



Meeting Minutes December 14th, 2022

Supervisors Present	Employees Present
Bill Naegeli, Chairman	Sarah Busmire
Terry Hightower	Advisors Present
Mindy Ferrell	Arthur Potts
Sean Moran (Zoom)	Jason Blakney
	Dillon Martini (Zoom)
Associate Supervisors Present	Visitors Present
	Kristen Wing
	Mary Reed
	Jeff Reed
	Nancy Mehaffie

Meeting called to order at 6:00p.m.

Meeting Agenda items not always taken in order that they appear.

Introductions

- This meeting will be recorded.

Minutes From October 19th, 2022 Meeting

- A motion to approve October 19th, 2022 meeting minutes was made by Sean, 2nd by Mindy. Motion carried.

Financial Report

- The financial report was sent to all Supervisors prior to the meeting.
- The financial report was reviewed in its entirety.
- A motion to approve the financial report for October and November 2022 was made by Mindy, 2nd by Terry. Motion carried.
- A motion to approve all invoices for November and December 2022 was made by Mindy, 2nd by Sean. Motion carried.

Administrator's Report:

Insurance policy through MACO

- Administrator described why we were losing coverage and that other districts in Montana are too. Montana Association of Conservation Districts is working on this as well to find a solution. The coverage is good until June 30, 2023. She will keep the board posted on this.

Quotes for printer

- Discussion was had over deciding what printer to choose. Refurbished was mentioned as was buying one directly from a company or from J2 Office Solutions.

- A motion was made that Sarah will do more research, that GMCD will allocate \$1000 towards a printer and will make a consensus over email of which printer to pick was made by Bill, 2nd by Mindy. Motion carried.

Key lock code for door/locksmith

- Discussion was had over a key pad door lock and the supervisors agreed it would be better than the current situation. Bill would be willing to install it to save costs.

Associate supervisors

- Mindy would like to be an associate supervisor as would Sean.
- A motion was made for Sean Moran and Melinda Ferrell to become associate supervisor members in January 2023 was made by Bill, 2nd by Terry. Motion carried.

Purchase of office supplies

- Administrator plans on buying office supplies for the coming year. Should be around \$100, maybe \$200 depending on how much she purchases. Board of supervisors said this is fine.

Adding and removing bank signatures

- Must be in minutes to change the names at the bank for who signs the checks. Remove Mindy and Sean from checking and add the new supervisors. Will go into effect in January.
- A motion to remove Melinda Ferrell and Sean Moran from the bank signature list and add Kristen Wing, Mary Reed and Nancy Mehaffie to the bank signature list was made by Mindy, 2nd by Sean. Motion carried.

Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group (LCFWG) Report

- A discussion was had about the different ways that LCFWG works with GMCD and other stakeholders in a collaborative effort. Grants and projects were discussed.
- Brita presented the Supplemental Agreement for the Harlow Ranch Irrigation Diversion Upgrade grant which is an Irrigation Development Grant through Montana DNRC.
- A motion to sign the Supplemental Agreement between GMCD and the LCFWG for the Harlow Ranch Irrigation Diversion Upgrade was made by Mindy, 2nd by Terry. Motion carried.
- Discussion about the MOU for Montana Watershed Coordination Council and GMCD was had.
- A motion to sign the MOU between MWCC and GMCD was made by Mindy, 2nd by Terry. Motion carried.
- Discussion was had over the Big Sky Watershed Corp member, their stipend from MCC and how much money has been funded so far
- Proposed to have host site fee covered from DNRC grant which has already been received. Then convert the MWCC cost share to a housing stipend for the member and then we have \$6000 between GMCD and LCFWG to cover for the host site fee.
- Arthur said that a spot at the RV park may be available, but they would need to supply their own RV.
- Details will be worked out and GMCD can formally approve something in January and have a motion then. By then we will know what funding sources are confirmed and get contract dates.
- Updates were given on the Vermillion River presentation events held in Thompson Falls.

