

MINUTES TO THE MARCH 9, 2020
CASCADE CONSERVATION DISTRICT REGULAR MEETING
USDA Service Center
CORRECTIONS IN RED

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wortman called the meeting to order at 12:31pm. A quorum was present.

Supervisors: Gayla Wortman, Pete Heryford, John Chase, Stevie Neuman, Elliot Merja

Associate Supervisors: Kathi Lahti

Staff: Emma Link, **Tenlee Atchison**

Guests: Tracy Wendt (Sun River Watershed Group (SRWG)), Emma Kelsick (SRWG), Bailey Rapp (Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)), Mikayla Moss (Big Sky Watershed Corps (BSWC)), Connor Mertz (BSWC), Autumn Christenson (Montana Conservation Corps).

Neuman moved to excuse Scott Brown and Marc Shane from the March 9th regular meeting of the Cascade Conservation District. Heryford seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment

MINUTES

Chase moved to approve the February 10, 2020 minutes as corrected. Heryford seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Chase moved to approve unpaid bills and authorize payment for the total of \$11,741.11. Heryford seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Neuman moved to approve the monthly petty cash report as submitted. Merja seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

DISTRICT REPORT

Administrator: Atchison reported the following to CCD:

- The CMZ Mapping for the Sun River corridor has commenced.
- The DNRC Renewable Resource Grant & Loan Program grant was not funded but she was encouraged to apply to a different grant for this project.
- She gave a CCD Building Update.

- She discussed the NRCS MOA in detail – There is a conference call regarding the NRCS MOA on March 11 to discuss the issues surrounding it. The comment period is over. The NRCS would like this MOA signed and returned by the end of May.
- She attended the NACD National Convention in Las Vegas February 8th – 12th. She stated how interesting it was to see how Conservation Districts within other states function. For example, that state of Nevada has 28 districts total but only 5 employees. She discussed *A Montana Experience* with some NACD representatives, they may be interested in getting involved in the future. She attended the NACD Technical Assistance Grants breakout session; this year's grant cycle has not been announced yet. She attended an Envirothon meeting with MT Envirothon Coordinator Shonny Nordlund. Envirothon has great support at the national level, Envirothon is a leadership succession step for the resource conservation profession.
- She attended:
 - MAGIE/MISC booth
 - Ag appreciation dinner
 - MWCC Annual Meeting
 - Leadership Training
 - Building funding meetings with Bankers
 - Naked Riverbanks
 - Area III employee meeting
 - JBCD/Hobson School
- She will attend:
 - Science Fair awards – Rai Hahn
 - TIP meeting/registration - Neihart
 - Naked Riverbanks meeting – March 17
 - Smith River Study – Helena – March 18
 - CEMIST meeting – Lewistown – March 20
 - Stream Restoration meeting – Helena – April 14
 - Monarch weed education with Extension and County Weed Dept.
 - 310 and Supervisor Training - Helena

Assistant: Link reported the following to CCD:

- Housekeeping items:
 - A Budget Review and Ag Days Meeting have been scheduled for Friday March 27th @ 5:30PM.
 - She attended the MWCC Water Summit in Helena on March 3rd & 4th and gave a recap of the Summit. She specifically shared that businesses, individuals, and anyone who utilizes water for personal consumption or business need to do a better job of working together in an integrated, strategic and creative approach to manage the scare resource of water.

- At the Area III District Administrator Meeting, Heidi Fluery out of Lake County shared the successes of their Pollinator Initiative Program and the tools that other districts will need to start their own Pollinator Initiative successfully.
- She gave an update on the progress made on the CCD marketing video. She contacted Banik Communications out of Great Falls and has received a video production quote. The board discussed where a marketing video would be used. Discussion included at events, tradeshow, conventions, legislative events, and Facebook.
- CCD and SRWG are teaming up to offer a Project Rain Barrel Workshop in late July, early August 2020. The location is TBD. This will be a fundraiser for SRWG, attendees will assemble a rain barrel and learn about nonpoint source water quality issues in the Sun River Watershed. SRWG will apply for a Water Quality Mini Grant through SWCDM.

