FLATHEAD
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Locally led Conservation Since 1945

133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell, MT 59901
www.flatheadcd.org | 406-752-4220

CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE

Chair Pete Woll called the January 24, Business meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the conference room.

Board members present: Pete Woll, Chair; John Ellis; Vice Chair; Donna Pridmore, Secretary/Treasurer; Lech Naumovich, Supervisor; Scott Rumsey, Supervisor; Verdell Jackson, Supervisor; being a quorum of the Board.

Board members absent: None.

Also, in attendance were Samantha Tappenbeck, Ginger Rigdon, Ginger Kauffman, Flathead Conservation District (FCD) staff; Ben Schleicher, Big Sky Watershed Corps Member; Gordon Ash, Associate Supervisor; Sean Johnson, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Sherry Lewis Peterson; Emily Harkness, Associate supervisor.

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda Item 1: Signature Authority

- Authorization for Samantha Tappenbeck to sign on behalf of Supervisors attending the meeting virtually.

Consent Agenda Item 2: Minutes

Consent Agenda Item 3: Financial

Check Detail 1/12/2022–1/19/2022

1. BCBS $2,132.17
2. Anders Business Solutions $831.39
3. Fisher's Technology $249.50
4. Mountain Trader $74.40

Consent Agenda Item 4: Correspondence

Lech Naumovich motioned "to approve the consent agenda as presented." John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one was present to comment on items not listed on the agenda.

310's

Beatty, FL-2020-070, Flathead River, Permit Extension Request- Donna explained that Mr. Beatty tried to get an extension last May, however it was denied by the board because it was too early to ask for an extension. The water levels are still not low enough for Mr. Beatty to place the riprap, so he is requesting a one-year extension.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to grant a permit extension for one year." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

End of the Month report November 2021: Donna Pridmore asked if anyone had any questions regarding the end of the month report. Lech Naumovich asked if the River Design Group invoice covers the full implementation of the Trumbull Creek Project. This invoice is just for ground water monitoring and the preliminary design for the crossing at Birch Grove Road. There will be more invoices to come.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to approve the end of the month report." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution to Transfer Funds: Ginger Kauffman explained that each year the district transfers $5000 from Fund 7201 to the Capitol Improvement Fund 7235 via a resolution per FY 2021/2022 Budget. As documented in the budget, the Board's plan for this fund is to purchase a vehicle in FY 2021/2022.

Lech Naumovich motioned "to approve the resolution to transfer funds." Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Personnel: Pete Woll explained that he wanted to set up a special meeting to discuss where we are going in the future with the open positions. An agenda will be put together. The special meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 8, 2022, at 10:00 AM in the Flathead District Conservation conference room.

Personnel Policy: The final draft of the personnel policy was submitted for approval by the board. The personnel policy needs to be reviewed by legal.

John Ellis motioned "to preliminarily approve, subject to being reviewed by legal authorities, the amended Personnel Policy." Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Conservation Grant Extension Request: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that Landowner (Deena Shotzberger, CGP2021-08) was requesting 6-month extension (December 1, 2022) on project due to challenges associated with contractor, materials, and seedling availability. Our program guidelines provide for the opportunity for one 6-month extension. The only complication is that our contracts end on our normal fiscal year and the extension would push it into the following fiscal year. The district will need to account for the funds during the budget planning process for the coming fiscal year.

Scott Rumsey motioned "to grant a six-month extension for the conservation grant." Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Pollinator Grant Sponsorship Request: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that the FCD received a request from a local landowner to sponsor a DNRC Pollinator Habitat Improvement Grant. There was some confusion on the landowner's part, as this grant is offered to Conservation Districts and not private landowners.

Samantha continued by explaining that since this is a program offered for conservation districts, if we did decide to sponsor the grant then the FCD would have to apply and administer the grant. The landowner would implement the project on the ground and then FCD would do the reimbursement. The grant is offered quarterly and so the next round of applications would be due on April 8th. The FCD would work with the landowner to polish up the application and apply for the grant.

The landowner added that she is proposing to implement a honeybee program located at the Montana Veterans Home in Columbia Falls. She would like to install 20 more beehives in two separate areas, the veteran's home, and private land on Columbia Falls Stage Road. This would be the first part of the project. The next part would be figuring out how to use drones to maintain the beehives or implementing technology to add to the educational side of the program.

