

MINUTES TO THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2018 MEETING
USDA Service Center
12 - 3rd Street NW
Great Falls, Montana
CORRECTED 10/15/2018

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Merja called the meeting to order at 8:33 AM. A quorum was present. The meeting attendees were as follows:

Supervisors: Gayla Wortman, John Chase, Pete Heryford, Scott Brown, Stevie Neuman, Elliot Merja, Marc Shane

Staff: Tenlee Atchison

Guests: Bailey Rapp, NRCS

310 permits: Dirk Walden, L Johnson Farms; Alex Dachs, Anna Weber, Ian Baxtar, Cascade County Planning.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment

MINUTES

Brown moved to approve August 13, 2018 minutes as corrected. Heryford seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Corrected minutes show corrections/additions in red.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Shane moved to approve the unpaid bills and authorize payment for a total of \$10144.35. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Shane moved to approve the monthly Treasurer's report as submitted. Wortman seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

BUDGET REVIEW

All current grants will be vendored before the end of the year.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Wortman moved to approve the hiring of Emma Link for the Administrative Assistant position. Shane seconded. Her official start date will be October 3, 2018.

AREA III MEETING UPDATE

CCD did not have representation at this meeting. Scott Brown attended but was there as MSCA representative. Only 7 of the 13 districts for this area were represented. Most of the attendees were agency personnel. Steve Hertel was elected the new district representative for Area III.

DISTRICT REPORT

Administrator: Atchison reported to the CCD the following:

- The Missouri River Basin Invasive Mussel Coordination team met in Fort Peck on August 28, 2018. This group was established as a pilot project and funded by state and federal dollars. Deliverables for this project:
 - Produce a publicly available coordinated “Early Detection/Rapid Response” Invasive Mussel Plan for the Missouri River System
 - Develop a Missouri River System containment and quarantine plan (HB622)
 - Create a White paper on lessons learned from response and pilot project
 - Complete and economic impact study on invasive mussels if established in Montana.
- The Mussel Economic Impact report will be finalized soon.
- The Montana Watershed Coordination Council Watershed Symposium is October 9-12, 2018 in Whitefish, MT. Tenlee will be a guest panelist for FWP during one of the breakout sessions to discuss the stream teams created for the River Campaign. Three supervisors will also attend the symposium. Accommodations have been reserved.
- The Resource Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) application is not due until the end of 2019. NRCS and CCD will continue to work with Lewis & Clark CD and Teton CD as well as other stakeholders to get the application completed and submitted.
- The Irrigator workshop will be held on October 25th. This will be a conversation among Irrigators from Wisconsin, Idaho and Montana about the impacts of Mussels on irrigators and the costs associated with it as well as other challenges each state faces/shares.
- The 2018 Montana Invasive Species Summit will be held in Helena, November 15-16, 2018. Supervisor Wortman will attend.
- Leave was requested.

Wortman moved to approve Atchison’s leave request as submitted. Neuman seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Supervisors:

Wortman reported:

- A letter was sent to Senator Tester regarding the Malmstrom Sikes funds CCD still holds. There has been no response likely due to the fact that the Senator is focused on his campaign bid for reelection.
- There was a total of 54 applications for the Administrative Assistant position that were reviewed and processed.
- Those who attended the Supervisor Summit agreed that it was a valuable session and should continue. It will be moved back to early spring (April) to move it away from the MACD convention. Bitterroot CD expressed some interest in hosting next year.
- Longtime River’s Edge Trail and CCD supporter, Doug Wicks, passed away while doing maintenance work on the trail this summer. CCD would like to dedicate one of the new trail signs in Wicks memory.

Wortman moved to dedicate a sign on the River’s Edge Trail to Doug Wicks, associate supervisor and partner of CCD valued up to \$300. Brown seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Brown reported:

- The new State Conservationist has done 23 separate RCPP projects in Oregon and likes to use that program to fund projects. He encouraged CCD to follow through with that process for the Sun River Watershed.

Chase reported:

- Sun River Watershed Group (SRWG) has hired Tracy Wendt as the new coordinator.
- The Living on the Bank project continues to move forward with the videos, pictures and website near completion.
- SRWG is submitting another letter to the Helena Lewis & Clark Forest regarding the revised forest plan.

Chase moved to submit a letter to the US Forest Service specifying the need to manage the forest as part of the whole watershed. Heryford seconded. The letter will include specific management for late season stream flow and better canopy. Motion carried unanimously.