Wortman moved to co-sponsor a water quality mini grant for Project Rain Barrel. Heryford seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- She has been working with Bailey Rapp and DEQ to design a study using deep rooted vegetation to capture mine impacted groundwater on Coke Oven Flats in Belt. There are 6 monitoring wells on the property. Bailey and Emma are in the process of identifying 3 to 4 species to plant as well as what needs to be sampled and tracked to evaluate progress.
- Upcoming Events:
 - Supervisor & 310 Training – April 16th in Helena
 - Envirothon 2020
- Attended:
 - Ag Committee Meeting – February 13th
 - Rain Barrel – February 20th
 - Envirothon – February 25th
 - Area III Administrator Meeting – February 27th
 - Budget Review – March 2nd
 - Water Summit – March 3rd & 4th
 - Coke Oven Flats – March 5th
- Upcoming Meetings:
 - Project Rain Barrel – March 12th
 - Ag Committee – March 12th
 - Naked River Banks – March 17th

Supervisors:

Wortman reported

- She gave a MACD Reorganization Committee update.
- She participated in the RCAC conference call.
- She attended the Hill County CD board meeting. The biggest concern in that area at this point is feral pigs.
- She attended the Area III District Administrator meeting on February 27th, she noticed that several District Administrator's wanted to move the Area III Meeting in the fall to a few weeks later to better accommodate farmer and rancher availability.

- The MACD Executive Director was let go. There will most likely be a hiring committee in place at the next MACD Board Meeting.
- She will attend the Big Sandy CD Board Meeting and Liberty CD Board Meeting soon. She will also be teaming up with Big Sandy District Administrator Barbie Martin to hold a range tour in that area.
- There will be a joint meeting with both MACD and SWCDM boards to discuss the reorganization and other relevant topics.

Neuman reported:

- Her WPIC meeting is later this week.

Merja reported:

- He has an upcoming planning meeting on March 26th.
- He discussed this past year’s hemp crop. Unfortunately, the hemp crop in this area did not have decent oil content.

Chase reported:

- MR CDC conducted interviews for the vacant coordinator position the last week of February. MR CDC also held a quarterly meeting. He wasn’t able to attend the meeting but made the request for them to include the Naked River Banks issue temporarily in there work plan. Autumn Christenson did attend the quarterly meeting and stated that MR CDC’s intent is to tie Naked River Banks to riparian management.
- Discussion took place regarding including irrigation water use as an important factor in the Helana – Lewis & Clark National Forest Service Plan. The Forest Service is no longer accepting comments regarding the plan currently.

Heryford reported:

- He has been appointed to the MACD by-laws committee and will engage in the first conference call soon.

310 BUSINESS

CA-01-20 – 3 RIVERS COMMUNICATIONS NEW APPLICATION

BELT CREEK/LITTLE BELT CREEK/BOX ELDER CREEK UTILITY CROSSING

Application is to upgrade the existing deteriorating copper telephone lines to fiber optic lines in the Belt telephone exchange. New fiber optic lines will be placed by plowing, trenching or boring, to upgrade the existing lines. All waterways and wetlands will be bored. All water ways will be crossed with a horizontal boring machine, entering and exiting sites a minimum of 10’ from the stream bed banks of any affected water way. Applicant states no disturbance of vegetation is anticipated. All work will be done outside of the stream bank.

INSPECTION TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Approve CA-01-20 with modifications.

- Meet or exceed a boring depth of 6+feet under all locations on Belt Creek.
- Meet or exceed a boring depth of 48” under Little Belt Creek and Box Elder Creek sites.
- Boring on either side of the stream must be at least 10ft back from the top of all banks including overflow channels and floodplain.

Heryford moved to approve CA-01-20 with modifications. Neuman seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**CA-02-20 – HERMAN HAMILTON
NEW APPLICATION**

**BELT CREEK
CHANNEL CLEANOUT**

This is a new application to remove debris and a gravel bar in order to reduce erosion to outer bank of stream preventing more loss of land and fencing. Approximately 30 yards of woody debris will be removed from the stream to allow better flow of water. Approximately 125 yards of gravel will be removed in an area 20' wide and 150' long in order to allow the stream to flow down the center of the channel. All material and debris removed will be deposited out of the floodplain.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve CA-02-20 with modifications.