The board asked what her affiliation with the Veterans Home was specifically.

The landowner continued by discussing that she collaborates with Farming For the Future, a group that works with people with diverse abilities, including people with autism and dementia. The veterans home gives her the space to implement these programs.

Samantha Tappenbeck explained that the staff is shorthanded at the moment, and this would take a substantial amount of time to administer. She explained that this would be easier to take on when we were at full capacity. John Ellis asked if we should table this until we are at full capacity.

It was noted that the Education Grant Program could be a good fit for this project. It was additionally noted that if FCD sponsors this grant application, then we should add requirements for promotion of FCD as part of project implementation.

Lech Naumovich motioned "to table until we get the staff up to full capacity." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Watershed Management Grant Awards: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that FCD received two watershed management grant awards. The FCD applied for a grant as a sponsor of the Flathead River Commission and was awarded $32,500 for the Flathead River erosion study. FCD was also awarded $25,000 for the Trumbull Creek Restoration and Aquifer Protection Project, specifically to develop the planning/design of the crossing at a Birch Grove Road. Samantha is working with the DNRC grant manager to set up the contracts for those awards.

IT support: Byte Savvy computing services expires on January 27, 2022. Samantha Tappenbeck would like to go back to a month-to-month agreement so that the staff can have time to figure out alternative IT support options. Byte Savvy will be servicing 6 computers for a total of $90.00 a month.

John Ellis motioned "to approve the monthly contract with Byte Savvy in the amount of $90.00 per month." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS
Flathead CD Staff reported:
Office and Administration

Welcome to our 2022 Big Sky Watershed Corps Member!
Ben Schleicher started his AmeriCorps term with Flathead Conservation District (FCD) on 1/10/2022. Ben will serve a 10.5-month term, and assist FCD with education and outreach, programs, and ongoing projects.

310 –At the end of 2021 FCD had received 109 310's; this includes permits, complaints and notice of emergencies. Ginger R processed the 12/13/2021 310-stream permit meeting minutes, 310-permits and letters. She contacted applicants and landowners regarding onsite inspection dates, and emailed the onsite list to Supervisors, FWP and Staff. Ginger R is currently processing the 1/10/2022 310-Stream permit meeting minutes, 310-permits and letters.

Ginger R processes, scans, and files new 310's as they are received. Donna Pridmore continues to scan old 310 files as her time allows and is currently working on files dated 2007. All 310-files dating 2008 to current are scanned. Disposal of 310-files dated 2008-2011was approved by the Board on 1/10/2022 after DNRC and the Montana State Historical Society Archives declined the files. Ginger K and Donna are currently processing those files, and Ginger K will contact a disposal company when files are ready. Ginger K updated the 310-databases to include permanent file documentation per Schedule No. 9 Conservation District Records Disposal Schedule #11 Permitting Files (310 Files) b. Keep significant permits permanently. Criteria for determining permanent status: Litigation/Court/Arbitration/Technical Review/Jurisdictional/Public Hearing.

Bookkeeping –Donna Pridmore and Ginger K reconciled the November bank, revenue, capital improvement and credit card statements on 12/17/2021. Ginger K compiled and submitted the November End of Month Report to Donna for review prior to the 1/24/2022 Board meeting.

Ginger K processed payroll, payroll reports and payments on 12/8/2021, 12/22/2021 and 1/5/2022. Staff cost of living increase of 2.42% (per the OPM 2022 Salary Table-RUS) beginning January 2022 was documented in the accounting system per 4.5

Promotion/Raises in the Personnel Policy. The next payroll will be processed on 1/19/2022 and will include January Federal & State tax reporting and payments. Ginger K continues to process daily bookkeeping items including payroll, invoices, credit card receipts, deposits, grant billing/vendor invoices, program payments, etc.

The CPA, Susan Hulslander, completed and provided the Annual Financial Report to FCD in December and Ginger K documented Journal Entries provided by the CPA in the accounting system. The Board approved the Report on 12/13/2021, and the CPA submitted the Report to the Department of Administration. No audit was required.

Ginger K compiled and provided documents to the CPA on 1/3/2022 to process and mail out W2's, 1099's etc.

