

MRCDC Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
July 29, 2025 at 7:30am via Zoom

At 7:31am, Chair Karl Christians called the MRCDC Executive Committee meeting to order.

Council members present were **Karl Christians, Lewis & Clark CD; Laura Kiehl, Petroleum CD; Jeff Ryan, Lewis & Clark CD; Lorri Schafer, Fergus CD; Dick Iversen, Richland CD; John Chase, High Plains CD; Dana Berwick, Roosevelt CD; Monte Billing, Garfield CD;** Jeff Pattison, Valley CD; Shane Lammerding, Phillips CD; and Greg Jergeson, Blaine CD. Others present were Robbie Savelkoul; Roosevelt CD; Dona Stafford, Fergus CD; Katie Lund, MRCDC/PCCD Fiscal Manager; Molly Masters, MRCDC Coordinator; and Trish Smith, MRCDC/PCCD. **Executive Committee Members in BOLD.*

APPROVE MINUTES

Minutes were reviewed from the June 24, 2025 MRCDC executive committee meeting. Dana Berwick moved to approve the minutes; Jeff Ryan seconded. Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

FINANCIAL REPORT

Katie presented the FY25 financial report. Income: \$75K, with an additional \$37K received in July (FY26). Approximately \$22K left for expenses until the grant ends September 30. Current balances include checking (\$32,901), savings (\$47,338.18) totaling \$80,239.18. DNRC advance of \$35K is still outstanding. Discussion on the need to spend certain amounts by September 30 and manage the transition to the new \$100K grant. John Chase moved to approve the financial report and unpaid bills; Jeff Ryan seconded. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Coordinator raise modification – Karl discussed the council approving a pay raise and stipend for Molly. Discussion on modifying the previously approved raise for the coordinator (Molly). Katie discussed keeping the living stipend for all employees at \$100 and just putting the extra \$300 into wages for Molly. The PCCD can pick up the \$1200/year stipend if MRCDC is unable to. Lorri Schafer moved to give Molly a 4\$ raise on the current hourly rate of \$32.76, with an additional \$1.73/hour for the living stipend, effective July 1. New hourly rate totaling \$35.80. PCCD will pay \$1200/year living stipend. Future raises will be based on the \$34.07 pay rate. John Chase seconded. Motion passed.

DNRC grant application – Molly discussed the DNRC grant application submitted June 30. Approved for \$100K; decrease of \$10,400 from previous years. Grant period for this grant is Oct 1 through June 30 (9 mths). Concerns raised about potential challenges if future grants remain at \$100K for a full 12-month period. Dona stated that all organizations received budget decreases due to an \$800K

deficit last year. Molly stated she is still collecting letters of support from CDs. Will submit them tomorrow. Have to re-apply every year, not every two years. Molly suggested having DNRC attend the next Quarterly meeting and discuss the shortage of funding. Karl stated it would be better as a separate call, not at the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

End of budget spending approval: Molly presented a list of proposed expenses for approval, including promotional items, new windshield, office supplies, equipment and a drone pilot license. Lorri discussed recategorizing the budget for spending; two separate columns, one through Sept 30, and then Oct 1 on. Dick Iversen moved to approve the proposed list of purchases; Laura Kiehl seconded. Motion passed.

Grant award reduction: Discussed in Old Business.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fort Peck Test Flows – Dana discussed the recent MRRIC meetings. Next webinar scheduled for August 19. Dick mentioned a stakeholder get-together August 14. Molly plans to email irrigators (part of survey) to attend. Dana suggested to include CDs also. Enough water in Fresno to sustain the city through fall and next spring. Everyone happy with the work Cameron is doing.

CMR Community Working Group – Molly stated there will be a planning meeting soon. Will be discussing what to do this fall for a CMR CWG meeting.

Living on the Bank – John asked about website analytics. Dona will reach out.

