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## **Quarterly Meeting Minutes September 26th, 2011 Culbertson Senior's Center Culbertson, MT**

At approximately 3:00 pm, everyone boarded the tour bus and headed out to tour a man camp being built near Bainville, a 5 acre oil well site and drilling, a water depot big enough to fill 4 trucks at a time, a scoria pit, and flood damage. During the tour the landowner/ business owner for the man camp spoke about why they were building and what permitting and other issues were associated with the man camp. At the water depot the landowner talked about issues of permitting and costs to build the depot and the demands of the water resource where also discussed. The Richland County Road Department talked about what the impacts from drilling have had on the county roads. The Lower Yellowstone REA talked about the demands of oil on the power in that area. At the Scoria pit the operator talked about permits, DEQ, and BLM permitting and the challenges they face. Landowner Richard Iversen talked about what the flooding along the Missouri River has done to their operation and local agency talked about possible opportunities for the area. The tour concluded back at the Senior's Center for a steak fry.

At 8:27 pm Chairman Nick Schultz opened the MRCDC quarterly business meeting. Council members present were; Dean Rogge representing Garfield County CD; Jim Beck representing Broadwater CD; Dennis Mitchell representing Blaine County CD; Buzz Mattelin representing Roosevelt County CD; Ron Garwood representing Valley county CD; Jeanne Kirkegard representing McCone CD; Dick Iversen representing Richland County CD; Karl Christians representing DNRC; Jeff Tiberi representing MACD; Tom Pick representing NRCS, MRCDC Coordinator Laurie Riley, and MRCDC Secretary Carie Hess. Guests in attendance were Scott Irvin, Austin Knutson, Jane Holzer, Julie Goss, and Connie Iversen.

Tom Pick with the NRCS talked about the NRCS Flood Recovery and Restoration Initiative. He started by giving some information of how this was started and that every project has to be sponsored and that individuals cannot sponsor but Conservation Districts, Counties, and even formal canal companies can sponsor projects. Tom said that to date 5.2 million has been allocated for this initiative. He said that next spring the NRCS will start being able to cost share on infrastructure or reapplying for items that would have originally been cost shared under EQIP. He did note that Flood Recovery CRP does count against the counties CRP cap. He also noted that WRP could take up to 16 months to get through contracting with the easements.

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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

Chair Nick Schultz asked what is the Conservation Districts role in all of this? What is our story to be told? Dick noted that there is some unrest with conservation district's reserves being used for fracking. It was noted that these reserves were originated for irrigation or agricultural uses. Buzz agreed and Jeff talked about how the resolution from last year was perceived in the legislature.

General:

1. Minutes were read and Ron Garwood moved to approve with the addition of West Nile Virus playing a big part in the survival of Sage Grouse and the fact they have no immunity to it. Dean Rogge seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
2. Carie read the financial package and answered member's questions. Dick Iversen moved to approve the report as submitted Dennis Mitchell seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Carie stated that there were 2 outstanding bills one to the MACDEO for \$25 for yearly dues and the other to Laurie Riley for travel reimbursement for \$142. Dick Iversen moved to pay the bills and Jeanne Rae Kirkegard seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Carie also noted that with the new grant contracts the Petroleum County CD has with DNRC that it would be a good time to renew the contracts with the council and that these contracts would follow the bi annual contracts with DNRC. After the council reviewed the contracts Jeff Tiberi moved to approve and sign as submitted and Dean Rogge seconded the motion passed unanimously.
3. Coordinator's Report- Laurie reported that the July meeting had been cancelled due to the flooding and that it had been replaced with a 2 day webinar which was mainly information sharing. She noted that there is an Independent science panel that was looking at the spring pulse and that they had not found anything to support that a spring pulse has benefit to endangered wildlife. Buzz noted that MRERP had not addressed whether or not the reach above Great Falls will be considered. It was thought that it would be included as part of the main stem. It was noted that next summer's meeting for Montana will be held in Billings. Currently the main concern is flooding and it was noted that the next AOP meeting is scheduled for October 31<sup>st</sup> at Fort Peck. Carie noted that there is currently approximately \$6,500 remaining in the travel grant. Laurie reported on the Natural Resource Partnership and that this group is somewhat flailing as it has no ownership.

