

**MRCDC Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**January 30, 2024 at 1:00pm via Zoom**

At 1:02pm, Chair Karl Christians called the MRCDC Executive Committee meeting to order.

Council members present were Karl Christians, Lewis & Clark CD; John Chase, Cascade County CD; Dick Iversen, Richland CD; Jeff Ryan, Lewis & Clark CD; Lorri Schafer, Fergus CD; Dana Berwick, Roosevelt CD; and Laura Kiehl, Petroleum County CD. Others present were Dona Stafford, Fergus CD; Molly Masters, MRCDC Coordinator; Barb Martin, Big Sandy CD; Macy Fogle, Garfield CD; Brent Smith, CEMIST Manager; Katie Lund, PCCD/MRCDC Fiscal Manager; and Trish Smith, PCCD Administrator/MRCDC Secretary.

Approve Minutes

Minutes were reviewed from December 19th, 2023. Amendments were discussed. Dana Berwick moved to approve the minutes as amended, Dick Iversen seconded. Motion passed

Public Comment

No public comment.

Financial Report

Katie briefly discussed the financials and outstanding bills. Submitted reimbursement request for the DNRC grants. Went over the profit and loss sheet; 50% through year and sitting good at around 50% of our budget. Dana Berwick moved to approve the January financial report; Lorri Schafer seconded. Motion passed. Laura Kiehl moved to pay the outstanding bills; Lorri Schafer seconded. Motion passed.

Old Business

There was no Old Business.

New Business

*Reservoir Reach representative election* – Molly stated that the MRCDC representative forms were sent out to the conservation districts. Monte Billing is now the representative and Dean Rogge is the alternate for Garfield CD. Need to elect the Reservoir Reach position. Tabled until the quarterly meeting.

New business item added by Molly. Discussed reserving the fairgrounds for the CMR CWG meeting; have a contract need to sign. Laura Kiehl moved to renting the fairgrounds for the CMR CWG meeting in February; Dick Iversen seconded. Motion passed. The Quarterly MRCDC Meeting will be in Lewistown at the FCCD office February 21<sup>st</sup>.

Committee Reports

*Fort Peck Test Flows* – Dick stated that as of right now they will be doing a test flow this year. MRRIC was in December and they were able to expedite getting the Roosevelt and Richland CD USACE permit for dredging okayed. There was a public info meeting in Williston, ND and will have another meeting or two in the spring with Joe Bonneau. A Test Flow Engagement meeting will be Feb 27<sup>th</sup>. Western Area Water Supply will be sitting in on the info meetings. They need more water, so they need to put a pipe across the river into McKenzie County (ND). They're really concerned on when the test flow will happen. Molly stated that it would be good to have Joe Bonneau and CDs come to the May MRCDC quarterly meeting.

*CMR Community Working Group* – Molly stated that their next meeting will be February 22<sup>nd</sup> in Lewistown. The planning committee met last week and will be lining up presenters (FWP) to discuss the state elk management plan. Will need to go over topics list and planning out meetings for the year. The next planning committee meeting will be February 8<sup>th</sup>; will get a rough agenda for the rest of the year.

*Living on the Bank* – Dona stated that they got a grant and wondering if they could run a commercial a couple times. There is \$20K left in the grant. Karl thought we should look into doing that and radio ads. Dick stated that Allison Whitmer from the Montana Film Office in Helena that would be a good one to contact. Molly also mentioned that the Northern Ag Network is a good contact for ads.

*Woody Invasive Species Working Group* – Molly stated the next meeting is February 13 in Lewistown. The MT weed control conference is in Billings this week and they will be handing out surveys. Survey questions: Are you concerned about these Woody Invasives? How are you controlling? Looking at funding opportunities? Aerial applications info. The Science Advisory Panel meeting will be coming up later this spring.

