



Final Minutes

Regular Board Meeting **1 PM** February 20th, 2017
Madison Valley Public Library Community Room

1. **Call meeting to order:** 1:06 pm
2. **Supervisors Present:** Mel McKittrick, Janet Endecott, Bob Sitz, Neil Kent, Nick Dyk, Kaye Suzuki, Jessie Wiese
3. **Staff Present:** Sunni Heikes-Knapton, Ethan Kunard, Cori Koenig
4. **Others:** Dan Durham, NRCS, Ginger and Kyle Nelson
1. **Supervisor Oaths of Office: Neil, Nick, Kaye:**
 - a. Sherriff Thompson was present and administered oaths of office to Neil Kent, Nick Dyk, and Kaye Suzuki. Colten will perform his oath prior to the next meeting.
2. **Review minutes from previous meeting:** There were several name spellings and grammatical changes. Kaye moves to accept as amended. Neil seconds. All in favor and motion passes.
3. **Financial:** Janet read the financial report & reviewed recent bills. She showed a budget vs. actual revenues and expenses as of February for everyone's information. Nick moves to accept financial report as presented. Kaye seconds. All in favor and motion passes.
4. **Public Comment:** Sunni read an anonymous letter MCD had received regarding Moores Creek and the gorge this year and explained that she wrote an article for Natural Resource News on "What Causes Gorging and why this year we have seen particular evidence of gorging."
5. **Business:**
 - a. **17-01: Moores Creek Lyons:** Mel and Dave Moser visited the site last week. Upstream bridges for the project are approved as long as they are full span and there is no disturbance of the bed and banks. Permit to expire June 1st, 2018. Nick moves to approve 17-01 as proposed. Janet seconds. All in favor and motion passes.
 - b. **17-02 Channels:** Mel and Dave visited the site last week. Dave Moser did not believe there was live water and therefore not a project for CD, he thinks it's a Corps of Engineers project. Mel suggested the Clarks get a rate of flow prior to any work being done and ensure that this does not affect water rights. Kaye moves to table and suggest to Clarks get a rate of flow from the Corps of Engineers.
 - c. **17-03: Cedar Creek Ranch:** Mel and Dave visited the site last week. Cedar Creek Ranch wants to clean out the diversion so that the water can get to their head gate. They will have to cross the creek to get material into the ditch. Dave and Mel recommended they complete the project prior to May 1. Janet moves to approve #17-03 with modification for the work to be completed by May 1st, 2017. Kaye seconds. All in favor and motion passes.
 - d. **Wachs Ponds:** Mel received a phone call from a potential buyer wondering about some old ponds. Mel spoke to Ron Spoon and they decided no action is needed at this time. Bob explained that the previous land owner has already gone through mediation. Any new projects on the ponds will require a permit.
 - e. **Monthly time spent on 310's:** Mel reported 10 hours spent.
6. **Equipment Rental Invoices/Income:** Bob reported that Colten has called about purchasing a pivot tracker. Oteco Manufacturing might sell us two for approximately \$11,000 each. Bob suggested that we make a sign asking not to fill over ½ full? Bob suggested a contract with a walk around, Sunni spoke of another CD with deposit fee. Bob will donate his trailer for Colten and Lane to go pick up. Kaye moves to order a track filler from Oteco Manufacturing in Wheatland, Wyoming not to exceed \$12,000. Neil seconds. All in favor and motion passes.

7. Sunni asked Nick if they should be talking of a video for harrow and seeder. Mel suggested putting the equipment back on Craigslist in eastern Montana and down in Wyoming.