Woody Invasive Species Working Group – Molly stated there will be a WISWG meeting on September 10. Core committee working on public service announcements and a radio ad to promote and educate on invasive species identification and reporting. Draft management plan completed and under review, expected to be finalized in the fall.

MRWA (Milk River Watershed Alliance) – Greg stated they will be having a meeting after the MRCDC meeting. They barely had a quorum at the last meeting. They discussed their plan of action and selecting a Chair or Vice Chair. Discussed concerns with the lack of engagement from supervisors and districts. A suggestion was made to schedule meetings further in advance to improve participation. Discussed concerns about the fiscal agent role.

River Rendezvous – Molly reported limited registrations for the event so far. Deadline is August 8. Stressed that Council members need to register and get their hotel rooms booked. Molly will send out registration reminders at the end of the week. Discussed FB advertising to promote the event. Trish will hang up flyers in Winnett.

PARTNER REPORTS:

MACD – Madi was approved to become the assistant executive director at the last MACD board meeting. Discussed the resolution letter in regards to NRCS, sent out by MACD, that the Council might want to review. NRCS has announced restructuring.

DNRC – No report.

NRCS – Dick stated that Gayle Barry is the new NRCS State Conservationist and might be a potential resource for MRCDC activities.

CEMIST – No report.

REACH REPORTS

Lower Reach – Dick stated that there has been a steady flow in the river and pump sites are doing well.

Reservoir Reach – Laura stated the Petrolia Reservoir System Improvement plan will be presented July 31 at the PCCC. The System Improvement Plan for Petrolia Irrigation District that is being proposed by Farmers Conservation Alliance has a \$55 million cost estimate. The NRCS, engineers, and PID are working on that new plan/number. Local work will begin soon. They were hailed out July 17, but the rain has helped things recover. Trish mentioned receiving \$125,000 for the McDonald Creek diversion structures replacement project, though more funding is needed.

Middle Reach – Dona stated they have been handing out seeds to folks (Pollinator program). Discussed extensive moisture and hail and applied for a BLM fuels mitigation grant.

Upper Reach – Molly read Jeff Ryan's note: local streams are taking a hit due to limited snowpack. Karl mentioned issues with Ten Mile Creek drying up due to irrigation and low snowpack, noting it's a recurring issue in dry years.

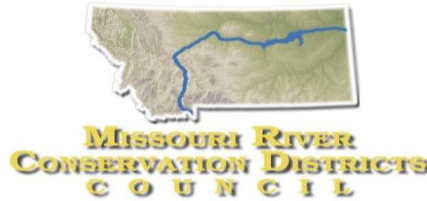
Individual CD Reports (voluntary/as needed) – Shane mentioned challenges with accessing fields due to wet conditions, but noted that hay ground is improving with recent rain.

COORDINATOR UPDATE – Nothing new to add.

July

- 1: RR Registration opens
- 1: MRRIC HC Call
- 1-3: Molly limited work hours
- 4: Happy 4th of July! Office closed
- 8: MRRIC HC Small group call
- 16: Molly out am
- 18: Molly out pm
- 23: CEMIST meeting
- 29: MRCDC Exec. Committee (7:30am)**
- 29: MRWA meeting (9:30am)
- 29: EQC meeting, Helena/Zoom

MRCDC
PO Box 118
Winnett, MT 59087



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

30: PCCD meeting
30: WPIC meeting, Helena/Zoom
TBD: RR Planning Meeting
TBD: CMR CWG planning committee

August

8: RR Registration due
18-22: MRRIC All member webinar
22: Molly out pm
25: MRCDC Quarterly meeting, Malta
25-26: River Rendezvous, Malta
26-28: Test Flow Stakeholder meetings
27: CEMIST meeting
27: PCCD meeting
TBD: CMR CWG planning committee
TBD: MRWA meeting

Other

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:18am.

Approved on: 9/23/2025

Submitted by:

Trish Smith, MRCDC Secretary

Karl Christians, Chairman