

**MACD/SWCDM Merger Survey Responses**

*Updated 03/30/2020*

| Conservation District | # Responses | Favored Option | Comments  |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|---|
| Beaverhead            | 2           | 3              | Motion by Tom Miller 2nd by Carl Malesich, Motion carried.  |
| Big Horn              |             |                |   |
| Big Sandy             | 1           | 3              |   |
| Big Sandy(2)          | 1           | 1              |   |
| Bitterroot            | 1           | 1              |   |
| Blaine                | 1           | 1              |   |
| Broadwater            | 2           | 3              | Hoping that a merger will help address issues due to inefficient, unresponsive, and territorial competing agencies. If cost savings are a fringe benefit, all the better and maybe the new merger association can spend some time and resources addressing the dilemma of local CDs basically having an unfunded mandate with regard to administering and enforcing the 310 permitting process / In my opinion there does not seem to be enough specific info to make an informed decision. There needs to be a comprehensive list of pro's and con's, perhaps an outline of what each org will be responsible for and a specific list of probable savings (not just generalities and maybe's), the timeline info is a start but why the rush? Gov't is not known for speed. Is there specific budget info available for both org's, what is expected income and how will it be divided? This info was apparently sent after the request for the survey input, seems the cart is first. |
| Carbon                |             |                |   |
| Carter                | 1           | 3              | We fully support the option to merge MACD and SWCDM into one organization. We believe this merge will have less restrictions on funding.  |
| Cascade               | 9           | 3              | Merging would simplify a lot of issues. Start fresh with a Bottom-Ran Organization. Districts need complete control. Increase income possibilities  |
| Chouteau              |             |                |   |
| Custer                | 1           | 3              |   |
| Daniels               |             |                |   |
| Dawson                |             |                |   |
| Deer Lodge            |             |                |   |
| Eastern Sanders       |             |                |   |
| Fergus                | 1           | 3              | Fergus Conservation District Supervisors feel that option 3 would be the best option. This would make the office stronger, working as one unit. It worked for many years this way and should never have been changed. It caused division in the work force and with Districts. So we feel if it is put back to one strong organization would be the best for the office and the CD's.   |
| Flathead              | 1           | 3              | Need one set of goal, objects, budget, and board. Can reduce some costs such as Audits.   |
| Gallatin              | 1           | 3              | The consensus of the board (all 7 members present), was to pursue option 3, following deliberate discussion. Good questions were asked, especially in the area of allowable lobbying in the combined 501c3 structure, and making sure SWCDM would be able to continue to fully function in program management and CD support. The board indicated they felt a combined organization would be more efficient and transparent to the MACD-CD membership.  |
| Garfield              |             |                |   |
| Glacier               |             |                |   |
| Granite               |             |                |   |
| Green Mountain        | 1           | 3              | We believe that this option is the best option with the following beneficial effects. It will streamline the procedures, more efficient use of staff and finances, reduce staff confusion for the CD's and the public and there would be a clear job description for all.   |
| Hill                  |             |                |   |
| Jefferson             |             |                |   |
| Judith Basin          |             |                |   |
| Lake                  |             |                |   |
| Lewis and Clark       | 1           | 3              | Basically the board feels that having both entities under one umbrella would provide clarity in the office (and to the CDs) on what the mission of MACD is, and would hopefully provide office staff clarity as far as what their roles are. (Hopefully get you more day to day assistance from those who work in the office).  |