8. Old Business and Reports:

- a. **Young Couples Ag Conference:** Kyle and Ginger Nelson presented on the conference. Three days filled with good information. They were able to network with many other ag couples and found the time spent valuable. The Nelsons provided a list of other potential couples who may benefit from the experience.
- b. **Banquet:** Sunni reported on the returned sponsors and supervisors' responsibilities in getting them returned. The Round Barn is letting RVCD and MCD use the facility for the cost of a cleaning facility. Wylie and the Wild West will be performing. Sunni and Rebecca Ramsey are corresponding regularly about the planning efforts.
- c. **Recommended Conservation Practices**
 - **Education? Implementation? Website? :** Ethan reported on Lewis and Clark Conservation District website, showing their education efforts and showed a prototype for our website. There was discussion on how to proceed. Ethan will bring another draft for resources on our website to the next meeting.
- d. **Moores Creek Lyons Contract:** Sunni presented contract #2017-02 with the MOU attached. Sunni met with the landowner, David Lyons last week. She will email the contract out to supervisors for review. The project will move forward if there are no changes in contract from supervisors. Return to Sunni within the next week.
- e. **MWCC-Partnership Program Dues:** Ethan presented. He and Janet spoke and paid dues as a partner as MWCC. The partnership has already paid off in discounts at conferences. Kaye moves to pay MWCC Partnership Program dues. Bob seconds. All in favor and the motion passes.
- f. **DNRC Drought Resilience Contract:** Ethan presented the DNRC contract. It will pay for his time on the Drought Resiliency Project. The contract will end August 2018. Kaye moves to move ahead with signing contract with DNRC for Drought Resilience Contract. Neil seconds. All in favor and the motion passes.

9. New Business:

- a. **Board tours: June- Big Sky:** Mel would like to schedule a Sunday for supervisors to tour Yellowstone Club and Big Sky. **Fall- Lyons and Goggins projects:** Dan suggested going out while the Millers are actually working to see project in action. We could do this on a night prior to a meeting. The board will schedule dates at an upcoming meeting.
- b. **Comment Period for South Gravelly Allotments- Letter from USFS:** There was discussion on the letter from the USFS regarding the DEIS for the South Gravelly AMP Update for public comment. MCD would like to send a letter of support similar to the Ruby Valley CD's letter. Sunni will draft a letter and Kaye and Bob will review it before it is sent.
- c. **Chamber of Commerce Membership:** Kaye moves to join the Chamber of Commerce for one year as a trial period. Bob seconds. All in favor and motion passes.
- d. **April Meeting Schedule:** We will return to a 7:00 pm meeting time in April.
- e. **Bear Creek Days May 16, 17, 18 (MCD Day):** Sunni presented. In the past, supervisors have been there to serve lunch.

10. Correspondence: 3:00 Review correspondence to date; discuss and respond as necessary.

- a. Science Fair Thank You's were reviewed.

11. NRCS Report: Dan was here to present.

- a. SNOTEL data was presented for the Madison. Snowpack has improved in the last month. More detailed information is available online.
- b. Projects: He is working on getting projects funded. There are a couple of irrigation projects, pollinator projects, steam/wetland projects in the works. They are working on a large project on Clear Creek in the Ruby. A few more landowners signed up to work on conifer encroachment on VC hill. Conifer removal contractors do good work for a fair price if anyone needs work done.

- c. Informational: Dan shared a scientific article *Consider the Value of Plant Nutrients in Your Hay and Corn Silage* by Glenn E. Shewmaker.
- d. Farm Bill will get renewed. Encourage producers in how the Farm Bill affects them and push that up the ladder. Be vocal about conservation part of budget.

12. Supervisors Report: Nick reported on the recent Cheatgrass Workshop. He reported good attendance and, he thought they would be further along with the studies for biological controls. Neil reported on the Madison Watershed Partnership joint meeting. Nichole made an excellent report and he feels our investment is her and the GROWW program is sound.

13. Staff/Project Report (see below)

14. Closed session at 3:45 pm

Cori Koenig, Administrator

Mel McKittrick, Co-Chair

Upcoming dates:

Pesticides and Pollinators Workshop: March 15th

Stewardship Nomination Due: March 10

CD Banquet: April 22nd

Conservation Film Fest: June 8th

Ethan Kunard – Staff Report February 20, 2017

Madison Stream Team – Madeline and I have been working on finishing up the report for 2016. The report should be finalized, and made available in March. Our final contract deliverables for 2016 will close out at the end of February. Additionally, we will soon begin our planning for the 2017 monitoring. We will have to meet with project partners to determine the objectives for the monitoring this year, and determine the priority locations for monitoring.

Watershed Planning Guidance Document – We submitted the final draft of the guidance document to SWCDM for review. Once approved, the document will be available to conservation districts and watershed groups around Montana to assist their development of Watershed Restoration Plans. Additionally, once approved by DEQ and SWCDM we can bill for my full time spent on the document, \$2,000.