Heryford reported:

- Attended the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) meeting in Helena. There are a number of outspoken environmentalists that are against the new Madison Food Park proposal. However, there seems to be a lot of misinformation about the plant. There was some open discussion with DEQ regarding permit regulations. Many want daily testing of water/soil.

Neuman reported:

- The Water Pollution Control Advisory Council has not met. WPCAC would like to discuss the belt treatment plant.

Merja reported:

- The Janetski set back project continues to be a problem with the county floodplain administrator. They are requiring a no rise engineering report which will cost approximately \$10-15K. Rip rap was placed in the ditch next to the road to protect the cropland behind it from flood erosion.
- There was considerable damage from the prolonged flood waters on the Sun River this year. Extensive bedload and debris were moved this year. It all was deposited in unlikely places creating new channels or migration that has created issues with irrigators. Gary Parker will submit an application for the DNRC grant that was released for irrigators effected by the flood.

Shane reported:

- There has been some recent use of the Rolling Rivers Trailer for training and education.

PARTNER REPORTS

NRCS

Bailey Rapp, District Conservationist, reported:

- The new State Conservationist is realigning area work loads and boundaries. There are still 4 areas, but some counties have been moved. The Great Falls field office will now supervise the Choteau County field office instead of Judith Basin. A new DC will be hired for the Judith Basin, Fergus, Petroleum offices. The changes will take place starting October 1, 2018.
- A shift to more focused efforts will take place. The hope is that it gets more conservation on the ground with significant impacts starting to show by 2020. This will give direction for the Local Work Group or County Advisory Group priorities. While projects are taking place in one area, planning should

be taking place for another area so that shovel ready projects continue to be funded with significant results for each area.

- The Area Engineer position has been announced.
- Special initiative sign ups will be excepted until October 19, 2018 in anticipation of the new Farm Bill being signed. Those initiatives are: On farm energy, honey bee pollinators, high tunnel systems, sage grouse, conifer removal, crop land seeding-sage grouse, capital 364 forestry projects, national water quality.

310 – BUSINESS

CA-08-18 – WILLIAM & JUANITA POLSTON EMERGENCY APPLICATION

SMITH RIVER WELL CASING REMOVAL

CCD received a call about a possible emergency and a letter explaining the emergency process was sent on March 20, 2018. The landowner was worried that high water would erode the bank further thus causing an old well casing to fall into the stream causing more damage to the bank. Action was taken by the landowner's contractor (4D4 Water) on July 31, 2018. Emergency notification was received in the office on August 6, 2018. A site inspection was held on September 5, 2018.

Applicant states there was a threat of high water further eroding the bank and dislodging the well casing. Three 8' well casings were removed. The bank was dug back, and the casings were buried for bank stability. Bentonite was put into the well on March 16, 2018.

INSPECTION TEAM FINDINGS: A well casing was broken up and placed in the well hole and in the bank to fortify the bank on the outside bend of the river where erosion had taken several trees and vegetation over time. It is a steep bank at that site. The well has been abandoned. Landowner plans to revegetate in the spring.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve emergency action taken.

CA-23-18 – ROY VOLK NEW APPLICATION

MISSOURI RIVER BANK STABILIZATION

New application to stabilize the river bank upstream from existing rip rap. Some erosion took place during high flows this summer. Continue approximately 175' of rip rap upstream extending from the toe to the top of the bank. All disturbed areas will be reseeded.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve as submitted.

Shane moved to deny CA-23-18. Brown seconded. The bank is not steep and sits on a straight stretch of river. There is little evidence of significant erosion over time and there is already stable protection for the house. Bio engineering or soft practices are recommended for that stretch of the bank. Motion carried unanimously.

CAV-31-18 – MARK & DEANNA JENSEN ALLEGED VIOLATION

MISSOURI RIVER BOAT RAMP

A complaint was received a complaint about a large quantity of dirt being dumped over the banks of the Missouri River and a boat ramp having been constructed into the river. An inspection team met onsite on September 5, 2018. No landowner representative attended.