Montana FWP

- Jason said they have been slowing down in the field and they are working on the annual fishing newsletter. They summarized about 5-years of data from the fish ladder and returns of trout. The furthest fish was caught in the Blackfoot River. Maybe 50% of anglers return the tag numbers and

tag loss is at about 17%. This project is dependent on anglers returning their fishing data from the tags. There will be 1 more year of data collection and then they will Floy tag more next year.

- Fourth grade classrooms have been visited by Abigail, which consists of 6 presentation and fish dissection. The program concludes with a fishing day. She has been to every school in the county besides Noxon, which they are working on.

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Update

- See attached report.

Arista Utilities Update

- Arthur reported that right now they are wrapping up 22 reports, annual Implantation plans for 2023 and outlining goals for next year. First of the year TRTAC and WRTAC meeting will be held in January for voting on proposed projects which will get sent to the Management Committee in March. Nate Hall, license manager, is retired and new manager is Monica Ott. She has been with Avista for 4 years working on the Spokane River. She started officially on December 5th.

North Western Energy (NWE) Update

- Nothing to report.

Public Education

- Mindy was able to generate more contacts for outdoor education in northwestern Montana. She shared this with Joel Ramsey at Noxon High School for his Natural Resource class. She also shared this with the administrator at GMCD.

Supervisor Education

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Old Business

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Building Repair/Grounds Maintenance

-

310 Activities

SW-13-22 Kowalski

- Administrator gave update from email about native seed mix not having time to come up because of cold temperatures and weather. Mr. Kowalski will check back in with us in the spring on the reseeding.

SW-26-21 Palm

- A motion to consider SW-26-21 Palm a completed project was made by Terry, 2nd by Mindy. Motion carried.

New Business

-

A motion to adjourn at 7:32pm was made by Terry, 2nd by Mindy. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah Busmire

Sarah Busmire
Administrator

Approved.

Wilhelm D. Naegeli

Bill Naegeli
Chairman



LOWER CLARK FORK WATERSHED GROUP

November 2022 Report

Brita Olson, Coordinator

Overview: We finished our field season in early November and wrapped our last funding proposals up. Thanks to everyone who helped contributed to project and funding proposal development this fall. It was a big effort, but will hopefully set us up well for continued collaborative watershed work in the Bull, Vermillion and Thompson Rivers over the next year and change.

Meetings/Training

- No meetings this month

Outreach

Websites

- LCFWG Website (www.lowerclarkforkwatershedgroup.org / www.lcfwg.org): Contractor Beth DiBenedetto is working on a draft website revision, which will be reviewed over the next few months and finalized likely early in the new year. This will help improve the mobile accessibility of the website.

Private landowner outreach:

- Continued supporting the Irrigation Develop Grant / Diversion Upgrade project on Sqaylth-Kwum Creek. Morrison-Maierle provided an update on November 11, 2022.
- Continued participating in interview process for the Big Sky Watershed Corps program. The member who accepts a position with GMCD and LCFWG will contribute to the Private Land Stewardship program in 2023.

Community Outreach

- *Watershed Wednesdays are the second Wednesday of every month at Limberlost Brewing around 4:00 PM (this is Brita's official sounding name for unofficial networking and comradery). The next Watershed Wednesday is December 14!*
- *Tshirts and stickers are also on sale at Limberlost Brewing in Thompson Falls – pick one up to represent the watershed and benefit our work!*
- Gave a presentation about the Vermillion River on November 9 at 1 PM MST at the Thompson Falls Library.
- Hosted Vermillion River presentation / film showing on November 12 at 6 PM MST at the Limberlost Brewery.

