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Quarterly Meeting Minutes February 19, 2015 Cottonwood Inn Conference Room Glasgow, MT

At 6:15 pm, Chairman Dean Rogge opened the Missouri River Conservation Districts Council (MRCDC) quarterly business meeting. Council members present were; John Chase, Cascade CD; Steve Wanderaas, McCone CD; Bruce Anderson, Blaine CD; Jim Beck, Vice-Chair, Broadwater CD; Karl Christians, DNRC; Rachel Frost, MRCDC Coordinator and Carie Hess MRCDC Secretary. Guests in attendance included Jenifer Anderson, Phillips CD; Ann McCauley, MACD and Jeff Wivholm, MACD President; and Matthew Schmidt, Big Sky Watershed Corps Member. Elena Evans and Don McIntyre (MACD) joined the meeting briefly by phone. Final quorum will be reached through email voting of members not present.

General:

1. Minutes were read and John Chase moved to approve the November 18th minutes as submitted. Steve Wanderaas seconded the motion, which passed by all of those in attendance, the remaining votes will be gathered by email.
2. Carie Hess read the unpaid bills detail, Jim Beck moved to approve as submitted; Bruce Anderson seconded the motion which passed by all of those in attendance, the remaining votes will be gathered by email. Carie Hess read the full financial report and Steve Wanderaas moved to approve as submitted. Karl Christians seconded the motion, which passed by all of those in attendance, the remaining votes will be gathered by email. The council travel budget was discussed at length and how the current withholding has impacted the budget line items. After the lengthy discussion Dean moved to transfer to \$5000.00 out of the savings account as needed to help with travel costs, Steve Wanderaas seconded the motion which passed by all of those in attendance, the remaining votes will be gathered by email.

Legislative Update – Elena reported that DNRC’s budget had come before the Long Range Committee and that there could be possible increases in the 223 grant program and the Administrative grant program by means of an amendment in the bill based on revenue. Elena mentioned SB 340 & 341 and stated that those bills would likely be tabled in committee. She also noted that HB 5, which contains District RRGL and RDG grants, moved to the full House Appropriations Committee. She also noted that the sage grouse hunting bill is moving forward and that there is a bill requiring a range inventory be conducted before bison can be introduced anywhere in the state. Lastly, she noted that there was a joint resolution to remove *Brucella abortus* the pathogen responsible for Brucellosis in cattle, elk and bison, from the Federal list to allow more extensive research is being considered by the Legislature. All this information will be contained in the “News from the Front”, which will go out on Monday.

Don McIntyre gave an overview of the new resolution process which outlines that district resolutions are due to MACD by September 1st so that they can be reviewed before the area meetings at the end of the month. He also noted that it is written in the by-laws that each district only has 1 vote at the area meeting when it comes to moving resolutions forward and that each district has 1 vote per supervisor at the annual meeting for moving resolutions forward. It was noted that this process is to be used as a guide line and there is room for some deviation when needed. Don stated that a resolution

Gallatin Conservation District
Broadwater Conservation District
Lewis & Clark Conservation District
Cascade Conservation District
Chouteau County Conservation District

Blaine County Conservation District
Big Sandy Conservation District
Fergus County Conservation District
Petroleum County Conservation District
Phillips Conservation District

Garfield County Conservation District
Valley County Conservation District
McCone Conservation District
Roosevelt County Conservation District
Richland County Conservation District

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cannot direct any one or any agency but MACD to take action and that they have to relate to conservation district business. Don urged the districts to add resolutions to their agendas and to discuss the process and possible resolutions throughout the year. Lastly he stated that any delegation of voting power needs to be done at a board meeting and noted in the minutes.

Reports:

Upper Reach: John Chase reported that Cascade CD has been awarded a \$75,000 planning grant to address a sloughing bank on the Missouri River in Great Falls. He also noted that there is a new group that formed called the Upper Missouri Watershed Alliance and their primary focus is on water quality in the Missouri River and the major tributaries.

Middle Reach: Bruce Anderson shared a landowner concern about noxious weed control efforts in the Monument area. Rachel mentioned that the Friends of the Monument might be able to help with this concern and that she would provide Bruce the contact information for the BLM Weed Coordinator for the Monument for the landowner. She also reported that the Friends of the Monument group have been doing some Saltcedar work in the Arrow Creek area of the monument.

Reservoir Reach: Ron Garwood reported that the Army Corp of Engineers is currently releasing about 5600 cfs which is lower than normal and that the lake is higher than normal. Ron noted that the Corp is still working on the 400 feet addition to the spillway as well as addressing the 100 foot deep pool formed from the flooding in 2011. Ron informed the group that the spillway project will cost \$93 million over the next 3 years.

Lower Reach: Steve Wanderaas reported that the McCone CD is planning to have a soil health tour in Fallon County this summer. He also mentioned a possible tour of the water treatment plant at Wolf Point. Rachel brought up the idea that the council could collaborate and participate in a couple of these events. Dean Rogge moved to approve the idea of collaborating with other partners for a couple of events. John Chase seconded the motion which passed by all of those in attendance, the remaining votes will be gathered by email.

DNRC: Karl mentioned that DNRC revenues are still below projected. He stated that the Administrative Grant process is going through a change for the fiscal year 2016 application cycle. Karl informed the council that the RCAC had met and that they are getting reluctant to fund equipment, high tunnels, community gardens, and soil health events.

MACD: Jeff Wivholm and Ann McCauley reported that MACD has been busy with the Legislative session, looking to team up with NRCS on their soil health tour this fall, and are currently having an open enrollment for the Irrigation Water Management program. Ann reported that MACD has a couple of mini grants out there and that they are looking at putting a 4th SGI position hopefully in southeastern Montana. Lastly they reported that it has been 6 months since the full office re-organization and that things are going well.

NRCS: Joe Little was not present.

Coordinator Report: Rachel started by thanking everyone who showed up for the CMR meeting earlier in the day. She introduced Matt Schmidt the Big Sky Watershed Corp member for the council and the Montana Saltcedar Team. She reported that the MST had held their 3rd meeting in Jordan on February 9th. She noted that there is good participation by the partners and that they are providing Matt with the data needed to develop a saltcedar infestation map for the Missouri and Musselshell Rivers. The core partners also met with the landowners involved in the Seven Blackfoot saltcedar treatment project in Garfield County and all were pleased with the plans for the project.

Rachel moved on to talk about her Riparian Pasture project in the Upper Reach. She stated that it is a great opportunity to get the information on grazing management in riparian areas out in highly visible areas. She mentioned that she plans to pursue a Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (WSARE) grant for the project.

Rachel informed the council that the first rangeland monitoring planning meeting was held to explore ideas for promoting and sustaining monitoring efforts in the state. She mentioned that the group discussed the need for a monitoring program

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approved by all agencies and key NGO's. She stated that the next meeting will be May 5th and that she will report back to the council after that meeting.

Rachel reported that the next MRRIC meeting is next week and that there is a lot of discussion over Fort Peck and the Intake project. She noted that Defenders of Wildlife and Center for Biological Diversity are suing the Corp on the operation and management of both Fort Peck and Intake. Buzz Mattelin is attending the next MRRIC meeting and she will get with him once he is back and send out a detailed report to the council.

Announcements:

Steve Wanderaas was appointed to the Governor's Invasive Species Council.

Rachel has been elected to the Montana Weed Control Association Board.

With no further business coming before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by unanimous vote on June , 2015

Carie Hess, Secretary

Dean Rogge, Chairman