



YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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yellowstoneconservationdistrict.org

**YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD MEETING
AGENDA**

May 21, 2025

YCD office, Suite #2, 1670 South 48th St. West, Billings, MT

1:00 p.m.

1. Call YCD board meeting to order
2. Agenda Changes – move 310 agenda item Joy Stevens, Alkali Creek to a closed session to discuss litigation
3. Close meeting to the public
4. Open meeting to public – 1:30pm
 - all issues will be addressed to the Chairman; public comments are always welcome but request that you wait until the issue is addressed on the agenda, asked to be recognized by the chair, and then limit comments to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on any item, not on the agenda. Attendees, please identify yourselves
5. Oath of Office – Leroy Gabel
6. Minutes Approval – April 8, 2025
7. YCD Board member absences
8. 310's
 - Applications/Emergencies/Complaints/Work Completion forms
 - Joy Stevens, Alkali Creek – Status update: Request for Judicial Review
 - YE-14-25-E – Karen & George Yost, Canyon Creek
 - Other 310 Business & Committee Reports
 - Yellowstone River Conservation Districts Council – Leroy Gabel
9. YCD/Agencies - supplementary information to agency reports received & provided to Supervisors before meeting
 - Administrator's Report
 - YCD/PF Report
 - DNRC
 - FWP
 - NRCS
 - Yellowstone County
 - Commissioners
 - Extension
 - Floodplain
 - Weed District
10. Business Meeting
 - Old Business
 - Legislature Session – SB472 final version
 - Irrigation Leader Magazine – review draft interview - Gabel
 - New Business
 - Grant Request from Rocky Mountain College for BBWA cleanup efforts
 - Occupational Accident & Business travel insurance discussion
 - New equipment: Discuss need for new printer
 - Treasurer's Report
 - T-Report – April 2025
 - Dues and/or donation requests
 - DNRC: Request 310 funds
 - Travel and meetings approval
 - Pollinator Workshop in Bozeman - Haaland
11. Standing Committees/Programs
 - Westend Reservoirs – DNRC grant #RD-YCD-712 – discuss & approve time extension request
 - Arbor Day & Lockwood FFA tree giveaway events – final reports
 - Pollinator Fair, June 20th - Crystal White & Jackie Haaland
 - FY26 Annual Plan of Operations draft
12. Unscheduled matters
13. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – Any subject not on the agenda; discussion limited to 3 minutes
14. Next meeting date
15. Adjourn

YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

April 8, 2025

November/December Board Meeting Minutes

1670 48th St. West Suite #2, Billings MT 59106

1:00 pm

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chad Sedgwick - Chair; Brad Kraft - Vice-Chair, Jackie Haaland, Leroy Gabel, Bryan Mothershead, Stacey Robinson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

NON-BOARD PRESENT: LaVerne Ivie - YCD; Mike Waters, Yellowstone Co. Commissioner, Crystal White, YCD/PF; Seanna Torske & Zoe Craft, NRCS; Demi Blythe, Shannon Blackburn - FWP; Steve Williams, Yellowstone Co. Attorney; Ronni Tallerico - Co. Public Works
Virtually: Anthony Sammartano - Yellowstone Co. Extension
Mary Hendrix - DNRC; Colten Shimmer & Jeremy Anderson - ACOE; Jessica Furst - Billings Floodplain; John Hefner; Jens Selvey
Others: Boris Krizek, Matt Crampton
310 applicants: Joy Stevens

Chair Sedgwick called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Roll Call

After introductions, Chair Sedgwick informed attendees: All issues will be addressed to the Chair; public comments are always welcome but ask that you wait until the issue is addressed on the agenda, ask to be recognized by the chair, and then limit comments to 3 minutes; no action will be taken on any item, not on the agenda. Attendees were reminded to sign the attendance sheet

Agenda Changes: None

Minutes: Kraft made a motion to approve March 6, 2025 Minutes as written and reviewed, second by Gebel, motion passed.

Board member absences: None

Oath of Office - The notary was unable to attend today's meeting thus postponing Leroy Gabel taking the Oath of Office.

310's

- **Applications, Emergencies, Complaints & Violations:**
 - Gabel made a motion to table discussion/action on Joy Stevens 310 application until the applicant is present at the meeting, second by Robinson, motion passed.
 - Ms. Stevens arrived shortly after the board tabled discussion. Gabel made a motion to take the earlier motion off the table, second by Kraft, motion passed.
 - **YE-12-25 Joy Stevens, Alkali Creek** - Inspection date and team: March 20, 2025; Team: Sedgwick, Gabel, Haaland, Mothershead, Robinson, Ivie, Blythe, Blackburn, Stevens. Others present: Steve Williams, Colton Shimmer, Jessica Furst, Jens Selvey, Christine Schweigert, Mark Elison, Garrett Masin,
Team members provided the report that was agreed upon and signed onsite. Review considerations determined the project will cause significant effects on the Alkali Creek as well as upstream and downstream landowners with written confirmation on Form 273. The inspection team recommends denial of the project

as submitted. The team also recommends leaving a bank on the creek to delineate the Stevens pond from Alkali Creek.

Board discussion and decision: Robinson made a motion to deny YE-12-25 as submitted with the basis for denial being the results of the onsite inspection and determination that the project has adverse impacts to the stream upstream and downstream and adverse future impacts to the stream, second by Gabel. **Discussion:** Chair Sedgwick opened the discussion up to those either in favor of or opposed to the application. Ms. Stevens was able to defend her project and asked her engineer John Hafner to explain the wall he designed and why they rejected alternatives. He emphasized his design is for the wall of the pond, not the creek. Others contributed to the discussion, but these Minutes will not reflect the full discussion. **Board action:** Chair Sedgwick called for a vote – the motion to deny the project passed unanimously.

