wildlife habitat improvement, riparian buffer improvement, bank stabilization, and windbreaks. Samantha communicated with and scheduled on-site project inspections with FY19/20 contractors as they completed projects and submitted requests for reimbursement.

Seedling Program – FCD began accepting orders on September 14. We have received and submitted five orders to date. Samantha consulted with landowners about conservation practices and species selection/spacing. Samantha also coordinated with the Nursery, NRCS, and landowners about the process for submitting large orders.

Education Grant Program – FCD has funded three contracts in FY20/21 for projects that (1) develop a conservation curriculum for preschoolers, (2) plant native-species at the Center for Sustainability and Entrepreneurship, and (3) expand a program that uses hydroponic tower gardens to teach students about growing and supplying food.

College Scholarship Program – Nine applications were awarded to Flathead County high school seniors in 2020. Several students submitted thank-you notes and indicated their interest in attending a future meeting. The thank-you notes are on display in Samantha's office.

Watershed Support Program – Mikaela and Samantha continue outreach to priority landowners. A post-card with program information was designed, printed, and distributed to priority 1 and 2 landowners (per ranking in the Phase I assessment) in the upper and middle reaches of Ashley Creek. To date, there has not been any interest from landowners in response to the mailing. Samantha is rethinking the strategy for program outreach, and ways to improve interest and participation.

Pollinator Initiative – 41 people have indicated interest in participating in this program. 11 pollinator plots (0.5 acres) were seeded in spring 2020, and an additional 0.5 acres-worth of seed has been allocated for seeding in fall 2020 or spring 2021. Mikaela and Samantha provided technical assistance to landowners on site preparation for fall seeding. Mikaela prepared seed packets for distribution to participants that have prepared their sites and created a quick-reference guide to seeding in spring vs. fall to include with seed packets when disbursed to program participants.

Rain Garden Initiative –Six rain gardens have been designed and built this season and 10 additional landowners are interested in the program. Mikaela, Hailey, Samantha, and City of Kalispell program partners worked to compile documentation and write the final report to close out the SWCDM mini grant.

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. The FCD schedule of educational workshops was converted to a series of live webinars. Webinars were recorded and have been posted with accompanying resources on the [Recordings & Resources page on the FCD website](#). Staff will work with partner organizations to plan alternative outreach opportunities and reschedule events when it is safe to resume gatherings.

Education Resources – Mikaela and Samantha created new materials to advertise the educational resources (e.g., Rolling Rivers Trailer, Enviroscope, educational trunks, etc.) available from FCD. Samantha attended a meeting with Rolling Rivers Trailer hosts to discuss the new User's Guide, lease terms, and maintenance and winterization needs.

Advertisements – FCD ran an advertisement in the Flathead Beacon about 310 permit information on October 14 and scheduled an advertisement about the Seedlings Program for October 28. Samantha coordinated with Flathead Beacon staff to prepare the annual contract for renewal in November. Samantha provided information, graphics, and a success story about FCD programs for publication in the River 2 Lake Initiative Newsletter (distributed 10/19/20).

Website and Social Media – Over the past 30 days, the website was viewed 2,363 times, with 79% new (vs. returning) visitors. The most viewed pages and posts were a blog post about the life history of larch trees, the FCD homepage, and Stream Permitting webpage. Over the same period of time the FCD Facebook page gained 21 new followers, posts reached 867 people, and there were 177 post engagements. The most engaging posts were about a recent River2Lake Initiative meeting and tour of Foys Bend, a public comment period for a proposed FWP Conservation Easement, and a guide to limiting recycling contamination in the Flathead.

eNewsletter – The Local Dirt was distributed on 10/5/2020 and included upcoming events, available programs, a partner profile, blog post, and 310 permitting information. The current mailing list includes 266 people. As of October 20th, the October issue was opened by 102 people (237 times) and had 57 total clicks. The most-clicked links were to the Seedlings Program webpage, a blog post about cold-weather composting, and the Flathead Pollinator Initiative webpage.

