

MRCDC Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2025 at 1:00pm via Zoom

At 1:00pm, Chair Karl Christians called the MRCDC Executive Committee meeting to order.

Council members present were **Karl Christians, Lewis & Clark CD; Lorri Schafer, Fergus CD; Jeff Ryan, Lewis & Clark CD; Dick Iversen, Richland CD; Laura Kiehl, Petroleum CD; John Chase, High Plains CD** and Tom Beck, Roosevelt CD. Others present were Robbie Savelkoul, Roosevelt CD; Dona Stafford, Fergus CD; Molly Masters, MRCDC Coordinator; Brent Smith, CEMIST Manager; Katie Lund, PCCD/MRCDC Fiscal Manager; and Trish Smith, PCCD Administrator/MRCDC Secretary. **Executive Committee Members in BOLD.*

APPROVE MINUTES

Minutes were reviewed from the December 17, 2024 MRCDC executive committee meeting. John Chase moved to approve the minutes; Dick Iversen seconded. Motion passed.

Minutes were reviewed from the January 9, 2024 MRCDC special executive committee meeting. John Chase moved to approve the minutes as amended; Laura Kiehl seconded. Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

FINANCIAL REPORT

Katie discussed the January financial report. Budget vs actual: received the 1st of two reimbursement requests from the DNRC. Halfway through FY25, we are at approximately 44% for income and 40% for expenses. Approximately \$16K in checking and \$47K in savings. Went over unpaid bills. John Chase moved to pay the unpaid bills and approve the financial report; Dick Iversen seconded. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

MRWA MOU – Molly gave a short update. Steph Criswell visited with Caitlyn Overland (DNRC legal) last week; there needs to be an agreement directly between Valley and Petroleum CD. Molly drafted up a simple agreement stating that MRWA will be a subcommittee of MRCDC; Valley will hold the finances, but the PCCD will be fiscally responsible for watching over and approving financials. Valley CD will help with the website and social media. MRCDC will make a recommendation on the agreement and PCCD will review and approve.

MWCC Membership – Went over the MWCC membership and benefits of joining. Dues are \$250 annually. Will keep discussing and decide on a later date.

River Rendezvous location – Molly stated that there were several locations discussed at the December meeting including Sleeping Buffalo, High Plains CD, Sidney area, Saint Mary's project area, Milk River area, etc. Molly would rather wait a year on the St Mary project area. John Chase stated that they haven't discussed High Plains as a location since November, so might not be an option. Will tentatively look at the Sleeping Buffalo and Milk River area for the 2025 River Rendezvous.

NEW BUSINESS

Fox Hills Hell Creek Aquifer: Karl stated that Amanda Kaster looked over Molly's summary sheet of the Aquifer during the Rotunda Meet & Greet event last week; she could get together an agency bill that would look at putting in some monitoring to protect the aquifer from overuse from the fracking industry. It is the lifeblood for folks there; approximately 1500 wells. ND put together a restriction for proposed water use. Molly stated that Anna Pakenham Stevenson of the Water Resources Division, was on the MACD call this morning, going over water and MACD stakeholder group bills. Asked about different options for the Fox Hills Hell Creek Aquifer – she will talk with MRCDC about more options going forward. Dick Iversen moved to have MRCDC move forward with this effort; Lorri Schafer seconded. Motion passed.

Irrigator Outreach Specialist hire recommendation: Molly stated that we had an applicant for the position, Cameron Skinner. He is currently an independent contract with YRDC. It was recommended to hire Cameron. John Chase moved to move forward hiring Cameron Skinner as the Irrigator Outreach Specialist; Laura Kiehl seconded. Motion passed.

USACE Grizzly Bear ESA listing proposed changes letter: Meetings have been canceled but still accepting public comment until March, so no new rules will be approved as of right now. Going to put this on hold for now.

2025 Proposed Quarterly Meeting dates- Went over the MRCDC quarterly meeting dates from 2025. Tentative locations and dates are February 25 (virtual only, starting at 1:00pm), May 27 (Manhattan), August 19 (Sleeping Buffalo), August 20 (River Rendezvous in Phillips County), and November (with MACD Convention). Molly is reaching out to local CDs.

Plank Stewardship Initiative grants support letter for PCCD – Dick Iversen moved to approve the PCCD support letter for the Plank Stewardship Initiative grant; John Chase seconded. Motion passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fort Peck Test Flows – No update.

CMR Community Working Group – Molly stated that the planning committee discussed and will be creating a survey to send out to folks and see what interest there is to keep the group going, and depending on the survey results, they will decide the future of the CMR CWG. Karl stated need to have stakeholder input before making a decision.

Living on the Bank – Molly will send promotional item(s) pictures for CDs to see.

Woody Invasive Species Working Group – No update.

MRWA (Milk River Watershed Alliance) – No update.

PARTNER REPORTS:

MACD – No report.

DNRC – No report.

NRCS – Robbie stated that there was an email update; any employment offers before February 8th would be honored, but after February 8th had been rescinded. Other employment is on hold.

CEMIST – Brent stated CEMIST will be at the Invasive Species Rotunda Day Feb 12 and the MATE Show Feb 20-22.

REACH REPORTS

Lower Reach – No report.

Reservoir Reach – No report

Middle Reach – No report.

Upper Reach – Jeff stated their CD will be helping cut willow for a mine reclamation project in Grizzly Gulch. He also discussed that the current Administration is not happy with FEMA; they are looking at getting a task force formed to decide the fate or re-organization of FEMA. They want input from the states. Jeff is interested in their authority over floodplain permitting; CDs need a voice on the task force.

Individual CD Reports (voluntary/as needed) – Robbie discussed their February 8th workshop in Culbertson.

COORDINATOR UPDATE – Molly re-sent MRCDC representative forms to folks she hasn't received back from. One CD asked if they could put two alternates on the form. The council said that is fine. Ranching for Rivers is looking at bringing awareness to reinvigorate the program. Sending out info on workplan and budget; need to get working on that so can get to DNRC (there will be considerable changes to workplan).

January

28: **MRCDC Exec. Committee meeting, 1pm**

29: PCCD meeting

29: CEMIST meeting

30: Molly out

30: USACE virtual grizzly info meeting

Weekly on Tuesdays at 7am: MACD Legislative Committee meetings

February

3: WIWG core group meeting

3-4: MWCC Annual Meeting

10: USACE grizzly info meeting, Cody, WY

17: Presidents' Day, closed

25: **MRCDC Quarterly Meeting**

26: PCCD meeting

26: CEMIST meeting

TBD: MRWA committee meeting

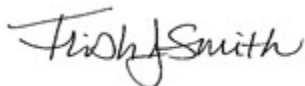
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Other

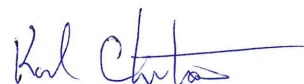
With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:18pm.

Approved on: 03/25/2025

Submitted by:



Trish Smith, MRCDC Secretary



Karl Christians, Chairman