FCD received Krause Creek Grant #RRG-21-1782 budget amendment dated 12/30/2021, and Ginger K updated the grant budget in the accounting system and spreadsheets accordingly.

Disposal of bookkeeping/office files dated 2012/2013 was approved by the Board on 12/13/2021 and 1/10/2022. Ginger K is currently processing those files and will contact a disposal company when files are ready. Note: Per Records Disposal Schedules some files must be kept permanently.

Office Support

- Staff meetings were held weekly to review staff schedules, priorities and project deadlines, and COVID policy updates.
- Supplies and materials were purchased to support staff and supervisors in the office and during board meetings.
- The Personnel Committee met on 1/11/2022 to finalize edits to the draft personnel policy. The draft personnel policy will be presented to the Board for approval at the January business meeting.
- Samantha and Ginger R researched local IT support options for FCD. Samantha contacted Byte Savvy regarding expiration of the annual service agreement. Samantha met with Weisz Consulting on 1/14/2022.

On-the-Ground Projects

Krause Creek Restoration Project – Phase one construction took place in November 2021. We will monitor the project during the 2022 runoff and plan to implement phase two in fall 2022. Samantha submitted the quarterly status report on 12/10/21 and worked with Ginger K to track in-kind match and pay vendor invoice.

Trumbull Creek – Samantha submitted the quarterly status report on 12/10/21 and worked with Ginger K to track in-kind match and pay vendor invoice. FCD was awarded $25,000 in DNRC Watershed Management Grant funding to support the design of a channel spanning bridge on Birch Grove Road Crossing.

Study of Erosion on the Flathead River – FCD and the Flathead River Commission were awarded $25,000 in DNRC Watershed Management Grant funding for support the erosion study. Samantha and Donna attended and presented to the Water Policy Interim Committee on January 18-19 in Helena.

Programs

Conservation Grant Program – Samantha worked with landowner for CG2021-08 on a plan and request for contract extension.

Seedlings & Native Seed Program – Samantha worked with landowners to plan planting projects and place orders through the Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery and CHS Kalispell. To date, 14 orders have been placed for 1,581 seedlings. Of those, 640 seedlings were purchased with financial assistance from FCD. FCD also provided cost-share assistance for the purchase of 50 lbs. of native grass seed mix.

Watershed Support Program – Samantha and Ginger R attended a site visit with a landowner on Truman Creek (tributary to Ashley Creek) and partners from FWP and the Flathead Land Trust to discuss potential projects and resources available from FCD. A bridge, livestock crossing and fencing, and riparian buffer improvement project is in the planning stages. Samantha and Ginger R shared program information and provided on-site consultation. Samantha also met with the landowner on 1/13/22 to discuss programs and specific questions about application.

Education and Outreach

Living in the Flathead Guidebook and Website
Flathead CD is working with a group of partner agencies and organizations on a booklet and companion website that is intended to be a guide to living in the Flathead. Topics will include living with wildlife, living with wildfire, weed control, responsible recreation, living by water, and more. Samantha provided edits to the draft outline and indicated content that FCD can commit to provide.

Advertisements – FCD ran advertisements in the Flathead Beacon for the College Scholarships Program (12/8/21, 1/13/22) and 310 Permits (12/22/21, 1/27/22). FCD also ran an advertisement in the Mountain Trader for 310 Permits.

Website – Over the past 28 days, the website was viewed 1,580 times by 833 unique users. Our site was reached through organic search (48%), direct access (46%), social media (5%), and

referral from other sites (2%). The most viewed posts/pages beyond the FCD homepage were blog posts about the life history of larch trees, Meeting Minutes, Meeting Agendas and Stream Permitting.

Social Media – Over the past 28 days, the FCD Facebook page gained 1 new follower, posts reached 846 people, and there were 180 post engagements. The FCD Instagram page gained 11 new followers, posts reached 250 accounts, and there were 117 post interactions.

eNewsletter – The Local Dirt was distributed on January 3 to 666 people directly and posted on Facebook. The January issue included information about upcoming events, available programs, conservation tips for the holiday season, and 310 permit information. It was opened 691 times by 281 people and clicked 144 times by 42 people. The most-clicked links were the Montana Soil Health Symposium, the district calendar and information about the Seedlings Program.