Partnerships

- Hailey and Mikaela attended the Flathead Core meeting and provided a tour of the FCD Demonstration Garden.
- Hailey, Samantha, and Mikaela worked with FWP and Whitefish Lake Institute staff and volunteers on maintenance at the Cow Creek restoration project site.
- Hailey, Samantha, Mikaela, Donna Pridmore, Kenny Breidinger (FWP), and Karli Becher (NRCS) visited Browns Meadow Ranch on Mount Creek for a 310 onsite inspection and to review the proposed project being funded through the SWCDM Ranching for Rivers program

Natural Resources & Conservation Service (NRCS): Sean Johnson submitted the following report:

➤ **Programs**

- Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) – Sign-up deadline of November 17th
 - Flathead Valley Irrigation TIP that was submitted not approved for 2021 funding
 - We will be reworking the TIP to resubmitted by February for 2022 consideration
 - Joint Chief's (JC) Proposal with FS through first review process
 - 6 JC proposals were submitted in MT, Flathead's JC proposal was ranked at #2 and has been submitted to National for funding considerations
 - Only top 3 from MT were sent in for funding consideration
 - Funding approval notification by mid-December

- Project would include the west side of the county essentially from Olney area to Lakeside
 - Potentially looking to draft a forestry TIP for the North Fork for 2022 consideration
 - Trail Creek and Red Meadows/Moose Creek prioritized as the top two areas to work in due to those being the secondary egress in case of a large fire
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) – Sign-up deadline of November 17th
 - CSP interest was strong this year but funding levels for the state were lower than anticipated so only a small number of applications received funding
- **Review Items**
 - NRCS office will probably be returning to telework starting Monday October 26th due to rising COVID-19 cases in Flathead County
- **Upcoming Items**
 - EQIP/CSP signup deadline on November 17th for 2021 programs

Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD): Pete Woll reported the Area V meeting was held via ZOOM.

Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB): Dean Sirucek submitted the following report: There were four items on the agenda. 1) Rolling Acres, 77-unit subdivision on Columbia Stage was recommended not to approve, 2) Van Helden, a four-lot subdivision on 20 acres on 174 Shepherd Trail was recommended for approval, 3) Thompson, a four-lot subdivision on Echo Lake was recommended for approval, 4) StorageMax LLC, two commercial lots on 3190 MT HWY 35 was recommended for approval. The next meeting is scheduled for November 11th.

Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB): No meeting in October.

Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC3): Lori Curtis reported that a plaque is being placed on the AIS decontamination station naming Flathead CD as a contributor. The next meeting is scheduled for November 4, 2020, 1:30 – 3:30 P.M. via Zoom.

Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC): Hailey Graf reported the meeting was postponed until December 2nd. The next meeting will likely be held virtually via Zoom.

Flathead Basin Commission (FBC): Lech Naumovich reported no meeting was held in October. A meeting is upcoming with a coalition of groups doing education outreach efforts in the basin.

Clark Fork & Kootenai River Basins Council (CFKRBC): This will be removed from the agenda.

MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF

Holiday Meeting Schedule:

- Montana legal state holidays for November - The Flathead CD office will be closed Election Day, Veteran’s Day and Thanksgiving.
- Day after Thanksgiving – Lori Curtis motioned “to close the Flathead CD office on November 27.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
Note: Staff will use annual leave for this day.
- The December meeting date will be discussed at the November 23rd Business meeting.

US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) Partnership: Christina Schroeder explained how USACOE makes determinations on 404-permits along the lower Flathead River, and that projects along the stream channel that are more than 300 linear feet require mitigation. She noted that projects are reviewed on a case-by case basis and asked that the district direct landowners to USACOE so they can explain their program and landowners are not confused.

MACD Convention Registration: Hailey Graf explained that convention will be held virtually November 18 & 19 and registration is free. She will register supervisors and forward the agenda to Leo Rosenthal and Kenny Breidinger.

Resolutions: Lech Naumovich motioned “to designate Pete Woll to vote for Flathead CD on resolutions during the MACD convention.” Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Hailey Graf will forward this information to MACD.

The next 310-Stream Permit meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 23, 2020, 5:00 P.M. via ZOOM.

Adjournment: Lori Curtis motioned “to adjourn. Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:37 P.M.

Submitted By:

Ginger Kauffman
Administrator

Hailey Graf
Resource Conservationist

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

<u>12/14/2020</u>	<u>Pete Woll</u>	<u>Chair</u>
(Date)	(Signature)	(Title – Chair etc.)