**YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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**YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

February 17, 2023, **Board Meeting Minutes**

Land Design Conference Room

1670 S 48th St. W, Billings MT 59106

Billings MT 59105

11:30 a.m.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**: Chad Sedgwick - Chair; Clint Peck - Vice-chair; Leroy Gabel, Brad Kraft, Stacey Robinson

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** none

**NON-BOARD PRESENT**: LaVerne Ivie, YCD Administrator; Seanna Torske, Crystal White - NRCS

Chrissy Webb, Shannon Blackburn – FWP; Dan Rostad – YRCDC; Travis Kamp - guest

Yellowstone Co. Weed Board: Norman Miller, Vince Thomas, Clint Schmidt, Joe Lockwood

Virtually: Stephanie Criswell, Attila Folnagy, DNRC; Prof. Megan Poulette – RMC

310 Applicants: none

**Chair Sedgwick called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.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:**

**Minutes:** Peck made a motion to approve January 19, 2023, meeting Minutes as written and reviewed, seconded by Kraft , motion passed.

**YCD Board Supervisor resignation**: Barb Wagner sent this email January 20, 2023: “Although we were all sworn in yesterday for another 2 years, I have decided not to do another term. It's been nice getting to know you and I wish you the best going forward. Barb Wagner” In speaking with Chair Sedgwick Wagner indicated it was not because she had issues but that it was just time for her to resign and give someone else the opportunity to serve. She also expressed her personal workload is such that she does not have extra time to dedicate to YCD activities. Kraft made a motion to accept Wagner’s resignation and advertise the open position with a closing date of March 17, 2023, second by Robinson, motion passed.

**FY23 Legislation discussion**

* **LC4416** – Draft bill to provide funding authority to the Dept. of Ag to be used for woody invasive species in Yellowstone, Stillwater and Musselshell counties. Rostad explained that the funding will be short term for a one-time spending authority. He has been advised by people in Helena to not spend any more time on this bill as it has implications of being in direct competition with CD funding. Supervisors disagreed in that this money is at the request of the Dept. of AG and if the bill passes the Legislature, it will be allocated to the Dept of AG to assist Weed Districts with control of woody invasive species – nowhere in the language does it mention CDs.

- Testifying on behalf of the bill when it comes out will be conducted by the Weed District, County Commissioners and YCD.

* **West End Development/ City Reservoir**:

- Sedgwick, Peck, and Ivie attended a meeting with City officials to draft an MOU between the two entities. After reviewing the MOU Peck made a motion to accept and forward to the City Council for approval, second by Kraft, motion passed.

- Beck has been communicating with Rep. Brewster to flush out the details in the LC4414 draft. The latest draft was provided for YCD review. Barring no further edits from the City or YCD, the draft will be given to the Legislative drafter to put in final format.

**- Update Master Plan discussion** with Criswell on format and content for the Conservation and Recreation Amenities layer contract between DNRC & YCD to provide an updated layer to the West End Reservoir master plan. Peck made a motion for YCD to write a contract to obtain funding to develop the layer for the West End master plan, second by Kraft, motion passed. Chair Sedgwick appointed Robinson, Peck and Ivie to work on the contract draft. Criswell will provide a list of specific details to include.

**310’s**

* **Applications & Emergencies:** none
* **Complaints & Violations:** **Last Month**: Sedgwick received a call from BBWA manager reporting activity on 7-Mile Creek (utilized as a drain/overflow ditch for BBWA). An official complaint will be submitted after which YCD will inspect. **Update**: BBWA withdrew the complaint.

**Other 310 issues & Projects**

* **Salt Cedar monitoring project with RMC** –Prof. Megan Poulette provided an overview and basic results of the 2022 Salt Cedar monitoring she and her students conducted. The extreme flooding changed the landscape thus delaying the monitoring. Poulette would like to see the monitoring conducted for several years for the results to be quantifiable. YCD Board & the Weed Board discussion: YCD contributed $2000 for the 2022 monitoring. Weed board members expressed the monitoring justifies Weed District work so should be paid by the Weed District going forward.
* **Yellowstone River CD Council Report – Leroy Gabel & Dan Rostad –** The next YRCDC meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 23rd.

