

## **Petroleum County Conservation District**

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*Local Common Sense Conservation*

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**Jay King** – *Chairman, Brenda Brady, Vice-Chairman & MSCA, Ralph Corbett* – *Urban Supervisor, Rodney Rowton* – *Rural Supervisor, Laura Kiehl* – *Treasurer & MRCDC, Nathan Descheemaeker* – *Supervisor, Diane Ahlgren* – *Associate Supervisor, MWC & MSGOT*

**March 30, 2023**

**Call to order:** Chairman Jay King called the regular meeting of the Petroleum County Conservation District to order at 5:01pm. Those present were Jay King, Brenda Brady, Ralph Corbett and Laura Kiehl. Others in attendance were Butch Arthur, Urban Supervisor Elect, Brent Smith, CEMIST; Laura Nowlin, ACES Operations Coordinator; Katie Lund, PCCD Fiscal Manager; and Trish Smith, PCCD Administrator. Veronica Grigaltchik, DNRC; Molly Masters, MRCDC Coordinator; Bruce Reid, BLM Forester; and Katie Decker, BLM Rangeland Management Specialist, attended virtually. Nate Descheemaeker, Diane Ahlgren and Rodney Rowton were absent.

**Approval of Minutes:** Ralph moved to approve the February 23rd, 2023 regular meeting minutes; Laura seconded. Motion passed.

**Guest/Public Comment:** Moved the Fire Mitigation discussion from Old Business. Forester Bruce Reid, from Lewistown, discussed his upcoming schedule and stated he should be able to get the Fuels Mitigation program going again in Petroleum County sometime this summer. He is already committed to many projects in Fergus and Musselshell County. Trish stated there hasn't been anything done since 2018. Bruce will be back to Montana mid-April and will be starting with site visits the last week of April. May will be his catch-up time for Musselshell Co. appointments. He will touch base with Trish once he is settled and they will plan an in-person meeting. Trish will touch base with Wendy Jones about the Fire Mitigation Meeting she is having in May, and plan to attend to get a better idea/info of the program.

### **Partner Reports:**

**MRCDC:** Molly reported that they are working through their budget and workplan to reapply for the DNRC grant which expires June 30<sup>th</sup>. Planning River Rendezvous with the CMR CWG meeting June 21-22. Registrations will be out in a week. Molly asked the CD Board about Workman's Comp. – where is it being paid from and does the insurance cover just the vehicle or also the home office. It was suggested that she get with Katie Lund to figure out. There was discussion about the PCCD getting a BSWS Corps member and sharing them with the MRCDC. Molly stated that a BSWS member could do more media and outreach with other districts, help with the CMR CWG and Woody Invasive Species Task Force. Housing and office space is still a challenge. Need to apply for a BSWS member in September.

**MWC:** Laura N. stated the new MWC Coordinator hire needs to be approved. It will be discussed in New Business. The next MWC meeting is April 11<sup>th</sup>; Michael Downey, DNRC Water Planner, will be discussing the new state drought plan.

**MSGOT:** Brenda moved to update the Schultz lease to 16 admin hours/year instead of 20, and we will use the same calculation as before to get a new number; Ralph seconded. Motion passed.

**MSU Extension:** No report.

**DNRC:** Veronica introduced herself to Butch Arthur. Administration grants are due April 28<sup>th</sup>, same as last year. Need to update the budget worksheet and get the mill levy signed at the board meeting prior, upload in Submittable. Trish was successful in getting the 2023 Workshop Education Grant. There were 8 grants that came in the last project grant cycle, several over \$10K. Next grant cycle is this fall. April 15<sup>th</sup> quarterly grant reports are due. Been going over CD surveys. The top 3 Priorities were: Personnel: wages, benefits, hours; Programs: soil health, drought resilience, pollinators; and Education & Outreach: youth and marketing.

**NRCS:** No report.

**Pheasants Forever:** Taking applications until April 5<sup>th</sup>, when they would be reviewing them at the ACES Conservation Committee meeting. After that, they will take applications for the next round.

**Winnett ACES:** Laura N. stated there is an All-ACES meeting April 5<sup>th</sup> at 6pm; ACES Board meeting prior at 5pm. Abby Majerus will be discussing the Food and Agriculture Development Center, pollinator study by the USGS at the All-ACES meeting. Sonja Anderson will also be discussing elk numbers and hunting permits for HD 410. Conservation Committee meeting will be April 5<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. The Succession Stories event had 57 attendees and good positive feedback. Kendall is planning soil health events this summer starting the last Tue in May.

**CEMIST:** Brent stated the CEMIST Quarterly meeting is April 19th, Eastern Heath Snail presentation is April 25<sup>th</sup> in Stanford, 1-3pm and there is an AIS monitoring class June 13<sup>th</sup> in Miles City for CD Administrators.

**BLM:** Katie Decker stated they are having a Prairie Restoration Workshop and Field Day (w/ the National Wildlife Federation & Montana Wildlife Federation) May 6<sup>th</sup> from 9am-4pm in Winifred. Classroom time in the AM for intros from organizations/agencies about programs for landowners and in the afternoon will go out to see BLM work that has been done at Rose Creek (LTPRB stream restoration). Gave an update for the two projects in Petroleum County; Tin Can Mastication project has been put on hold and work will continue after July 1, and the Crooked Creek Prescribed Fire project is looking to implement the 3,800-acre prescribed fire to reduce ladder fuels and conifer density – prep to start in April/May. Jay asked if the BLM has any record or surveys to show how many people come on to BLM land in Petroleum County in a year as compared to Fergus and other counties. Katie stated that they do not collect that info, just info from camp grounds.

**Supervisor Reports:**

**Brenda Brady:** No report.

**Laura Kiehl:** Molly and Laura met with the NRCS/DNRC/MACD March 9<sup>th</sup> in Helena (Core partners) and discussed different project ideas. Suggested that these groups help administrators with the grant work.

**Ralph Corbett:** Picked up the saw blade from the CD. He will start getting clips made up for the CD sometime this spring when it warms up.

**Jay King:** The HB321 was passed through appropriations. HB321 details were discussed. HB295 (Nepotism Bill) passed all the way to the senate.

**Diane Ahlgren:** No report.

**Rodney Rowton:** No report.

**Nate Descheemaeker:** No report.

**Old Business:**

- A. **Fire Mitigation Program:** Discussed prior in Public Comment.
- B. **Long-Range Plan:** Will meet at 4:30 before the next meeting to go over.
- C. **Workshops (Applicators Class & Gardening W.S.) & Grant Update:** Trish stated that we were awarded \$2425 for the Petroleum Co CD Spring 2023 Educational Program Grant that she applied for in March. The Gardening Workshop is May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1-3pm and the Applicators Class is May 4<sup>th</sup>, 3-5pm.
- D. **Ladies Day on the Range:** Trish went over the LDOTR event. Those putting on presentations include several Rancher Ladies, Rebecca Woodford and Kendall Wojcik. Topics include animal nutrition, Range/Science & Plant Health, etc. It is scheduled for June 5<sup>th</sup>.
- E. **310 Updates:** Still need the Supervisor Decision cover sheet from Garfield County signed by their board. The Browning 310 was tabled until the next meeting. Ralph moved to approve the Nowlin 310 application; Laura K. seconded. Motion passed.
- F. **Irrigators Grant Update:** Trish started preliminary entry (all that she can do on her end) and waiting for water users for project and history information to get the application finished.
- G. **CEMIST – Admin additional hours:** Ralph moved to approve additional hours for the administrator through CEMIST not to exceed \$7500 by September 2024; Brenda seconded. Motion passed.
- H. **Rollings Rivers Trailer:** Trish stated she is working on a date in July that works for both the CD and Lance with the summer Youth Group program. July is the soonest that the RR trailer is available. That day will also include other informational stations from NRCS, BLM, FWP, CEMIST, etc.

**New Business:**

- A. **CD Insurance:** Katie talked to Scot Scolberg from Lewistown insurance. He sent in all the paperwork to the company but can't quote until 90 days prior to expiration; expires in July. Hoping to have a quote before the admin. grant is due. Chris from Rocky Mtn Insurance has all our paperwork and will hopefully have two different options. Veronica mentioned it will probably be double of what we have had before.
- B. **Urban Supervisor Appointment (Butch Arthur):** Trish will need to get minutes from the Town of Winnett. Will vote to approve Butch at the next meeting.
- C. **Administrative Grant/TA Grant:** Katie said she is waiting to finalize figures after the end of

this month and after the reimbursement comes in to see where we are at. She will send out the spreadsheet to review to be finalized at the next meeting, and Trish and Katie will be working on getting it submitted April 28<sup>th</sup> on Submittable. Trish will talk to Meg about if we should be applying for another TA grant in September. Brenda & Katie mentioned giving Loyd Bantz a raise.

- D. Legislative Bills Letter of Support – General Board approval:** Jay discussed having a general approval for all letters of support on legislative bills that the board approves of in future legislations. Laura moved to allow the administrator to send out letters of support requested by MACD, that the board has already preapproved for specific bills, without board approval each time; Ralph seconded. Motion passed.
- E. Tree Orders(s):** Trish stated that there was only one tree order and they ended up deciding to not go through the CD when it came time to discuss delivery and pickup and had it shipped directly to Billings where they are located. Jay discussed the possibility of the CD purchasing and selling individual trees in the future.
- F. Area 1 Meeting/PCCC reservation & down payment:** Brenda moved to pay the downpayments for workshops and meetings at the PCCC; Ralph seconded. Motion passed.
- G. USGS Biologist crew – PCCD WIFI use April-July:** There were questions on their usage such as would they need to be using it in the building or just outside the building, what all they would be using the internet for (downloading large files, or just emails- general use) and how often. The CD doesn't have unlimited data. Trish will send on the board's questions.
- H. Approval of recommendation (MWC Board) MWC Coordinator:** Ralph moved to recommend to hire Allison Martin to be the project Coordinator for MWC; Brenda seconded. Motion passed.
- I. Closed Session - CD Schedule:** Moved to the item number XIII in the agenda since it is a closed session with the Board and Administrator. Ralph moved to approve the telework agreement; Brenda seconded. Motion passed.

#### **Administrative:**

- A. Grant Updates:** The Board looked over the updated Grant Summary sheet. Laura stated that the WMG will be closed out before Allison Martin starts her MWC Coordinator position. There was discussion about the CIP Petrolia Grant. Trish will call Lindsay Volpe to see if we need to be requesting a final invoice.
- B. District Updates:** The Board went over the administrator monthly update sheet. Finally able to get back into the suspended NRCS computer with Reba Ahlgren's help; since unlocked Trish was able to set up an appointment for starting the process to get her government LincPass. There was discussion on options for putting together a more user friendly PCCD website for the administrator/others. Trish will ask Eric Ranstad if he is able to do updates on a different program than WordPress (through MACD) if he was given the username/password (in the event Trish is unable to), and will bring the cost of getting a domain for a new website to the next board meeting.
- C. Telework Agreement:** Moved to the item number XIII in the agenda since it is a closed

session with the Board and Administrator.

**Financial:**

- A. **Petroleum CD:** Katie stated that QuickBooks is requiring an upgrade every year. She needs to upgrade before May 31 (2023 version) and it is \$549 annually. The cost can be split between the CD and her other clients. Ralph moved to approve Katie purchasing QuickBooks and sharing the cost between clients; Laura seconded. Motion passed.

Ralph moved to pay PCCD unpaid bills; Laura seconded. Motion passed.

- B. **Missouri River CD Council:** Ralph moved to pay MRCDC unpaid bills; Brenda Seconded. Motion passed.

**Correspondence:** None.

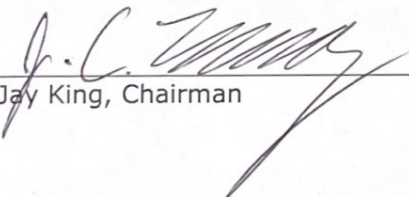
**Announcements:**

- A. Next Board meeting: Thursday, April 27, 2023. 4:30 Long Range Plan, then regular meeting at 5pm. (Location to be determined)

**EXECUTIVE SESSION (Closed Session):**

- A. **CD Schedule:** An updated CD office schedule was discussed.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 8:34pm.

  
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Jay King, Chairman

  
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Trish J. Smith, District Administrator