TEAM INSPECTION FINDINGS: The inspection team noticed that some gravel was placed on an exiting uphill portion of the ramp. Large boulders sit at the toe of the ramp so access into the stream is limited to foot traffic. The toe of the stream at the bottom of the ramp should be vegetated to stabilize the bank and prevent run off into the stream. It does not appear that dirt has been dumped over the bank. There is an area where the bank has slumped under large boulders that were placed on top of the bank as a border. If it continues to fail and material enters the river, that would constitute a violation. A 310 application is required to do any work to stabilize the slumping bank.

RECOMMENDATION: Determine this is not a violation. Any further activity on the bank will require a 310 permit. This includes any work done to the existing ramp.

Shane moved to find CAV-31-18 not in violation. Heryford seconded. Landowner is required to get a 310 permit to do any work to stabilize the slump, add material to the ramp or vegetate the toe of the ramp and bank. Motion carried unanimously.

**CA-32-18 – L JOHNSON, INC
NEW APPLICATION**

**ANTELOPE CREEK
DREDGING**

Application is to dredge a portion of Antelope Creek to promote proper drainage. Antelope Creek is designated an intermittent stream however, it has flowed almost year-round in recent years. Due to erosion, the stream channel has filled in with sediment where Antelope Creek meets Sand Coulee Creek (which was dry during the site visit). This creates several plots of crop land to flood each spring. Applicant would like to dredge that portion of Antelope Creek to allow natural flow into Sand Coulee Creek.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve as submitted with all dredged material disposed of in an upland area away from any wetlands and revegetated as quickly as possible to eliminate the spread of weeds.

Merja moved to approve CA-32-18 as submitted per inspection team recommendations. Shane seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**CA-33-18 – MOUNTAIN VIEW RANCH, INC
NEW APPLICATION**

**LITTLE BELT CREEK
FORD**

Application is to install crossing on Little Belt Creek for access to ranch property with larger vehicles and implement equipment. Shape banks at a 2:1 slope, grade and level existing gravel to harden the road access. Width will be 6'.

This project was approved in December 2016 but expired prior to completion.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve with modifications. Remove island and use material to construct ford. Do not add fill to stream channel. Make slope of stream channel gradual from top to bottom of riffle to reduce chance of head-cuts. Maintain fish passage through the ford site. Cut and slope river right bank as needed.

Shane moved to table CA-33-18 until an updated site inspection can be held. Wortman seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

CA-21-17 – KURT & RONDA WIGGERS

**SUN RIVER
BANK STABILIZATION**

High water this summer caused some erosion higher on the bank. Vegetation was never established prior to high water. Wiggers have verbally requested that CCD pay for all maintenance and/or repairs.

INSPECTION TEAM FINDINGS: Considering the sustained high flows this summer, the bank held remarkably well. The erosion control mat was dislodged and torn in many areas. According to the home owner, there was very little vegetation that was established prior to high water the end of June which was the bigger than the high-water event the end of May. Photos show mostly weeds as of inspection this fall. Some small conservation grade trees were sprig higher on the bank above the erosion matting but there was no evidence of watering. The coconut matting per the engineering design was highly eroded in just over a few months. A gravel bar has started to build at the mouth of the gravel pit pond which may deflect future high flows further down the bank. The Russian Olive just downstream of the project held the bank in place well. The opposite bank is not as high and has established willows that could be used as a source supply for the Wiggers bank. The slope appears to be steeper than a 3:1. The permit remains in place until the 16th of October. No project completion notice was received. Therefore, the permit remains open and active.

RECOMMENDATION: Encourage the Wiggers to establish vegetation per the engineer's design as quickly as possible. Start planting immediately this fall. If requested, extend the permit.

No action Necessary at this time.

310 funding partially restored. In order for the district to qualify some of that funding a letter must be sent to the Resource Conservation Advisory Council (RCAC) stating need.

Brown moved to send a letter to the to the RCAC requesting 310 funds be distributed to CCD. Chase seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

A MONTANA EXPERIENCE

This project fits well into the CCD strategic plan. A "dress rehearsal" will be run in 2019 with influencers from Montana. A committee will be formed to move the message and project forward. A September date was proposed.

WORK PLAN UPDATES/CALENDAR REVIEW/ANNOUNCEMENTS

October 3, 2018	New Administrative Assistant start date
October 5, 2018	A Montana Experience team meeting
October 24, 2018	NRCS Field Office/CCD meeting
October 25, 2018	Irrigator Workshop
October 26, 2018	Legislative Breakfast
October 30, 2018	Sun River Watershed Group meeting

OTHER BUSINESS

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM.