

MRCDC Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

March 26, 2024 at 1:00pm via Zoom

At 1:02pm, Vice Chair Dana Berwick called the MRCDC Executive Committee meeting to order.

Council members present were **Dana Berwick, Roosevelt CD; Monte Billing, Garfield CD; Jeff Ryan, Lewis & Clark CD;** Greg Jergeson, Blaine County CD; Steve Wanderaas, McCone CD; and **Lorri Schafer, Fergus CD.** Others present were Dan Rostad, YRCDC Coordinator; Robbie Savelkoul, Roosevelt CD; Dona Stafford, Fergus CD; Molly Masters, MRCDC Coordinator; Macy Fogle, Garfield CD; Brent Smith, CEMIST Manager; Katie Lund, PCCD/MRCDC Fiscal Manager; and Trish Smith, PCCD Administrator/MRCDC Secretary. **Executive Committee Members in BOLD.*

Aprove Minutes

Minutes were reviewed from January 30, 2024. Lorri Schafer moved to approve the minutes; Monte Billing seconded. Motion passed. Minutes were reviewed from March 1, 2024. Lorri Schafer moved to approve the minutes; Monte Billing seconded. Motion passed.

Public Comment

Greg Jergeson stated that he emailed the Council his analysis of Margaret Byfield's recommended course of action at the last MRCDC quarterly meeting. He would like this analysis to be added as a future meeting agenda item, to discuss it in more detail.

Financial Report

Katie Lund gave a brief overview of the MRCDC financial report. We are three quarters the way through the fiscal year and have used approximately three fourths of the MRCDC budget. Discussed the profit/loss by class; nothing significant to report. Getting another reimbursement soon. Had a fraudulent charge come through early March, those charges will be refunded, and ordered a new card for Molly. Molly will be having traveling soon so she will not have a card for gas/hotels. There was discussion on different options; decided she will pay for travel and be reimbursed. Lorri Schafer moved to approve the March financial report and to pay the outstanding bills; Jeff Ryan seconded. Motion passed.

Old Business

There was no Old Business.

New Business

Noxious Weed Trust Fund grant request to increase monetary input – Dan Rostad discussed that there is very limited funding at the moment. He is going to suggest to the Director of the MT Department of Ag to put in governor's budget proposal to increase the funds that are going into the Noxious Weed Trust Fund. He has seen a lot of support across the board. At their YRCDC meeting they are planning on having legislative folks present. Steve Wanderaas discussed the Science Advisory Panel and that they are having a hard time quantifying impacts of Woody Invasives. Their next meeting is April 18th and they will be

strategizing on how to move forward with the Legislature. In the future the Woody Invasive Working Group will need letters of support.

USFWS invite to Montana – Molly stated that they have briefly discussed the refuge system; it will be good for them to come to Montana and potentially have a discussion with us and other groups like MSGA, Farmers Union, etc.

BLM draft EIS for Greater Sage-Grouse – Molly stated the public comment letters are due the first part of June. MRCDC did submit broad comments in 2022 during their scoping period. Bison are listed under both livestock and big game species. Dana stated that it will take some time to get through that document but to keep continuing forward. Greg wondered if there was anything specific just to Montana, and that our comments could just address those. Molly stated that Montana was referenced throughout the entire document, and there was not one specific section regarding Montana.

Committee Reports

Fort Peck Test Flows – Dana stated they will be having an AOP meeting in Poplar this week. They will also be having a working group meeting April 17th, 11:00am to 1:00pm. Snowpack is really low so they are unsure if they will be doing a test flow, but not saying 100% one way or the other. Robbie Savelkoul discussed the easements that the Corp of Engineers were sending out. Most land owners have no interest in signing the easement documents.

CMR Community Working Group – Molly stated that the next CMR CWG meeting will be April 18th in Fort Peck; have several folks doing 20-minute presentations on different types of monitoring (range land monitoring, soil health monitoring (Kendall Wojcik, Winnett ACES), bird monitoring (Marissa Sather). They will also be having 10-20 minute presentation discussing past CMR CWG accomplishments. Applied for a mini CD Education grant through Garfield County CD for purchasing monitoring kits for the CMR CWG meeting June 27th. Valley County CD sent a letter that has some feedback regarding CMR CWG. Molly will email out that letter for review.

Living on the Bank – Dona stated that her and Molly have reached out to the Realtor Association about possibly having a booth in their annual Realtor Convention in October. Molly briefly looked at Facebook advertising. It is \$5.00/day, \$35/week.