- Maintain a natural grade when removing material from the channel

Merja moved to approve CA-02-20 with modifications. Heryford seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**CA-03-20 – RICH FRANKO
NEW APPLICATION**

**BOSTON COULEE CREEK
UTILITY CROSSING**

Application is to install a power line across Boston Coulee Creek. A trench the width of a backhoe bucket will be dug to a depth of 36 - 42" below the stream bed. The line will be encased in a PVC conduit and native field stone will be placed on top of it to hold the conduit in place. Native material will fill the trench.

INSPECTION TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Approve CA-03-20 with modifications. Place silt fence or straw waddle downstream to trap mobilized sediment. Maintain natural profile/grade of stream bottom. Reclaim bank to existing height, slope and vegetation.

Heryford moved to approve CA-03-20 with modifications. Neuman seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**CA-04-20 – ENERGY WEST
NEW APPLICATION**

**SAND COULEE CREEK
UTILITY CROSSING**

Application is to run a 4" plastic gas main under Sand Coulee Creek at two locations for a gas main extension along E Hunter Road. An 3rd location is requested only in case of route change. All crossings will be bored under the creek using a boring machine at an adequate depth to not disturb or damage the creek or banks. All bores will start/stop a minimum of 50 ft from the stream bank. One bore location will include the installation of 4" plastic pipe. The second location will be a 1" plastic service line for a customer. Two crossings will be under the culvert in the roadway. The second is in a pasture like field with banks in fair condition.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve CA-04-20 as submitted.

Merja moved to approve CA-04-20 as submitted. Heryford seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Tenlee Atchison gave a Parker diversion update. The board discussed the history of this area, what caused the issues in the first place and how to proceed. The CMZ Mapping will help, which is encouraging. CCD and SRWG are both in the process of trying to secure funding for this area. What is needed is a long-term solution.

PARTNER'S REPORT

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Bailey Rapp, Supervisory District Conservationist reported the following:

- He is currently processing 16 EQIP applications
- He has one RCPP application for Rick Cummings in partnership with Montana Salinity Control
- He also has one GCI and one CSP application.
- His Targeted Implementation Plant (TIP) to address noxious & invasive weeds in the Belt Valley area was funded. He will address 750 acres of weeds (just under 10% of the area). The specific weeds he will be addressing are leafy spurge, houndstongue, dalmatian toadflax, spotted and russian knapweed, sulphur cinquefoil, and oxeye daisy. He will be partnering with US Forest Service, CCD, MSU Extension Service, Cascade Weed and Mosquito. Each contract will be a three-year contract, targeting the same area for three consecutive years. There is a public meeting for landowners in this area on Tuesday March 10th at 3pm at the Forest Service Building in Neihart.

SUN RIVER WATERSHED GROUP

Tracy Wendt, SRWG Coordinator reported the following:

- The Water Management Working Group will take place on March 25th in the Basement Conference Room of the First Interstate Bank Building from 1pm – 4pm. Stream gauges will be discussed in depth at this meeting. She will be conducting outreach in attempts to find permanent, large scale funders.
- The grant for the Wayne Tonne project was funded.
- Three more schools will now participate in Pull Your Share. Five hundred students will attend.
- She is involved in Missouri River Fly-fisheries and Trout Unlimited and both groups are interested in partnering on a river clean up like CCD's "Bashin' Trash".
- The Chamber is carrying out a "Give Great Falls" event where non-profits will be on display for the public to learn about and potentially donate to.

Emma Kelsick, SRWG BSWC

- She gave an update regarding Project Rain Barrel:
 - Potential dates August 22nd, August 29th, or September 5th
 - The hope is to hold this event at the Beacon Bar. There will be an educational component to this workshop.
 - This is intended to be a fundraiser for SRWG

MT CONSERVATION CORPS

Autumn Christenson, Missouri River Watershed Program Coordinator reported the following:

- She shared some outreach materials regarding the programs she is working with.
- Her efforts are currently focused in the Augusta area.
- She is also working on the issues involved with Elk Creek.

Meeting adjourned at 3:59pm