**Agency Reports**

* **Administrator’s Report –** Report provided before today's meeting. No comments or questions were received.
* **Army Corps of Engineers –** unable to attend
* **Beartooth RC&D – vacant**
* **DNRC – Stephanie Criswell –** In addition to participating during the meeting sheprovided an update on bills that are running through the session that impact CDs.
* **Fish Wildlife and Parks –Chrissy Webb** introduced herself as the new communications and information person at FWP Region 5**.** She will be working on the AIS video with FWP & YCD and offered her assistance with other YCD projects.
* **NRCS – Seanna Torske** in addition to thein-depth written report that was provided to YCD supervisors prior to today’s meeting, Torske added the following:

**- EWP update:** National headquarters approved five (5) applications for Yellowstone County

**-** **Fly Creek Workshop** – Finalize location of workshop at the Stoltz Ranch. The supervisors and NRCS agreed upon April 6th as the date to hold the workshop. Sedgwick will contact the landowner to inquire if we can hold it in his shop. Ivie will coordinate activities with Big Horn CD, NRCS and MT Salinity Control Assoc.

**-** Torske introduced Crystallaina White, the new Pheasants Forever employee stationed in the Billings FO.

**-**  Farmers Conservation Alliance inventory for irrigation structures report is being conducted and when finished  will open the door for federal funding, such as WaterSMART grant funding or P.L. 566 funding.

* **Yellowstone County**
* **Yellowstone Co. Extension** – Vacancy is filled but the person is unable to attend today’s meeting.
* **Billings/Yellowstone County Planning Board and City of Laurel Planning Board-** Vacancy has not been filled.
* **Yellowstone Co. Floodplain –** Tim Miller is the temporary contact for the county.
* **Yellowstone Co. Weed Department –** Joe Lockwood – covered topics earlier in the meeting.

**BUSINESS MEETING**

* **Old Business**
* **Pryor Creek Stream Gauge Station –** Attilla Folnagy, DNRC provided an overview of the proposed Pryor Creek real time stream gauge installation location downstream of I-90. Part of his presentation involved O&M sponsor financial solicitation. The board was unable to commit at this time but would discuss during YCD’s budget deliberations early spring.
* **Part time employee** – The advertisement has been provided to RMC professor contacts for distribution amongst their students. Interviews are tentatively scheduled for the middle of March.
* **New Business**
* **Future Fisheries Panel** – Peck requested YCD approval to apply once again to represent conservation districts on the state-wide FWP panel. Robinson made a motion to support Peck’s application, second by Kraft, motion passed with Peck abstaining.
* **Board Meeting Absences:** None
* **Treasurer’s Report –** Robinson made a motion to approve the January Treasurer’s Report as presented and reviewed, second by Kraft, motion passed.
* **Travel & Meetings –** Travel is approved during the 2023 Legislative Session as required to testify on bills.
* **Standing Committee Reports**
* **City Reservoir** – covered earlier in the meeting.
* **Fly Creek drainage –** covered in NRCS report
* **Salt Cedar monitoring on the Yellowstone River –** covered earlier in meeting
* **Lake Elmo State Park Project** –

**- AIS Education Video provided through an $11,000 AIS grant–** Peck and Webb have met and begun rescripting the videos. One of the videos will include information for the waterless cleaning station. Webb is also working on signage for the cleaning station.

**-** **Lake Elmo open house** to showcase the new work conducted over the past 2 years at Lake Elmo State Park, including a session demonstrating the Waterless Cleaning Station YCD purchased for FWP. Chrissie Webb explained to Peck the tour cannot be conducted on May 22, 23,24th as they had previously discussed because there will be too much activity with the students fishing days happening during that time. Possible tour dates will be discussed at YCD’s March board meeting.

* **Unscheduled Matters** – Supervisors discussed ways to honor Barb Wagner for her years of dedication to the YCD. Gabel made a motion to purchase a gift and award a certificate of appreciation and present to her at the Lake Elmo open house, second to the motion by Peck, motion passed.
* **Public comments** – none
* **Next YCD Board Meeting** – Next YCD meeting tentative date: March 17, 2023
* Kraft motion to adjourn at 1:45 p.m.

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**Chad Sedgwick , Chair LaVerne Ivie, YCD Administrator**