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Executive Committee Conference Call Minutes March 29, 2010

The Executive Committee met on March 29th, 2010 beginning at 10:14 AM by telephone conference call. Present were: Dana Darlington, Chairman; Jim Beck, Immediate Past Chair; John Chase, Upper Reach; Paul Gies, Middle Reach; Dean Rogge, Reservoir Reach; Vicki Marquis, Coordinator; and Carie Hess, Secretary.

Approval of February 22nd Minutes: John moved to accept the Executive Committee minutes with the corrections he noted and Jim seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Financial report and approval of bill payments: The committee looked over the financial report John moved to pay the unpaid bills and Paul seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Vicki noted that she had heard from Ray Beck and the council's funding was not going to be cut. She also noted that they need to spend the money allocated for the contract labor and Education & Outreach. It was noted that on average the council spends roughly \$1,200 in travel per meeting. John Chase noted that when the council looks at it's next budget that they should have a plan B for budget cuts and asked that it be put on the agenda for the June meeting.

Follow up on DC Trip: Vicki stated that she had sent the letter to the Corps as well as the congressional offices and had received one response from MRERP. She had also sent letters regarding MRRIC travel to the congressional offices and drafted a proposed MRRIC recommendation regarding the need for travel reimbursement. Larry Mires took the proposed recommendation to DC recently and it seemed to be well received. Vicki stated that she had emailed a couple of times with Jeff Eisenberg about the NACD involvement and will continue to send information. It was noted that the Bison Conservation Initiative appears to be set off to the side for now so she has not been working on issues relative to that. The Eastern Plains RC&D voted to take the CMR Refuge stakeholder group on as a project, pending approval by the Garfield County CD at their next board meeting on April 14th. Dean and John stated that a face-to-face meeting after the GCCD approval is a good idea. It was noted that the CMR CCP meeting has been moved from June 22nd – 23rd to June 2nd – 4th. Vicki noted that the CREP Addendum was well received at the NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee meeting and that the council is waiting to hear from Glenn about how it fared at the FSA State Committee meeting.

Russian Olive Biological Control Research: Vicki noted that the council had approved to support this research but that it was not approved for funding from the Noxious Weed Trust Fund due to the fact that it is not a listed species. Vicki noted that Kenny Keaver had proposed a conference call to discuss Russian Olive efforts and perhaps create a Russian olive work group. Paul thought that it could be possible to give some money towards the effort. This was tabled until the June meeting.

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

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CMR Range Data / John Lacey's report: Vicki stated that she had emailed John Lacey's report to the council members. Dana noted that the report mentioned some previous court cases that were not favorable to livestock grazing and indicated that the Refuge Leader has a great deal of power regarding management and grazing. Paul noted that many see cattle grazing as a harmful, but the science and history in other areas proves otherwise. John Lacey's report noted that some of the CMR's range data was flawed and not all appropriate data was collected. Paul stated "who is really the environmentalist, who is working hard to do what is best for the land," noting that the farmer and rancher does more to sustain the environment than most others. It was noted that this was to be added to the next meeting agenda.

APF Economic Data: The council discussed pursuing a panel discussion over the data with involvement from Stockgrowers and Farm Bureau. Much of the information provided in the APF report should be clarified, especially their discussion of farm subsidies, which is inaccurate.

Next meeting date: It was noted that the next council meeting is scheduled for April 8th. There is to be a tour at the Granger Ranch south of Ennis in the morning and the business meeting at the Bear Paw Restaurant in McAllister in the afternoon. The guest speaker will be Dr. Clayton Marlow from MSU.

Interior leaked Document: Dana stated that he was not satisfied with how it was handled. The thought was to have the Conservation Districts formally adopt a position opposed to additional Monuments within their District and urge their County Commissioners to do the same. John added that the council should send talking points to the CD's to help with the letter writing.

May trip to DC with MACD/DNRC: MACD and DNRC are scheduled to go to DC in May and the council was invited if they are interested. Vicki noted that Jeff Tiberi, Ray Beck and Jane Holzer are tentatively going. Dean thought that Vicki should go and John agreed. Vicki stated that she would get the rough numbers and have them for the April meeting.

Vista Volunteer Program: After some discussion Vicki proposed to submit the requested information in order to have the Council on the list for further consideration. John stated that they needed more information and would need more details about specific qualifications before they could agree to sponsor a volunteer.

Other Business: Dana brought up the Buying and Selling of water rights as it has been in the news. He asked if it fit into the state water plan and thought that something could be learned about the process.

With no additional business being brought before the Committee, the call adjourned at 11:00 AM.

Submitted by:

Approved by unanimous vote on April 26th, 2010

Carie Hess, Secretary

Dana Darlington, Chairman