Grants/funding/proposals

Amazon Smile

- *Support the Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group when you shop through Amazon by using Amazon Smile. Access Amazon through smile.amazon.com and add Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group as your preferred beneficiary. Save smile.amazon.com as a bookmark so that you support our work every time you make an Amazon purchase. This link will take you right to our profile: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/41-2136925>. You can also add us to Amazon Smile on your mobile app.*

Awarded Funds / Under Contract:

- GMCD was selected by Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) as a host site for a Big Sky Watershed Corps member and has signed an MOU with MCC for this position. We are still awaiting a member assignment. The first two members declined the position, we have interviewed two additional candidates, and are hoping to have one accept in early December.

Awarded Funds / Pending contract:

- Warrington NRCS EQIP contract is finalized, and we'll be hoping to finalize a new landowner agreement with the Warringtons for that work this fall or early winter.
- GMCD was awarded \$6,000 in cost-share funding for a Big Sky Watershed Corps member from the Montana Watershed Coordination Council and we are awaiting contracting.
- Was awarded \$50,000 from the DNRC Reclamation and Development Grant program planning grant program to support the development of a robust Project Effectiveness Monitoring program associated with Vermilion River restoration efforts
- Montana Department of Environmental Quality 319 Program proposal to support revegetation efforts in the Bull River over the next three years, including capacity for expansion of work through the Big Sky Watershed Corps program, MCC crews, and our Project ASCENT internship program was recommended for full funding, pending the state receives a similar 319 award from the EPA as they have in years past.
- DNRC Conservation District Project proposal to support a Big Sky Watershed Corps Member, Project ASCENT internship, and GMCD Administrator time was also fully funded. This will provide match for the Big Sky Watershed Corps proposal as well as match for a 319 proposal for Bull River Revegetation.

Pending proposals/requests:

- Dave and Karen Nye completed an EQIP application to the NRCS, which is likely to support ongoing revegetation efforts in 2023-2025.
- Submitted four 2023 Project Plans for funding through the Clark Fork Settlement Agreement in 2023, to support survey and design on the Vermilion River, projects coordination and restoration maintenance activities.
- Submitted Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Future Fisheries Improvement Program proposal to support Bull River revegetation efforts. MFWP staff recommended proposal for full funding. Agency review panel meets in mid-December.
- Submitted funding proposals to the NorthWestern Bull Trout Mitigation Fund and Montana Watershed Coordination Council for Thompson River road consolation stakeholder engagement and project development.
- Proposals to the Sanders County RAC program were submitted to support Vermilion River survey and design and project effectiveness monitoring efforts as well as Bull River revegetation maintenance efforts.

Upcoming proposals/requests (Susan and Ruth, as Clark Fork Grant Writers, are providing Sarah and I much assistance with the following):

- Working to support the Kootenai National Forest's proposal for Collaborative Aquatic Landscape Restoration Program (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds) which would support Vermilion River Restoration and Project Effectiveness Monitoring – RFP is anticipated sometime in 2023

Completed reports:

- CFSA Work Summaries – Appendix B and E Annual Work Summaries were completed. Working with Arthur Potts to complete Appendix K Annual Work Summary in early December.

Upcoming reports:

- Sims Meander 319 Annual Report – Due December 15
- Other annual reports due by year-end or sooner

Projects

Beaver Creek

- Kootenai National Forest continues work to design project to address instabilities associated with the 301 Bridge
- Sarah visited Young Conservation Easement with NRCS in early November to assist with installation of browse protection on some past plantings and to help identify any opportunities for LCFWG/GMCD to support planting efforts or other stewardship opportunities on the property.

Blue Creek

Bull River

- Completed a draft Bull River Revegetation Plan and sent out to stakeholders for review. The document will be finalized in early December.
- Bull River Revegetation Projects on private lands:
 - Working to finalize reporting on 425 plantings completed this year.
 - Will be drafting/updating site specific plans and landowner agreements for all properties over the coming months.
 - Plan to purchase and stage materials at GMCD over the winter.
- National Forest (KNF) lands:
 - Will plan for continued plantings on Kootenai National Forest property along the East Fork Bull River in 2023.
 - Planning to support maintenance activities downstream of the guard station and further planting along the East Fork Bull River in 2023.
- Will be working to inventory and maintain all plantings in the Bull River in 2023-2025 in addition to completing 500 additional plantings per year.

