

Area 3 Meeting Minutes

September 30, 2020

Virtual Zoom Meeting

8:30 a.m.

Attendees:

Liberty CD: Gail Cicon (Admin), Ray Morkrid

Cascade CD: Gayla Wortman, Stevie Neuman, John Chase, Tenlee Atchison (Admin), Emma Link (employee), Elliot Merja,

Chouteau CD: Lorna Krause (Admin)

Judith Basin CD: Teresa Wilhelms (Admin), Steve Hedstrom, Doug Hitch,

Fergus CD: Shonny Nordlund (Admin), Steve Hertel, Anna Moris,

Blaine CD: Shannon Sattleen (Admin), Kurt Hansen,

Phillips CD: Jenifer Anderson (Admin), Bob Breipohl, Pat Anderson, Merrilyn Black, Hal DeBoer

Pondera CD: Brandee Fladstol (Admin), Jack Judisch

Glacier CD: Barb Broberg, Todd Eney, Mark Suta, Kim Stoltz (Admin)

Toole CD: Elisha Dempsey

Hill CD: Steph?

Big Sandy CD: absent

MACD: Jim Simpson (President), Dean Rogge (VP), Rebecca Boslough (Executive Director), Jeff Tiberi (Government Advisor)

Partners: Stephanie Adams (SWCDM), Melissa Downing (SWCDM), Autumn Christians (MRCDC), Ethan Kunard (MWCC), Laurie Zeller (DNRC), Mark Bostrom (DNRC), Linda Brander (DNRC), Jason Garber (DNRC), Mary Hendrix (DNRC), Kristy Fortman (DEQ), Jorri Dyer, Duane Claypool (DNRC)

NRCS: Misty Vermulm (Shelby NRCS), Marni Thompson (Great Falls NRCS), Shilo Messerly (NRCS-DC), Pam Linker (NRCS DC), Kailee Calnan (Blain County NRCS), Brad Holliday (Super DC) Ryan Johnson (Super DC)

Kay Webb: Little Beaver CD Admin (Technical Assistance)

Welcome by Liberty County CD Chairman, Ray Morkrid. Liberty County CD presented a PowerPoint video highlighting Liberty County.

Business

2019 Minutes-Area III Meeting-Curt Hansen, Blaine CD made a motion to approve minutes, seconded by Stevie Neuman, Cascade CD. Motion Carried.

2020 Resolutions

Stevie Neuman from Cascade CD presented the only resolution to combine the Montana Association of Conservation Districts, a 501 (c) (4) and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Montana, a 501 (c) (3). A motion was made by Steve Hertel, Fergus CD and seconded by Cascade CD. Vote by poll resulted in 10 yeas, 0 nays. Motion carried.

MACD Board Elections

A motion was made by Steve Hertel, Fergus CD to nominate Gayla Wortman, Cascade CD to a three-year term. Cascade CD seconded. Vote by poll resulted in 7 yeas, 2 nays and 1 abstain. Motion carried.

2021 Area III meeting will be hosted by Phillips County.

Longevity Awards-a PowerPoint presentation listed those receiving longevity awards. Certificates and pins will be mailed to recipients.

MACD Annual Convention will be held virtually this year, due to COVID-19. Therefore, there will be no auction.

MACD President-Jim Simpson

Jim followed up on confirmation of the virtual convention being held this year and thanked everyone for considering an auction. Jim explained how the funds raised during MACD Auction is used for legislative efforts and asked for CDs to consider a monetary donation in lieu of auction items.

Jim introduced new MACD Executive Director, Rebecca Boslough. She shared her background, being born and raised in Montana with a background in conservation. She is excited to work for MACD.

Merger Roundtable- Jim had asked Gayla Wortman to create a merger round table discussion to get input on merging MACD and SWCDM, that resulted in a final report completed in June. Most CDs support the merger. Through the merger round table, steps have been identified to move forward with the merger and a set of by-laws has been drafted, which is being reviewed by attorneys. Jim is unsure if the draft by-laws will be available for Districts to review prior to Convention, but assured everyone that Districts will have plenty of time to review them

electronically. Gayla said documents related to the merger will be available on the MACD website.

Legislative Update-Jeff Tiberi

The legislative committee meets every third Friday at 7 am. The committee is made up of 7 CD Supervisors, including 2 previous Legislators. Monthly meetings will turn into weekly meetings once the legislative session starts in January.

Jeff disperses monthly reports and ad-hoc committee minutes by email to CD boards/admins. He invited anyone with an interest to participate in ad-hoc committee meetings.

Jeff, Jim Simpson, Dean Rogge and Rebecca Boslough will be in Lewistown October 16th to meet with any Districts interested.

The legislative committee is working on documents for the upcoming Legislative session touting Conservation District accomplishments, including a “how to talk to Legislators” chart for CD Supervisors and Admins. There will be a legislative panel during the virtual MACD Convention.

2020 MACD Convention-Rebecca Boslough

MACD Annual Convention will be held virtually on November 18-19th, 2020 due to COVID-19. A draft agenda will be posted soon on MACD’s website.

Day one, November 18th, will be business only. Districts need to be sure to identify a designated voter for the business session.

