



# Yellowstone River *Conservation District* Council

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## Meeting Minutes – January 20, 2017 Region 5 FWP Billings, MT.

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Members Present: – Walter Rolf, Custer – Don Youngbauer, Rosebud/MACD – Paul Gilbert Steve Story, Sweet Grass – Judi Knapp, Treasure – Shawn Conradsen, Richland – Rick Herman, Prairie – John Moorhouse, RAC Chair. Darryl Stutterheim, Park CD participated by telephone.

Not in attendance: Dawson CD, Stillwater CD and McKenzie Co. ND CD.

Others Present: Warren Kellogg, TAC; Sara Meloy and Mark Elison, DNRC; Burt Williams, former TAC; Ken Frazer, MT FWP; Susan Gilbertz, MSU; Dan Casey, NGPJV, Mike Penfold, Our Montana; David Pratt, former TAC ; Craig Wagner, former RAC; Dan Rostad, Coordinator, and Carol Watts, Custer CD. Laurie Zeller, DNRC participated by phone.

Presenting guests were Nikki Wesolek, Dawson CD and Tanya Lester, Stillwater CD.

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Chairman Don Youngbauer called the meeting to order at 10:08 am on January 20, 2017. Introductions were made.

Business meeting: Minutes from the October 21, 2016 meeting were approved with John Moorhouse making the motion, Rick Herman the second. The motion carried by voice vote. Carol Watts handed out the financial reports. The first report shows all the activity in the checking account since the last meeting. The second report gives the status of each grant. Carol also had an updated budget. This budget went in to effect in September and the grant expires September 30, 2017. Carol is holding money from the last pass through to pay Warren's contract, MMRIC travel and the MT State Library. Funds from the Northern Great Plains Joint Venture grant will pay for more of the Yellowstone River Recommended practices booklets to be printed. The Council approved the reports with Walter Rolf making the motion and Paul Gilbert the second; the motion passed by voice vote.

Coordinator's Report: Dan Rostad said the website and his email are down because of changes being made. MACD will now host the website and Warren and Dan are working on revisions. Dan Rostad and Don Youngbauer have been to Helena to testify about funding for the Council where they were received well there and DNRC proposed additional funds for the Missouri River Council and the YRCDC. They also met with Eric Nyland from John Tester's office in Butte. Representatives from Senator's Daines and Testers offices have been helpful to the Council in the development of the CEA and are working to secure project appropriations in the future thru the WRDA Sec. 3110 authorization.

The Department of Justice is interested in contracting with Custer Co. CD, on behalf of the Council, to provide technical assistance for identifying and recommending projects they will be doing with funds from the oil pipeline break settlement.

CEA Final Report: Dan Rostad reported that he had spoken with Brad Thompson, ACOE, and Thompson told him the Council would be advised about the approval process of the CEA report in the in the next two weeks.

### Long-Term Planning Strategies/ Grant proposals:

Dan Rostad reported that there are funds available thru DNRC programs that could offer assistance to the Council in developing long-term strategies for implementation of the CEA and YRRP recommendations.

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**CONSERVATION DISTRICT COUNCIL MEMBERS:** Custer – Dawson – Park – Prairie – Richland – Rosebud – Stillwater, Sweet Grass – Treasure – Yellowstone – McKenzie County, North Dakota – MACD – RAC Chair

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Proposed Working Groups: An Irrigation Water Management Working Group was the first proposal discussed. The thought was that this was a very important part of the YRRPs and it would be good to have it started. Paul Gilbert made a motion to start an irrigation management group, Walter Rolf seconded and discussion followed. It was decided this would be a big project to take on and it would be better to wait until another Working Group had completed a project so there would be a strategy to follow. Paul Gilbert amended his motion to read that a Pipeline Working Group should be formed, Walter agreed. A vote was taken and the motion carried by voice vote.

Yellowstone River Clearinghouse website Presentation: Tanya Lester and Nikki Wesolek did a training session for the Council on how to access and use the website. They had developed a handout which was useful and will be added to the website in the future. Nikki showed the Council how to move around on the site and Tanya defined how she used the site while working on 310 permit applications. The Council thanked them for doing an excellent presentation.

YRCDC Website Revision:

Montana Association of Conservation Districts is in the process of developing a new website for the Council and will host the new website on their system. The new website will be much simpler to navigate and will have one main link on the home page that will take viewers to the Yellowstone River Clearinghouse which contains all of the information included in the Cumulative Effects Assessment and Recommended Practices documents.

Council's Standing Rules: Council members had a draft of the standing rules. David Pratt was on hand to facilitate the discussion. Each section was taken separately, changes were made and approved before proceeding to the next section. Dan Rostad made the changes to the draft as they were made. The biggest change from the previous standing rules is removing the RAC/TAC and replacing them with working groups. The membership also has changes. The Working Group Coordinator that had been proposed was stricken from the list of members. Working groups will report to a Council member designated by the Council. Reimbursement for the Council follows state laws. Reimbursement for the working groups is still being studied. These changes were approved with John Moorhouse making the motion, Rick Herman the second. The motion carried by voice vote.

2017 Legislative Session: Don Youngbauer and Dan Rostad will be attending the MACD Legislative "Meet & Greet" in Helena on January 24<sup>th</sup>.

Cultural Inventory Update: Community Resilience to Drought and Flooding:

Dr. Susan Gilbertz of Montana State University Billings (MSUB) is working on a proposal to study how local resistance to drought and flooding in the Yellowstone River basin can be better achieved when community groups are engaged in planning efforts. If funded, her partners are likely to include the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, private donors, MSUB, Rocky Mountain College, St. Louis University and the Corps of Engineers.

Partner Reports: Sara Meloy, Water Planner with DNRC, provided the council with an update on current activities within the Water Management Bureau. Sara mentioned DNRC's current focus on improving the exchange of water supply information (precipitation, soil moisture, snowpack, etc.) from the Governor's



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Drought and Water Supply Committee in Helena to on-the-ground water users and vice versa. Two initial ways the planners are accomplishing this information exchange is through water supply e-newsletters and updates to the drought.mt.gov webpage to make it more user-friendly.

The Department will continue to pursue ways to better deliver water supply information to improve local water management (e.g. irrigation scheduling) and would welcome any suggestions from water users.

Sara additionally spoke of the National Drought Resilience Demonstration project DNRC, EPA and others are leading in the Upper Missouri Headwaters basin. This involves helping nine Conservation Districts and watershed groups develop locally-adapted drought management plans. The key to this effort is providing technical support and funding for local drought coordinators to lead these efforts on their own with local stakeholders. The ultimate goal is to help these communities prepare for and mitigate drought before it occurs next. Ultimately, DNRC hopes to see other watershed groups and CDs follow in this example and is happy to offer technical, planning, and coordination (possibly funding) throughout the process. DNRC is planning to partner with Susan Gilbertz from MSU-B to be able to offer drought planning assistance to an interested Yellowstone River Basin CD or watershed group. Contact Sara or Susan if interested.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm. The next meeting will be March 24, 2017. Location to be announced.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Watts, CCCD Administrator

Some of these topics may need to be moved around, not sure that they need to follow the agenda because the meeting didn't.