Woody Invasive Species Working Group – Nothing additional to report from the Noxious Weed Trust Fund item in new business.

MT Water Review – Molly listened to part of their March meeting. They discussed the court judicial system and what they are wanting to do; they have it narrowed down to two types. They also discussed water storage and exempt wells. The next MT Water Review meeting is April 9th and 10th in Miles City. Special public session is the evening of April 9th.

River Rendezvous – Molly stated that the next planning meeting is April 4th. She has the draft “Save the Date” postcards created. Wondering if she should mail them to legislative folks.

Partner Reports:

MACD – No report.

DNRC – Molly stated that Hailey Graff is the acting CDB Bureau Chief while Stephanie Criswell is off for medical leave.

NRCS – No report.

MRWA – Greg stated that they will be having a “re-organization” meeting with Terry Profota April 10th. Their focus will be the tributaries in the Milk River.

CEMIST– Brent Smith stated that they will be having their executive council meeting tomorrow. They have approached Megan Hoyer with Yellowstone County Weed District about her stepping in as an executive council member; she is interested and this will be discussed at their meeting tomorrow. The USGS presented on their Invasive Mussels Risk Model for the Missouri River Basin. This model is driven by several attributes, one being the number of boat ramps on a given body of water. This being said the state of Montana shows a majority of low risk. Tiber and other reservoirs around Helena were moderate risk. Fort Peck was lower risk due to its size and relatively low boat ramps. CEMIST is working on this summer's E&O events. A couple scheduled as of now are the VCCD kids' conservation day (May 8th) and an AIS Early detection and monitoring workshop at Fort Peck or Glasgow on June 18th. Walleye Unlimited have expressed interest in the event as well.

MISC– Steve Wanderaas discussed the feral hog tour that was early March. MISC planned to have a booth at the MonDak in Sidney, MT, but the coordinator was unable to attend due to a family emergency. MISC quarterly will be April 17th in Helena.

Reach Reports

Lower Reach – Dana stated that the ice is mostly off of the river and they have had no big ice jams. Continuing to push forward with Test Flow conversations.

Reservoir Reach – No report.

Middle Reach – No report.

Upper Reach – Projects are being rushed since willows are coming out of dormancy. Many volunteers are helping cut willows for the Lake Helena willow project. They are planning to import soil since Lake Helena shore lines are full of heavy alkali clay. Will be putting in 400-500 feet of trench, that will make it around 1500 feet total treated. On April 13th there will be a “Montana Matters” event at the Lewis & Clark Fairground in Helena hosted by The Montana Conservation Elders. Around 40 organizations will be involved. Kids will get a chance to win a summer camp opportunity.

Individual CD Reports (voluntary/as needed) – Trish discussed the PCCD/MSGOT leases that they have been working on with the Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team for almost 2 years. They are finally getting contracts wrapped up and signed in the next month.

Coordinator Update – Molly attended the NACDEO meeting last month on social media; legal issues if we would ever be audited. Discussed her updated timesheet; now comp time instead of overtime pay.

Upcoming Events/Important Dates

March

26: Group BIDEH discussion

26: MRCDC Executive Committee meeting

27: CEMIST meeting

27: PCCD meeting

27: Ranchers' Resource Network meeting

28: USACE Annual Operating Plan meeting

MRCDC
PO Box 118
Winnett, MT 59087



Phone: (406) 454-0056
mrcdc@macdnet.org
www.missouririvercouncil.info

April

- 1: Easter observed, closed
- 3: Molly out
- 4: River Rendezvous planning
- 9-10: MT Comprehensive Water Review, Miles City
- 11: MSGA
- 13: Montana Matters Youth Outdoor Experience, Helena
- 18: CMR CWG meeting, Fort Peck
- 18: MISC meeting
- 23: MRCDC Executive Committee meeting**
- 24: CEMIST meeting
- 24: PCCD meeting

May

- 6: MRRIC AMCR for Fish
- 14-15: MT Comprehensive Water Review
- 14-16: MRRIC AM Workshop
- 21: MRCDC Quarterly meeting, Sidney**
- 27: Memorial Day
- 29: CEMIST meeting
- 29: PCCD meeting

Other

With no further business, Monte Billing moved to adjourn the meeting; Lorri Schafer seconded. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 2:03pm.

Approved on: 04/23/2024

Submitted by: 04/23/2024

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trish Smith".

Trish Smith, MRCDC Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl Christians".

Karl Christians, Chairman