

1601 2nd Ave. North, Ste. 601
Great Falls, MT 59401



Phone: (406) 454-0056
mrcdc@MissouriRiverCouncil.info
www.MissouriRiverCouncil.info

Executive Committee Conference Call Minutes February 22, 2010

The Executive Committee met on February 22, 2010 beginning at 2:04 PM. Present at the Great Falls office were: John Chase, Upper Reach; Jim Beck, Immediate Past Chair; Dean Rogge, Reservoir Reach; Paul Gies, Middle Reach; and Vicki Marquis, MRCDC Coordinator. Also in attendance were Lindy Garner and Jim Stutzman with USFWS Partner's Program. Present via conference call were: Dana Darlington, Chairman; Nick Schultz, Vice Chair; and Carie Hess, Secretary.

Jim Stutzman, State Coordinator for the Montana Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program talked about how they provide technical and financial assistance for private lands. He gave the examples of the assistance they offer like Riparian Rehabilitation and grazing systems. He talked about the work they are doing with bear landowner interactions in the Blackfoot Valley. He noted that they currently work with about 700 individual landowners in this program and that they can only work on private land. He noted that when working with these landowners they like to work under WEA's or Wildlife Extension Agreements which are a 3 page document instead of a Cooperative Agreement which they have to advertise on grants.gov. With the WEA's they don't have to require a cash donation and landowner continues to have complete access. He noted that they have a biologist out of Malta working in the Milk River Valley and one in Medicine Lake working on Pothole Prairie wetlands projects. The program is completely voluntary and they have had good success at leveraging additional funds from state agencies and NGOs for projects. They can provide some technical assistance and advice on grazing systems that include public lands grazing.

Linda Garner a Biologist and Regional Invasive Species Coordinator talked about early detection and rapid response, she noted that they have 3 Strike Teams across the state addressing new infestations. Additionally, they have a separate Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator. She talked about the Invasive Species with Volunteers grant program, which the Council has worked with to bring weed wash units to the CMR Refuge the past 3 years. MOUs with the FWS are appropriate at the Federal level, from there Cooperative Agreements would provide for site-specific projects.

Approval of December 28th, 2009 Minutes: Jim moved to accept the Executive Committee minutes with the correction of the typo's and John seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Financial report and approval of bill payments: The committee looked over the financial report. Paul moved to approve the financial report with Carie's corrections. Dean seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Gallatin Conservation District
Broadwater Conservation District
Lewis & Clark Conservation District
Cascade County Conservation District
Chouteau County Conservation District

Blaine County Conservation District
Big Sandy Conservation District
Fergus County Conservation District
Petroleum County Conservation District
Phillips Conservation District

Garfield County Conservation District
Valley County Conservation District
McCone Conservation District
Roosevelt County Conservation District
Richland County Conservation District

DC Trip Update: The DC group reported they had 14 meetings in 3 days. They noted some concerns with their meeting with Congressman Rehberg; although Vicki stated that Eric Beirwagen from Rehberg's office has made some positive steps for MRRIC travel funding. Dean noted that they might be able to do some local fundraising for the DC travel costs. For follow-up items, Vicki noted that she was drafting a letter to the Corps asking them to combine Missouri River meetings in Montana to the same time and place. Vicki also talked about a MRRIC appropriations request and a draft letter to NACD asking for more involvement. The Bison Conservation Initiative was discussed and the thought was to keep it on the back burner for now. Vicki had talked to Barron Crawford today. He stated that they would not be able to be part of the stakeholder group. He also explained that the AUM fees the refuge charges go into a general service fund and are then divvied out to all of the refuges. He mentioned that he did not trust the CD's and the CD's don't trust the USFWS. Vicki also noted that he took offense to wanting to use the Beartooth WMA as an example of good land management. The CREP addendum will go in front of the NRCS on March 4th in Lewistown. Letters of support from those CD's in the corridor would be helpful. John noted that the council should send an example of talking points to the districts to help with the letter writing.

Russian Olive Biological Control Research: It was discussed about supporting this research. Dana mentioned that he felt they should leave the ones that are there but keep them from reproducing. Jim moved to support the biological control research on the Russian olive and Paul seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

Center for Aquatic Nuisance Species' Weed mapping project: It was discussed that CANS would like to map the Missouri River from Holter to Cascade or as far as they can go. They are looking for at least 8 boats and volunteers to help. Dean moved to do the weed mapping as a volunteer project and John seconded the motion passed unanimously. John noted that he would like to see opportunities to observe this process.

Dana left at 3:39 p.m. leaving Nick to finish the meeting as VP.

Range Data from CMR: Jeanne Rae had sent comments on the data. The group thought it would be good to send the information to a range specialist and have them give feedback. There were a few names given and they would be followed up on.

APF Economic Data: The APF publication received from Jeff Hagener was discussed. The Committee noted several questions and issues with the information. Paul suggested that a panel discussion would be helpful where facts and data from all sides could be presented. Dean noted that FSA and NRCS should be involved to provide accurate data and background on farm programs. The Farmers Union could also explain the value of safe and consistent food supply. Nick noted that there are lessons learned from the Wyoming experience and that some folks in the Pinedale area could provide insights into elk-cow interactions and brucellosis. An ag economist from MSU would be good to have on the panel too. Media and public officials should be included.

Next Meeting: Vicki noted that plans were being made for the April 8th meeting in Bozeman. The committee agreed that Matt Wilhelm with the CANS should be invited to present information on the weed mapping project.

Other Business: Vicki noted that she was working on letters of support for the Intake fish passage project and the Whitmore Ravine appropriations request. The letters would echo the Council's previous support for both projects. The Committee agreed that the letters could be approved via e-mail and sent.

With no additional business being brought before the Committee, the call adjourned at 4:10 PM.

Submitted by:

Approved by unanimous vote on March 29th, 2010

Carie Hess, Secretary

Dana Darlington, Chairman