*MT Water Review* – Molly stated that she listened in to one of their meetings; they discussed storage of water. There was a WPIC meeting on Jan 17<sup>th</sup>; Ginette Abdo from the Bureau of Mines gave a presentation on water storage, aquifer recharge and how to get water stored in the aquifer and getting it back out. Last MT Water review meeting discussed the judicial system with the division and/or district court system. Dick discussed the off-stream storage that was discussed at the meeting. Molly stated that they encourage comments via email and they will share that to the stake holders. Lorri went to the Lewistown meeting, and they have meetings to give recommendations to legislators to change the laws in regarding water rights. They are targeting the areas around Kalispell, Bozeman & Missoula. Trying to capture runoff before it reaches the river. Issue is the lack of trees from forest fires and beetle kill. Karl discussed water rights and all the development coming in that is causing a huge impact.

*River Rendezvous* – Molly stated that we had our planning committee meeting last week, went through options/plans for that day. Looking at touring the mining reclamation on Confederate Creek/Cutthroat study. Getting a bus (has AC!). The time donated for driving the bus is free, but will be a fee for using the bus. Will base the River Rendezvous out of Townsend. Featuring L & C Solar water system. Next meeting is the end of February.

#### **PARTNER REPORTS:**

*MACD* –Karl is the NACD Rep for MT and is also now on the NACD Board. The NACD Convention is in San Diego. NACD can run emergency resolutions through their committee. Karl stated that we need to keep pushing the "Asset" conversation.

*DNRC* – No report.

*NRCS* – Karl stated he will be attending the State Technical Advisory Committee in Missoula March 5<sup>th</sup>. If anyone has anything want him to bring up, let him know.

*MRWA* – Jeff Pattison & Terry Profota are rebuilding the MRWA.

*CEMIST* – Brent Smith stated that they are currently at Fort Belknap attending the Mid-Winter Fair. They applied for the AIS grant. The Feral Hog Tour will be March 4-8 on the Highline. Molly will contact Patricia Gilbert regarding saltcedar mitigation/treatment following the Test Flow this spring.

*Lower Reach* – No report.

*Reservoir Reach* – Laura stated that the Petrolia Irrigation District and Deadman's Basin are moving forward with FCA and NRCS to develop a preliminary plan for the update of the irrigation systems. Petroleum County continues to work through becoming the fiscal sponsor for local term leases with the MT Sage Grouse Oversight Team.

*Middle Reach* – Lorri stated that FWP are looking for representatives for being on a community working group regarding harvest rates and elk management. She said the target number is based on land owner tolerance.

*Upper Reach* – Jeff stated that they met with the Volk family and are moving on with the Conservation Center. The Montana Conservation Elders are hosting a “Montana Matters” event at the Lewis & Clark Fairgrounds in Helena April 13<sup>th</sup>; expecting 40-50 organizations to attend. There will be educational displays for ages 7-17. If the kids go to 12 or more stations, they will get a chance for a summer camp opportunity.

*Individual CD Reports (voluntary/as needed)* – Barb & Karl discussed Dana Darlington running for a Legislative seat – trying to get off the CD board, still on the Beef Council.

Coordinator Update – Molly discussed the representative forms she sent out to CDs. She is still waiting to hear back from a meeting present for the Quarterly meeting in February. State Test Flow Meeting is Feb 27<sup>th</sup>.

#### Upcoming Events/Important Dates

##### **January**

- 30: MRCDC Executive Committee Meeting
- 31: PCCD Meeting

##### **February**

- 6: Range Conservation Committee Meeting, Billings
- 13: WIWG Meeting
- 13: MT Comprehensive Water Review
- 15-17: MATE Show, CEMIST booth
- 19: Presidents’ Day, Closed
- 21: MRCDC Quarterly Meeting, Lewistown**
- 22: CMR Community Working Group, Lewistown
- 28: Ranching For Rivers meeting
- 28: CEMIST meeting
- 28: PCCD meeting
- 29: Leap Year! An extra day

##### **March**

- 11-13: MRNRC Conference, virtual
- 12-13: MT Comprehensive Water Review
- 13-26: MRCDC Executive Committee meeting
- 27: CEMIST meeting
- 27: PCCD meeting

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Other

With no further business, Dick Iversen moved to adjourn the meeting; Lorri Schafer seconded. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 2:38pm.

Approved on: 3/26/2024

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Trish Smith".

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Trish Smith, MRCDC Secretary

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karl Christians".

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Karl Christians, Chairman