

**Quarterly Meeting Minutes**  
**February 21, 2023**  
**Virtual via Zoom**

At 9:06am, Vice Chair Karl Christians opened the MRCDC quarterly business meeting. Council members present via Zoom were Laura Kiehl, Petroleum County CD; Karl Christians, Lewis & Clark CD; Dallas Diehl, Broadwater CD; Steve Wanderaas, McCone CD; John Chase, Cascade County CD; Greg Jergeson, Blaine County CD; Jeff Ryan, Lewis and Clark CD; Dean Rogge, Garfield County CD; Mike Hansen, Gallatin CD; Dick Iverson, Richland County CD; Lorri Schafer, Fergus CD; and Dana Berwick, Roosevelt CD. Others present were Brent Smith, CEMIST Manager; Autumn Holzgen, MT Conservation Corp; Veronica Grigaltchik, DNRC CDB Specialist; Stephanie Criswell, MT DNRC CDs Bureau Chief; Robbie Savelkoul, Roosevelt CD; Dona Stafford, Fergus CD; Molly Masters, MRCDC Coordinator; Katie Lund, MRCDC Fiscal Manager; and Trish Smith, MRCDC Secretary.

**General**

Everyone introduced themselves. Minutes were read and Karl Christians moved to approve the minutes as corrected; Steve Wanderaas seconded. Motion passed.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Financial Report**

John Chase moved to approve the outstanding MRCDC bill; Mike Hansen seconded. Motion passed. John Chase moved to approve the financial report; Dick Iverson seconded; Motion passed. Molly stated her work computer needs fixed and it would be around \$250. Dick Iverson moved to get Molly a new computer and any addons needed for her job; Steve Wanderaas seconded. Motion passed.

**Old Business**

No Old Business.

**New Business**

NACD Travel costs for Karl Christians – Karl stated his total expenses have been \$2,133.62. Other organizations are pitching in to pay expenses; Flathead - \$500, L & C - \$1000, Fergus - \$500. Steve Wanderaas moved to cover the remaining expenses for Karl Christian's NACD travel; Mike Hansen seconded. Motion passed.

River Rendezvous Grant Application – Molly stated that in previous years they submitted for a 223 grant for the River Rendezvous. Last year they asked for \$2400. Mike Hansen moved to have Molly start the grant application process for the River Rendezvous; Steve seconded. Motion passed. Molly suggested rolling the River Rendezvous into the general budget. Dick stated that it could be a line item if there is enough money in the MRCDC budget. Laura stated that the MRCDC will apply for a grant this year and then later look at it being a line item.

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Work Plan & Budget Review – Molly stated the current grant ends June 30<sup>th</sup> so need to start discussing it and form a committee. Lorri asked when we will know about more funding; Molly stated it will be the end of May at the earliest probably due to possible legislative funding changes. It was decided to have a committee figure out a couple different scenarios and brought to the next March 28<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee Meeting. Karl stated he visited with Tom Watson and he wants to discuss funding on their end; NRCS has a lot of money coming in and would like to brainstorm on things we would like to do if we can get funding through them. Tom Watson would like to support the River Rendezvous. Dick suggested that Molly visit with Tom and get a list of the type of projects that can be funded; before the next meeting. Dean stated that they could maybe help pay for CMR CWG meetings. Steve stated that the budget should be wrapped up by the April 25<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee meeting. The budget committee will consist of Steve, Karl, Lorri, Dana and Laura. The work plan was reviewed. Karl stated that if anyone has any changes or suggestions to email Molly. Stephanie Criswell stated they are trying to get better data for the project outcomes, for the possible additional funding coming in. She said all items should be tied to a longer overall 5-year plan to strengthen applications. Veronica mentioned that the language needs to state what project outcomes will be and have quantifying language. Jeff Ryan stated because of the uncertainty of the funding, we should do business as usual and just have a wish list, and if more funding comes in, will at least be in the workplan/budget. Laura K. stated Molly can send out an email to all the districts of what we are looking for. Maybe work with DNRC and MACD on this. Jeff stated having a special meeting to fill out the CD funding questions form and mentioned people can listen in if they want to hear what is discussed.

Elect Reach Representatives – Molly went over all the current Reach Representatives. Steve nominated Dick Iverson as the Lower Reach representative; Dana Berwick seconded. Mike Hansen nominated Jeff Ryan as the Upper Reach representative; John Chase seconded. Greg Jergeson nominated Dean Rogge as the Reservoir Reach representative, Karl Christians seconded. Dean Rogge nominated Lorri Schafer as the Middle Reach representative; Dick seconded. All motions passed.

### **Committee Reports**

Executive Committee – Molly stated that all the updated and approved minutes are now on posted on the website.

CMR Community Working Group – Molly stated the next meeting is March 16<sup>th</sup> in Lewistown. The planning committee met last week and decided on the broad theme of *Grasslands Health*. This year she sent out the save the date letters and asked if she needs to follow up with post cards for reminders. Steve stated that he doesn't need a postcard and emails suffice. Laura suggested a once-a-year paper mail out to those who don't have emails, and the rest send email reminders.

Woody Invasive Species Task Force – Molly stated that the Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund planning grant has been submitted by YRCDC & Custer County CD. Liz Lodman from MISC lead the December meeting.

Living on the Bank – John Chase stated that adjustments made recently and that the three pages need to be condensed and simplified. Enthusiasm and diligence have been excellent. Molly suggested Ads with MACD & to each CD.