Madison Watershed Planning – We held our first meeting for the watershed planning project on January 25th (See attached handout for a meeting summary). We had around 30 attendees at the meeting, and received some useful feedback. Using feedback from meeting participants, as well as stakeholders we've interviewed, we're developing a watershed characterization that can help us better understand past, present, and future conditions related to water and water use. Some of the things that will be included in this characterization include: groundwater assessments, well mapping, SNOTEL analysis, subdivision buildout, irrigation uses, water quality impairments, past and present restoration work, BMPs that have been successfully implemented, and future climate predictions. This characterization, along with stakeholder feedback, will help us determine priority locations and topics to focus our planning efforts.

Additionally, we are working on putting together public forums/meetings on topics that have been of greatest interest to stakeholders. These topics include: groundwater & surface water connectivity in the Madison (also looking at the effects of development and different irrigation techniques on groundwater), how climate predictions might impact agriculture and fisheries in the Madison, and example BMPs for large and small acreage landowners to better utilize water. I'm reaching out to potential speakers now, and we hope to begin the first of these meetings in late March, followed by meetings in April and May.

Madison CD Recommended Management Practices – At the last meeting the board discussed changing the focus of the recommended practices to being primarily educational. We will be working to develop a page on the website to house information and links guides that we recommend as beneficial practices for resource management.

Sunni Heikes-Knapton: Watershed Coordinator

Lower Jack Creek: NorthWestern Energy voted to approve an additional \$15K for the project, bringing their total contribution to \$63k. The February 14th meeting was cancelled, as all parties were not able to be present in person. We need to discuss some issues and develop a plan to move forward to develop a final design, which will be presented to the landowners in May.

Channel Migration Zone: I read through the final report and provided comments to Tony. The maps were also reviewed and editing/formatting suggestions were made and submitted to Tony. Final maps will be presented at a later date.

Moore's Creek Lyons: This project is in the permitting phase. An MOU with NRCS, MCD, and the landowner has been developed and a contract goes with it. This will need to be reviewed and approved.

Landowner Workshops: Cheatgrass workshop in Harrison is (was) February 15th. The pollinator and pesticide is March 15th in Ennis.

2017 Banquet: Sponsorship responses are coming in. Please look at the updated list to date. Those who received your letters will need a phone call from you by March 1. For any major sponsors who donate, we MUST HAVE their logos by March 5th. Tickets will be available for purchase after March 10th at our office.

2017 Stewardship Award: There is a nomination in the works currently- others are encouraged. Nominations are due by 5 PM March 10, and we will select the winner at our March 20th CD Meeting.

GROWW Coordinator: Nichole did a great presentation at the Madison Watershed Partnership Meeting on January 31st. Thanks to Neil for attending. She will be taking a maternity leave, and then coming back in spring to plan for Good Thymes Camp and to plant the school garden.

Riparian Restoration Planning: Madison River Foundation has scheduled a planting day for May 15th on some a property downstream from the McAtee Bridge. We are also getting a price for LiDAR survey as a potential complement to future planting efforts.

Conservation Film Fest: I have been discussing an opportunity with Rebecca and Jon Osbourne (Ruby Valley Resident) on a potential film festival evening on June 8th in Virginia City. It would be an evening event from 6-8 PM featuring a collection of short films that relate to natural resource management in our area, with perhaps a discussion by groups who to the work or the filmmakers themselves. Tickets will probably be \$10.

Missouri Headwaters Partnership: We need to decide who will be the signee on the MHP by laws for our area: MCD, MVRG, or MRF.

Madeline Pruszenski: BSWC

Stream Team Report: Organized the data collected from last year into the 2016 report. Currently, it is in the final stages and should be finished shortly.

Work Plan: I made an outlined work plan for this year. Tasks include: watershed characterization process, plan for and participate with the 2017 Madison Stream Team, help with the GROWW program in the summer, and continue working on the watershed restoration plan.

Watershed Characterization: For the Watershed restoration plan, I have been starting to compile information to address the issues in the Madison including climate change, streamflow, population growth and development, land use, and snowpack.

Cori: Administrator:

I've been working on various administrative tasks.

Banquet: We've been getting banquet sponsors back. See Sunni's report.

Website Profile: Mel, Bob, Colten please finish these before you leave today.

Photo Contest: We will be running this starting March 1st. Photos will be due March 30th, the contest will close April 14th.