# MACD/SWCDM Merger Survey Responses

Updated 03/30/2020

|                   |   |   |   |
|-------------------|---|---|---|
| Liberty           |   |   |   |
| Lincoln           |   |   |   |
| Little Beaver     |   |   |   |
| Lower Musselshell |   |   |   |
| Madison           |   |   |   |
| McCone            | 1 | 3 | With ever shrinking resources and qualified staffing pool, this option appears to be the best solution. Questions: 1 – How are other states organized? 2 – What root operating goals would lost if combined? 3 – What would the actual impact be on lobbying? 4 – What would the short and long term cost savings be from combining the offices? 5 – What are the compelling reasons not to join the two entities together?   |
| Meagher           |   | 1 | Our board is concerned with what special interest groups SWCDM accepts money from and what strings are attached. What groups MACD would accept funds from if it becomes a 501c3. SWCDM is not represented by agricultural interests. Supervisors cited that the advertisement for an SWCDM executive director said applicants should have a strong background in natural resources and proven experience working for or with non-profits. There was no mention of having an agricultural background at all. SWCDM is not accountable to the conservation districts.   |
| Mile High         |   |   |   |
| Mineral           |   |   |   |
| Missoula          |   |   |   |
| Northern Powell   |   |   |   |
| Park              |   |   |   |
| Petroleum         |   |   |   |
| Phillips          | 1 | 3 | I am absolutely in favor of merging MACD into SWCDMI as a 501c3, while retaining or renaming the organization as MACD. I think this would clear up a lot of confusion, open new opportunities to MACD, and help assure that the vision and direction of the organization be determined by the Conservation Districts of Montana. Currently I believe there is some question regarding the direction of SWCDMI, and the alliance with Conservation Districts. I believe the current structure is very confusing, and I feel it must be very difficult to operate two entities as one. I can understand how this could easily create personnel and other issues due to uncertainty of responsibility, authority, and direction.   |
| Pondera           |   |   |   |
| Powder River      | 1 | 3 | We discussed the merger at our Powder River Conservation District meeting. The Board were leaning toward merging the two entities, for various reasons, but also wanted more information. The reasons include having only one board, perhaps reducing membership dues (since ours tripled by going to the minimum), being able to take in donation (501c3), and less expense due to having less administration.   |
| Prairie           |   |   |   |
| Richland          | 1 | 3 | We would like to see one organization called MACD Since that is the name agencies and people associate with Conservation Districts.   |
| Roosevelt         | 4 | 1 | I do not see or agree with a need to change or restructure moving forward / These two entities perform 2 different functions. Don't waste money and time merging them   |
| Rosebud           | 1 | 3 | A few years ago that the c3 was MACD and the c4 was swcdm. They switched so that swcdm could go after programs. We would request complete and detailed disclosure of the financials as well. SWCDM generates substantial revenue through the programs it currently runs and the partnership it has with NRCS. We would request that once the merge is complete, the fees and operating costs generated through these partnerships, could be used to offset the dues that districts pay to the organization and are used to directly benefit CDs. Although many of the programs are from federal funds, once the organization deposits these funds they are no longer federal. We would like to see current & future partnerships and programs managed by conservation districts. This would help cd's who operate on very limited budgets and are not currently able to offer full time employment or higher wages. We would like the merged MACD to work for and with the best interest of conservation districts. As contracts end with the current programs, instead of renewing or going after these opportunities, MACD should reach out to districts that would be willing and able to manage these programs. We would also like to see the bookkeeping and the website done by a conservation district employee who has the expertise already and would like the benefit of more hours or higher pay. We currently do not see a measurable amount of the services that are being paid for by MACD or DNRC being fulfilled. we would prefer that macd goes back to the state association that works for cd's. Helping cd;s apply for programs and grants, helping cd's build capacity, provide auditing and financial assistance when requested by a cd. Reaching out to cd's when opportunities arise to build partnerships and programs, helping district with the process, from applying for grants or programs to fiscally managing and reporting. We do expect resistance from SWCDM to merge the organization, both because they don't want to lose their jobs and the benefits of building the organization to operate on its own. We feel that the swcdm employees will have a huge part in the success of this transition and that there is no reason they cant fit into the MACD. |

# MACD/SWCDM Merger Survey Responses

Updated 03/30/2020

|                   |   |   |   |
|-------------------|---|---|---|
| Ruby Valley       |   |   |   |
| Sheridan          | 5 | 1 | SWCDM is accountable to MACD, in the MACD appoints directors. It is better to have two stand alone entities, one that is primarily focused on lobbying and other political activities (MACD), and one that is focused on delivering programming of interest to the conservation community (SWCDM). It is not difficult to envision a scenario where the lobbying entity is advocating on behalf of programs, activities, or legislation that are opposed by the funding agency. It is human nature to become resistant to supporting those who oppose your viewpoints, and having only one conservation district entity (in the case of a merger) simultaneously request programming funding while opposing the funding agency's position on some issue in the capitol is not a recipe for increased collaboration (i.e., increased funding for SWCDM) between the two. |
| Stillwater        |   |   |   |
| Sweet Grass       | 2 | 3 | We can merge the two entities into one organization. But does it eliminate board members? The main reason for SWCDM was to provide faster response and flexibility that MACD did not have. 2nd comment the main reason for SWCDM was to own Bridger. If MACD can change its tax status and take over Bridger then there is no reason to have two separate organizations.  |
| Teton             | 2 | 1 | A merger could result in lobbying restrictions.   |
| Toole             |   |   |   |
| Treasure          |   |   |   |
| Upper Musselshell |   |   |   |
| Valley            |   |   |   |
| Wibaux            | 1 | 3 | CDs must maintain control   |
| Yellowstone       |   |   |   |

## Overview of District Responses

|                 |    |
|-----------------|----|
| TOTAL Option 1  | 7  |
| TOTAL Option 2  | 0  |
| TOTAL Option 3  | 18 |
| TOTAL Responses | 25 |

\* Big Sandy included twice

## UNKNOWN RESPONSES

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
|  |  | 3 | The merger would have everyone going the same direction   |
|  |  | 3 | Option 3 will work as long as Districts have a vote and control who is on board and local Districts maintain all rights and power we currently have.  |
|  |  | 3 | As long as the new structure allows the individual CDs the power to make all decisions.   |
|  |  | 3 |   |
|  |  | 1 | The purpose of SWCDMI was to allow MACD to have ownership of Bridger BPMC. If MACD changes it's tax status and assume the responsibilities of SWCDMI then there is no reason to have two entities. In the last few years SWCDMI seems to have generated friction with MACD and it's members. It appears that some of the participants in SWCDM have ideas that are contrary to many of the CDs and supervisors. It bothers me that MACD's assets have been transferred to sWCDMi, especially when some SWCDMI members don't think they have to answer to the CDs. Eliminate SWCDMI and eliminate some of this friction. / Current by-laws lack specific procedures for amending said by-laws. All members have the right to adequate notice anytime by-laws changes are proposed. |
|  |  | 1 | Leave as funded. SWCDM merges back to CD. Don't want public money. There is no new MACD. SWCDM is wanting to break away, "bange" bylaws and go for more public money.   |