Fort Peck Test Flows – Dick thanked Karl for carrying the resolutions to the National Convention. Joe Bonneau with the Corps of engineers has been having a series of informative meetings for stakeholders. Dick talked to Jon Tester during the Sidney farm bill hearing and asked for mitigation money for the crop insurance and test flows, and possibly equipment that would help for the large number of pump sites needed. They will try and help. Will know more in the next month. Dana added that the last partnership meeting PowerPoint presentation with Joe Bonneau/Pat Braaten (USGS) might be made

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available to look at. Dana stated the Governor was in Sidney for a town hall meeting to discuss Sidney Sugars Inc.'s closing.

River Rendezvous – Molly stated that we are tentatively planning the River Rendezvous for June 21 touring the Seven Blackfoot saltcedar and having the MRCDC quarterly meeting that evening. The next day will be cohosting with Garfield CD and CMR CWG, looking at their range monitoring and habitat pilot project. The Planning Committee needs to get together soon to look at the grant. Added Karl to the planning committee. Patricia Gilbert with USACE is hoping to travel by land to the treatment site but not sure if doable until May, so it is a short timeline to know if it is a go or not – need a back up plan. Steve said the logistics of doing that is huge and what we really need is the data/info on how the treatments are working, so the Woody Invasive Species Task Force can use that info. Dean will make a call to the previous foreman and see if we can get in there with the road. Steve stressed that an expert assessment is more important than a tour. Jeff Ryan stated the tour and road is at the mercy of possibly rain storms and Laura K. suggested having drone footage of the area. Molly stated one of the hotels in Jordan do not allow room blocks so she said she could reserve them all now (like did last year for Council members) and people can reserve through Molly. The Council agreed for her to reserve all the rooms now.

### Partner Reports

MACD – Dean stated that Karl did an excellent job presenting the resolutions and Rebecca Boslough is doing a great job at the legislative sessions. The HB295 (Nepotism bill) passed the house unanimously. There are changes with the CD Funding Bill. The HB 321 (Coal Trust Bill) was tabled in house appropriations for political leverage. There are 7am MACD Legislative calls every Tuesday. The spring Board meeting is June 6-8<sup>th</sup> in Helena.

DNRC – Stephanie mentioned how important it is for all CDs to complete the funding survey. Veronica stated that their mini grant is open till March 15, the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays will now be their *Office Hours*, and there is a new Broadwater administrator, Diane Johnson. Hayley Young is new in the Valley County CD.

NRCS – No report.

MRWA – Greg stated that there is 65 million secured in HB6 for syphons on the system. Jeff stated the RFP has been issued for St. Mary's Working Group coordinator/media person. No one has been fully hired yet but excited about progress finally being made.

MCC – Autumn stated that MCC currently has their corps members across the state. They are hiring around 100 positions (Conservation Interns and Fellows). Field crew training starts in March. Working on projects panning, low tech projects are happening and going to try and double all the projects; 400+ structures to be built in 2023.

CEMIST – Brent stated that they are having to amend their DNRC grant to be able to do their own invoicing. They are having an Eastern Heath Snail presentation in Stanford April 25th, 1pm-3pm. There will be a Feral Hog Tour around Scobey late spring/early summer. Wendy Jones is putting together an AIS workshop that will be in Miles City in June. Wendy and others attended the MATE show in February.

### Reach Reports

Lower Reach – Dana Berwick stated that in 2002, *Sidney Sugars* bought the business without letting producers know and it hasn't been feasible for producers since then. *American Crystal* won't sell. Dana presented at the Soil Symposium in Billings. Laura mentioned EGT is hosting a talk tonight.

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Reservoir Reach – Dean is trying to get together a presentation for the CMR Pilot Project. Laura state that Jay King did a lot of work getting the nepotism resolution passed.

Middle Reach – Lorri stated they have been trying to do some targeting work on saltcedar in the Judith River Basin and Arrow Creek.

Upper Reach – John stated that Cascade CD had to put their CD building on hold, and have a new architect. Jeff mentioned their new Lewis and Clark CD building going in that will also be an education center. Karl discussed NRCS frustration with CDs not adhering to office space allowance, hiring on additional CD personnel without asking. Dallas stated that they are having trouble keeping administrators due to the job being overwhelming. Dean and Jeff mentioned to reach out to the EO Chris Evans to help administrators.

**Individual CD Reports (voluntary/as needed)** - Trish discussed all the upcoming PCCD workshops coming up; Ladies Day on the Range in June, gardening workshop this spring, and an applicators class for 2 credits this spring.

**Coordinator Update** - Molly stated that they are expecting a baby girl in July. She still hasn't received the MRCD representative forms from a handful of CDs.

### Upcoming Events/Important Dates

#### **February**

- 22: CEMIST Meeting
- 23: YRCDC Meeting
- 23: Ranching for Rivers Meeting
- 28: MACD Legislative Committee Meeting, 7am

#### **March**

- 2-3: Molly out
- 7: Molly out
- 7: MACD Legislative Committee Meeting, 7am
- 9: CORE Partners Meeting, Helena
- 14: MACD Legislative Committee Meeting, 7am
- 16: CMR CWG – Lewistown
- 21: MACD Legislative Committee Meeting, 7am
- 22: CEMIST Meeting
- 28: MACD Legislative Committee Meeting, 7am
- 28: ***MRCDC Executive Committee meeting***

#### **April**

- 3: USACE Spring Operations Meeting
- 4: MACD Legislative Committee Meeting, 7am
- 10: Office Closed
- 11: MACD Legislative Committee Meeting, 7am
- 18: MACD Legislative Committee Meeting, 7am
- 25: MACD Legislative Committee Meeting, 7am
- 25: ***MRCDC Executive Committee meeting***
- 26: CEMIST Meeting

**Announcements**

With no further business, Laura Kiehl asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dick Iverson made a motion to adjourn; Dallas Diehl seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 12:28pm.

Submitted by:

Approved by unanimous vote on 7/21/2023



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Trish Smith, Secretary



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Laura Kiehl, Chairman