Reports:

1. Upper Reach:
  - ❖ Jim talked about the Missouri Headwaters Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) Task Force. He handed out a status update as of September 13<sup>th</sup>.
  - ❖ Whitmore Ravine Update: Nothing at this time.
  - ❖ River's Edge Trail Interpretive Signs (Great Falls): Laurie reported that John and she have been working on the signs there will be one on invasives, 1 on high water and 1 on the council. John has found spots for the signs to be placed and Celestine has given information on the invasives.
  - ❖ CREP Update: Laurie informed the group that she has the final copy from DC and that she just got the numbers from DNRC on the cost analysis.

2. Middle Reach:

- ❖ BLM RAC Update: Nick reported along with others about the dinner with Bob Abbey and Jamie Konnell. It was noted that Jamie needs to be invited to the next council meeting. Most in attendance thought that the council came off as professional and polite and that getting to work with the National Director for 3 hours was big. Nick noted that the council is looking at this from the on the ground perspective where Abbey looks at it from the bigger scale coming from DC. All felt that the council could work with Stan Benes and Jamie.
- ❖ Cottonwood Regeneration & Wild & Scenic Reach: It was reported that at the meeting on September 13, 2011 there were presentations and then the group worked on an MOU. It is not as big now with the flooding that has occurred. Nick brought up the idea of closure on this in the next 2 years. It was thought to put all data together in a package. Tom Pick stated that he had been up in that area and worked on some of the monitoring protocol.

3. Reservoir Reach:

- ❖ CMR Community Working Group: Dean talked about the tour put on by the stakeholder group. During the tour the 1997 Antiquities Act was discussed and how it has changed the refuge. Karl talked about Mary Sexton and the land swap being discussed and what that means. Within the CMR there are 2 sections that are being looked at to be traded with 2 sections in the Swan Valley. The overall feeling is that it went alright although there were some heated discussions towards the end. It was noted that there is a need to keep the focus that it is on the communities surrounding the CMR. It is thought that on the October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting when CD's get their chance to talk that it will hit home about how the CD's were started and why.
- ❖ Fort Peck EWM Task Force: Ron stated that they have lowered the spillway another 5,000 cfs and by week's end they will shut it down. He reported that he would be attending the XL Pipeline meeting the next day in Glasgow. He had no new news to report of the EWM.

4. Lower Reach

- ❖ Impacts from Mining activity – Dick noted that there was a lot of flooding and people are starting to rebuild. He talked about that on September 22<sup>nd</sup> the BLM came to Sidney and assessed fines for those people mining scoria in 2009-2010 without a BLM permit. It was noted that in Montana scoria is not considered a mineral but if the federal government owns the mineral then federal law prevails the state law. He noted that there needs to be more education on weed prevention and management that goes along with all of the development.

5. MACD - Jeff stated that they have an expert on soils that is slated to talk at convention.

6. DNRC – Nothing at this time.

7. NRCS- Noted earlier.

Old Business:

**State Water Plan** – The state now has some funding to start this process as one division in DNRC has given another division some funding.

**Bison Update** – There is an EA out on translocating some bison to the Spotted Dog, Tribal Lands, Marias River, Green Ranch, and Slip 'n' Slide pasture and in its comment period. Arnie Dood's report is also out and in comment period. EA comment deadline is October 19<sup>th</sup> and Jeanne noted that representatives feel

that this should be an EIS. It was noted that Jeanne, Dean could draft comments on the EA and get to the council before October 12<sup>th</sup>. Buzz moved to have Jeanne and Dean draft the comments and send to the council before October 12 and Ron seconded the motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

Laurie updated the council on the 2013 Canon Envirothon and how much funding was going to be needed. She also updated the council on the USGS gauging stations and their funding. No action was taken on either of these items as they were updates. Laurie also reported that the Yellowstone CD Council would like to do a joint meeting at convention. It was noted that there are a lot of different issues on the Yellowstone then in the Missouri. It was thought to do a possible 1 hour individual council meeting in adjacent rooms then open the divider and do a 1 hour joint with each coordinator giving a brief 15 minute power point on what each council is doing. Dean moved to do a possible 1 hour individual council meeting in adjacent rooms then open the divider and do a 1 hour joint with each coordinator giving a brief 15 minute power point on what each council is doing and Jeff seconded the motion passed.

Public Comment: None

Next meetings: Convention November 15<sup>th</sup> in Helena from 4-6 pm.

With no further business coming before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

Approved by unanimous vote on November 15th, 2011,

Submitted by:

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Carie Hess, Secretary

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Nick Schultz, Chairman