- **Violation Status:** This area is still in violation of the 310 Law and must be restored. **Board discussion and decision:** Kraft made a motion to mitigate the damage to the stream, YCD will accept a new application with a permanent structure between the pond and the creek within 60 days of this meeting, second by Robinson. **Discussion:** Ms. Stevens expressed her dissatisfaction with the requirement of separating her pond from the creek and will have to think about how to proceed. **Decision:** Chair Sedgwick called for a vote – the motion passed unanimously. **Note:** Stevens discussed her options further with Mr. Williams outside of the board meeting.

Other 310 Issues & Projects

- **Yellowstone River CD Council** – Gabel indicated staff is working with Legislators during this session to further the Council's agenda, particularly with noxious weeds.

Agency Report

- **YCD Administrator Report** – was received prior to meeting. No questions or concerns raised by Supervisors.
- **Partner Biologist Report** – Crystal White – sent a report prior to the board meeting that included her current workload with PF, NRCS and YCD. Today she added that she will be manning the steamtable at River Front Park during their school program.
- **Army Corps of Engineers** – attended virtually and were asked to contribute during the 310 items on the agenda.
- **Beartooth RC&D** – no current report
- **DNRC – Mary Hendrix** – Had comments about the potential YR Water reservation application and process reminders.
- **Fish Wildlife and Parks** – Demi Blythe – May 20th is the kids fishing day at Lake Elmo State Park and asked for volunteers from YCD (if able).
- **NRCS – Seanna Torske and Zoe Craft** – Field office report
 - Preapproved EQIP Application Conservation Plans signed by the board for:
 - Weed Spraying: Ventenata, 5 moving forward, \$495,000
 - Pivot/Pollinator: 2 moving forward, \$272,000
 - Organic Transition: 1 moving forward, \$30,000
 - Tree thinning/Juniper removal: 1 moving forward, \$21,000

All the FY25 EQIP applications have been assessed, ranked, and have cost estimates.

- **Local Work Group** – Board reviewed the minutes provided by Seanna Torske for the March 6th LWG meeting.

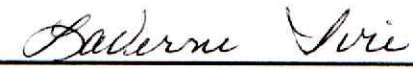
Gabel made a motion to accept Yellowstone County Natural Resource Priorities for the upcoming year as: #1 Urban Priority – Improving Pollinator habitat #1 Ag Land – Irrigation efficiency, primarily focusing on the Huntley Project Irrigation District. Second to the motion by Robinson, motion passed.

- **Yellowstone County**
 - **Yellowstone County Commissioner** – Mike Waters was present to hear and observe YCD activities.
 - **Yellowstone Co. Extension** – Anthony Sammartano will be presenting a soil health talk at the Billings Library.
 - **Yellowstone Co. Floodplain** – Ronni Tallerico is still working on the Hruska violation. The violation occurred in the flood fringe of Yellowstone Co.
 - **Yellowstone Co. Weed Department** – Joe Lockwood – no report this month.

BUSINESS MEETING

- **Old Business**
 - **Water Reservations:** Double LL Ranch's application was returned for a few missing items. Once received, it will be forwarded to DNRC. Mary Hendricks, DNRC reported that she will be out of country until the second week in May.
- **New Business**
 - **Church Correspondence** - YCD was contacted by a local church to assist with tree selection and possible financial assistance. The board will address the church's needs when a formal proposal is submitted.
 - **Irrigation Leader Magazine** - has asked YCD to do an interview outlining YCD's mission, activities and interactions with irrigation districts in Yellowstone County. Gabel volunteered to conduct the interview.
- **T-Report**
 - **March T-Report:** Mothershead made a motion to accept the March Treasurer's Report as written and reviewed, second by Haaland, motion passed.
 - **Travel & Meetings** - none presented
 - **Dues and Donations:**
 - **Plant Materials Center** - Robinson made a motion to pay the requested \$35 dues to the PMC, second by Mothershead, motion passed.
 - **MACD** - Robinson made a motion to not approve the \$4000 dues request from MACD, second by Gabel, motion passed.
- **Standing Committee Reports**
 - **Fly Creek** - sampling report as compiled and provided by the NRCS State office was distributed and reviewed by YCD Supervisors. The board thanked Torske and White for the update. White plans on taking water samples very soon.
 - **Legislative Committee:** SB 472 (to increase 310 fines) is waiting for its' day on the House floor.
 - **Yellowstone Conservation Area (aka West End Reservoirs/City Lakes)** - No new information to report.
 - **Arbor Day Annual Tree Giveaway, April 25th** - Volunteer schedule is being developed; the 700 trees will be delivered to Kraft's; Canyon Creek Nursery has not been coordinated with yet, but Robinson will make that happen soon; Extension and the City will provide technical assistance to the public during the event.
 - **Pollinator Fair** - per board discussion last month, Crystal White is working on developing a Pollinator Fair. The first meeting planned was held with a small group and was well received. She will develop further and bring details to the YCD May meeting for the board to consider financial sponsorship.
- **Unscheduled Matters** - none
- **Public comments** - none
- **Next YCD Board Meeting** - The next YCD meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 21, 2025.
- Robinson motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:20 p.m.


Chad Sedgwick, Chair


LaVerne Ivie, YCD Administrator