Partner Meetings & Support

- Samantha met with partners on the Living in the Flathead Guide on 12/1/21
- Samantha and Ginger R met with agency partners on 12/14/21 about plans for the 2022 Land Stewardship Series (formerly Small Acreage Landowner Workshop)
- Samantha and Ginger R attended a meeting on 12/14/21 with partners from DNRC, Flathead Lakers, MSU, and USFWS to discuss development and implementation of a River Conditions Tool for local watersheds
- Samantha and Ginger R attended the River to Lake Initiative meeting on 12/15/21
- Ginger R attended the Flathead River Commission meeting on 12/16/21
- Samantha met with Sean Johnson regarding FCD collaboration and priorities for 2022 Local Working Group meeting
- Samantha and Donna met with DNRC, MACD, and FWP to coordinate and prepare for the presentation to WPIC
- Samantha attended Nutrient Work Group meetings on 12/8/21, 1/12/22, and 1/26/22
    - 2-hr meetings; total time spent = approx. 8 hrs
    - Request from NWG to provide feedback on draft definitions included in rulemaking framework

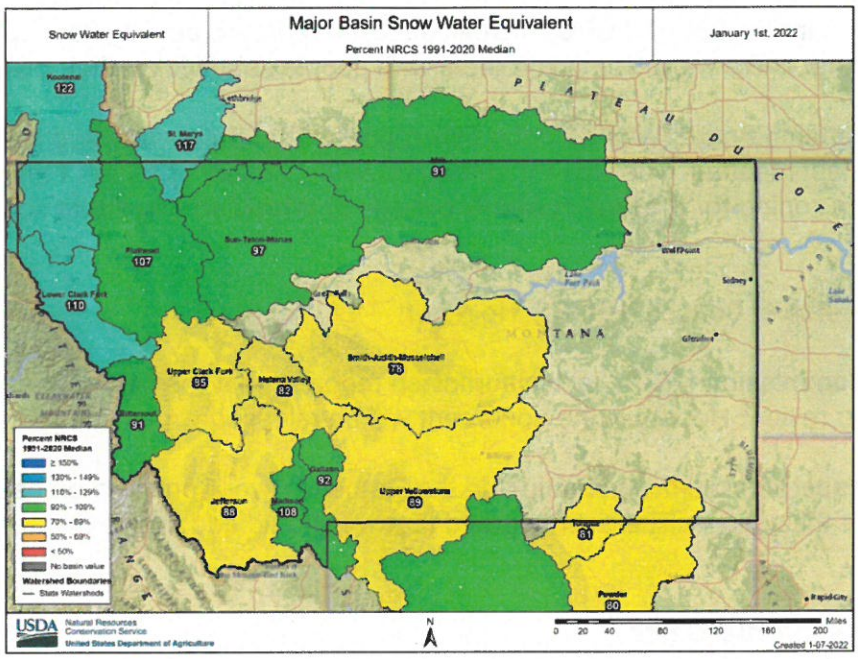
The board discussed the focus of the Flathead River Erosion Study. Water Policy Interim Committee (WPIC) would like to see this study be scalable to the entire state. The Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) and Conservation Districts Bureau (CDB) will spread this message to the state and the FCD will focus on the local problem.

Natural Resources & Conservation Service (NRCS), Sean Johnson reported:

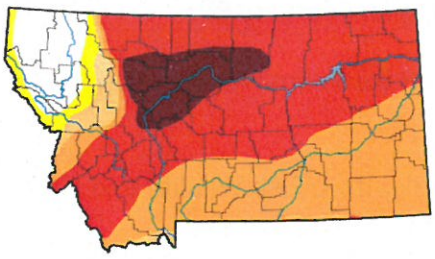
- **Programs**
    - EQIP
        - Signup ended on October 29th for FY22 contracting cycle
            - Good application turnout
    - Joint Chief's – FY22 Funding