Day two, November 19th, will be an engagement/training day.

Jim reported that a 2/3 vote (Districts in good standing) is needed to approve bylaws. There are currently 45 CDs in good standing, meaning 30 CDs need to vote yes for approval.

Standing Committee Work

District Operations-Pat Anderson

They’ve been working on revising the resolution process and creating a document outlining the process of conducting Area Meetings.

Education-Elisha Dempsey

They’ve been reviewing old resolutions, deciding whether to keep/remove them from the books. They’ve been working on improving external/internal lines of communications.

Water Resources-Pat Riley

Has some good advice/issues for legislative session.

Soil Resource and land use-Steve Terrell

They've been mostly inactive but have worked on reviewing Wilderness Study Areas.

Partner Reports

SWCDM-Stephanie Adams

- Mini-grants-there are upcoming opportunities through the MACD mini-grant program, up to \$3,000 for education/outreach events. A total of \$24k will be offered to Districts in February.
- Ranching for Rivers-this program, through Missouri River Conservation Districts Council currently has \$55,000 available. It is a cost share program to implement ranching practices along rivers in the MR CDC area.
- Soil Health Symposium will be held in February. It will be in person, with virtual option and will be limited to 200 registrations, due to COVID-19 restrictions.

DNRC-Laurie Zeller

- DNRC Conservation District Bureau helps Districts by finding the resources they need and to provide technical and financial assistance to CDs. Some of the things DNRC has helped CDs with are:
 - Permissive Mill Levy
 - Administrative Grants
 - Technical Assistance Grants-up to \$160k /year for 2 yrs
 - Pollinator Habitat funding for projects
 - McCone CD Soil Health Grants
 - Judith Basin CD Range Grants
 - Sweet Grass CD Water Improvement grants
 - Fire emergency funding
 - Monthly Zoom trainings
- There is proposed legislation that would allow for CDs to appoint Supervisors mid-term to serve a full term.
- Linda Brander, Duane Claypool and Laurie Zeller are all retiring from DNRC in December.

DNRC-Mark Bostrom thanked Laurie Zeller for her lifelong dedication to serving Conservation Districts. He thanked CD Administrators for stepping up to temporarily assist in administering COVID-19 funding grant applications for DNRC. Mark also gave an update on number of grant applications for grants through the DNRC Renewable Resources Grant and DNRC Reclamation Development Grants.

DNRC-Autumn Coleman she and Karl Christians will be offering a training on grant administration. She also gave an update on the status of the Milk River/St. Mary's repair project. After failure of Drop 5 in May 2020, repairs of both drop 2 and 5 have been ongoing and should be completed in October.

MSCA-Jane Holzher gave an update on the MSCA RCPP funding program through NRCS. This is a five-year program and provides funding for groundwater investigation and implementation. MSCA employees have been busy this summer, with projects in Valley, Roosevelt, Hill and Fergus Counties. She encourages CDs to apply for the RCPP funding and noted priority goes to projects that involve multiple landowners.

DEQ-Kristy Fortman gave an update on DEQ. They work on standards that protect water quality in Montana. DEQ offers funding and technical assistance, utilizing 319 grants for CDs and Watershed groups. Project applications are due each Spring.

NRCS-report in packet

MACDEO-Tenlee Mortenson, President reported that the EO has not had a lot of activity this year, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Tenlee's term is expiring the end of this year. Next year's officers will be:

President-Heidi Fluery, Lake CD

Vice President-Katie Mumford, Broadwater CD

Treasurer-Sharon Flemitis, Stillwater CD

Secretary-Emma Link, Cascade CD (Also serves as Area 3 representative)

The EO is working on updating CD employee handbooks and their website. They are considering hiring a consultant for this. They are also looking into hiring a CD Administrator to administer the new website.

Tenlee is hoping for an in-person Annual EO meeting, with a Zoom option for those not wanting to attend in person. The meeting will be the week of convention and location has not been determined yet.

EO will host another Statewide Administrator Training (SWAT) for CD employees next summer. EO has been hosting a SWAT event every other year.

A task force to address invasive species in Central/Eastern Montana has been formed, called Central Eastern Montana Invasive Species Taskforce (CEMIST). They've hired a new Coordinator and are looking into applying for a Big Sky Watershed Corps member to help the group.

Autumn Christensen-Big Sky Watershed Member for MRCDC Ranching for Rivers program. She gave a brief update on the Ranching for Rivers project and showcased the MRCDC website that highlights past R4R projects. She noted one beneficial change to the program. Applicants no longer need to be located on a waterway with an official watershed restoration plan. Eligible waterways now just have to be listed as impaired.

MWCC-Ethan Kunard introduced himself. He gave updates on MWCC programs and funding. The Montana Watershed Symposium will be held October 14-16, virtually this year. Registration is free. He also briefed the group on their “Watershed Fund” which is available to CDs to provide support and/or capacity for projects on private land. Up to \$30k is available for projects. Information for the funding can be found on their website. Sheridan County CD currently administers a grant for CD Professional Development, utilizing MWCC funds.

A motion was made by Kurt Hansen and seconded by Anna (Fergus) to adjourn the meeting at 11:36 p.m. Motion carried.

DRAFT