Sqaylth-kwum Creek

- Irrigation Development Project: Consultant continues modeling and design work in coordination with the water user and landowner. Provided a report on progress in mid-November.

Graves Creek

- Revegetation plan for Graves Creek Weir: Checked in with Avista. Will plan to monitor success of plantings in the spring, and plan for any further efforts needed in 2023.

Prospect Creek

- Upper Prospect: Informal monitoring visit made early in the month – project partners will complete full post-project monitoring in 2023.
- YPL Bank Stabilization: No activity this month; however, the Lolo National Forest and Trout Unlimited may have completed some minor maintenance following some erosion sustained at the upper end of the project during spring's high water.

Vermilion River

- Sims Meander Project: Gave presentation at the Thompson Falls Library on November 9 and at Limberlost Brewing Company on November 12.
- Chapel Slide/Miners Gulch Project: No activity this month.

- Vermilion River Restoration and Project Effectiveness Monitoring (2023-2026): Reviewed a few potential funding sources; was awarded DNRC planning grant.

Thompson River

- Loneman Creek Riparian Fencing Project: No activity this month.
- Fishtrap Creek Projects (West Fork Fishtrap Creek Road Realignment, Fishtrap (LWD) Habitat Enhancement, Beartrap Creek Road Storage): Planted approximately 125 (including willow and dogwood stakes) around the lower crossing on Beartrap Creek in early November. Completed final reporting and invoicing for Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y).
- Beatrice Road Project: Participated in a post-project debrief with the Lolo National Forest and Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative. Planted approximately 125 (including willow and dogwood stakes) around the lower crossing on Beartrap Creek in early November. Completed final reporting and invoicing for Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y).
- Upper Mainstem Thompson River Revegetation: No activity this month; hope to visit with Franz Ingelfinger in the coming year and assess opportunities for further work.
- Thompson River Road Investigation: LCFWG and TU plan to host a meeting among key stakeholders (LNF, Green Diamond, DNRC, and Sanders County) in late January or early February. Applied for funds from NorthWestern's Thompson Falls TAC and Montana Watershed Coordination Council's Capacity Fund to support this targeted coordination and follow-up in 2023.

LCF Stream Restoration Summary (1995-2022)

- No activity this month, but aim to complete this project in 2023.

Green Mountain Conservation District Meeting
NRCS Report
December 9, 2022

- Working on redoing our long range plan based on our discussions from the Local Working Group Meeting.
- Beginning work on applications we have received for next year. We ended up with applications for all of our current TIPs
- NRCS is expected to see an increase in budget as a result of the IRA. Lot of numbers being thrown around and no one knows just what will happen, but it is expected we could see a substantial increase.
- Currently working on writing 2 new TIPs in Sanders County
 - Improvements to do intensive grazing on pivots for Lake County and the Hot Springs area
 - A pilot project on invasive grass control in the Camas Prairie and Little Bitterroot Areas. Hopefully we can learn how to deal with this resource issue through the pilot project and expand it to other parts of the county. Ventenata is the primary focus.
- Meeting with Dave Wroblewski from the Lolo NF to discuss a potential application for a Joint Chiefs project.
- Working on document that outlines current NRCS funding opportunities for producers in Sanders County...I haven't touched this document in since the last meeting, but it is still on my to-do list
- Administering a number of active forestry contracts; high tunnel contracts, CSP contracts, and a few active irrigation contracts
- Working on some conservation technical assistance regarding forest management plans.
- CSP Payments are all processed for this year
- Urban ag push within NRCS

Thank you,
Dillon

Dillon Martini
District Conservationist
Plains Field Office