        - Still waiting on any notification if we are going to receive the Joint Chief's funding or not 1 12. – Update – Received three year proposal over 1.1 million to treat 350 acres each of the three years.
    - CSP
        - Signup ended on October 29th
- **Review Items**
    - Assisted in peer reviews of 13 submitted TIPs across the Missoula Area last week. Lots of good and creative TIPs being developed.
- **Upcoming Items**
    - Flathead Firesafe meetings – 1/27, 9:00-11:00, 2/24, 9:00-11:00
    - President's Day – 2/21
- **Miscellaneous**
    - Local Working Group meeting
        - Due to COVID, the last LWG meeting was held in 2019. I would like to hold another LWG before field season kicks off…thinking sometime in March. Typically, the FCD involved either in a hosting capacity or in more of an admin role with helping to keep notes and minutes.
    - Flathead County has dropped back down to 50% staff based on current COVID levels. Flathead county currently at 6.46 new cases/10,000 residents. Anything above 5 new cases/10,000 lands us at 50% staffing and anything over 10 new cases/10,000 lands us at 25% staffing.
    - Drought
        - Flathead County is in pretty good shape now with only a small section in the SE corner still showing in the drought monitor.
        - Eastern MT still hasn't fully recovered from the drought although things are trending in the right direction.
    - Snow Survey
        - The Flathead Basin is at 107% of normal so far as of January 1st.

January Water Supply Outlook Report



January Drought Monitor



Map released: Thurs. January 13, 2022

Data valid: January 11, 2022 at 7 a.m. EST

Intensity

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

Authors

United States and Puerto Rico Author(s):
Richard Tinker, NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC

Pacific Islands and Virgin Islands Author(s):
Curtis Riganti, National Drought Mitigation Center

*The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying **text summary** for forecast statements.*

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Conservation Districts Bureau (CDB): Samantha Tappenbeck explained that the newsletter highlighted Hailey Graf as the new CD specialist for west of the continental divide. There is also a new mileage rate.

Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB): Verdell Jackson reported activity has tapered off in the last few months. There were 6 small projects with people subdividing their own properties.

Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB): John Ellis reported that there were two matters discussed at the last meeting. One was for setting up an accessory apartment and the other was setting up the zoning for the land currently outside of Whitefish City limits south on Highway 93.

Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC): No report.

Flathead Basin Commission (FBC): Lech Naumovich reported that the septic leachate study is undergoing a peer review. Hopefully the document will be released within two months.

Samantha Tappenbeck asked if we should add the Flathead River Commission back to the reports section of the agenda. The board agreed that we should add this to the agenda.

MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF

310 Discussion: Scott Rumsey wanted to discuss the 310 process and permitting procedure. He reviewed options for standardizing the review process, including sending all 310 permit applications and information to every supervisor or making it available at the office for supervisors to review ahead of the 310-permit meeting. He also suggested streamlining the presentation of the 310 permits while at the meeting.

This will be discussed further at the special meeting on February 8th.

Gordon Ash suggested that maps and pictures from the Team Member Report should be placed on the large screen television for easier viewing.

It was noted that Kenny Breidinger and Leo Rosenthal from Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) should be a part of this discussion as well.

Vehicle Procurement: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that we had discussed purchasing a vehicle this fiscal year. There are several options, one being acquiring a new vehicle through state procurement. The state is a year out on filling those orders. Procurement Law states that if the purchase of the vehicle is under $80,000 it can be purchased through direct negotiation.

The budget available for the vehicle is approximately $43,000. We are unsure of how much money we will receive on the trade-in. The FCD could also potentially keep the vehicle.

Samantha Tappenbeck and John Ellis will start the shopping process. It was noted that the staff would like a pickup truck.

Local Working Group Meeting: NRCS is interested in FCD being a partner and providing input and assistance for a Local Working Group meeting in March 2022. The board is in favor of participating in this meeting. The board discussed options of where to hold the meeting. It is estimated that 40-50 people will attend.

Nutrient Working Group: Samantha Tappenbeck attended several meetings in December and January. She estimated that this was approximately 8 hours of time. Currently the group is reviewing and providing feedback to the Department of Environment Quality on the draft rulemaking documents. This is potentially a much larger time commitment; however, Samantha will be careful with her time.

The next 310 permit meeting is scheduled for February 14, 2022, at 7:00, P.M. via ZOOM.

Adjournment: Verdell Jackson motioned "to adjourn." John Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

Submitted By:

Virginia Rigdon
Administrative Assistant

Reviewed By:

Samantha Tappenbeck
Interim District Conservationist

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

2/14/22		Vice Chair
(Date)	(Signature)	(Title – Chair etc.)