



Lewis and Clark Conservation District

790 Colleen Street, Helena MT 59601 406.502.8591 <https://lewisandclarkcd.org>

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

March 12, 2026, 1 pm

USDA Service Center Conference, 790 Colleen Street, Helena MT
And Zoom conferencing

Call to Order—The meeting was called to order by chair Jeff Ryan at 1 pm. In attendance were Jeff Ryan, Karl Christians, Elena Frederick, John Baucus, *Jeanette Nordahl, Sarah Howe-Cobb, and Stan Frasier*; also in attendance were *Orwan Smith Phillips 66, Morgan Bosch Phillips 66, Andrew Kretschmer, Madi Larson, Madison Colyer, Dave Morgan, Pat Keim, Joe Kremer-Herman, and Chris Evans*. Italics denote Zoom attendance.

Introductions—Introductions were made.

Public Comment—there was no additional comment outside of 310 permits.

310 Permit Applications

LC-30-24 Alamia—This is the Skelly Gulch permit that was approved a few years ago. They are requesting an extension, because they haven't had the funding. Motion by Ryan to approve a 1 year extension, second by Christians; motion carried.

LC-09-26 O'Connell—Joe showed some photos and diagrams of the proposed project. There would be 2 structures, the initial diversion and a step-pool downstream about 5 feet. Rock would be about 18 inches at its highest point, dropping to about a foot at its lowest point across the stream. This diversion would be more fish friendly, but would still allow the manager to access irrigation water, while still conveying water downstream. Comments from landowners who've had concerns: Pat Keim asked about the potential need for more than one of the pools, but the district would like to see how this particular proposal works. The applicant wants a 5 year annual maintenance permit. Pat Keim said that if this works, that's great. The past conditions have lost surrounding landowner trust. He also said that the EPA will be testing the ditch sections in about a week to see if they liberated contaminated sediment. Dave Morgan asked about how he is supposed to contact the CD if the diversion structure changes. He was told that he needs to file a complaint form and get it to Joe. Following the rules that the Board has adopted is important with all permitting issues, especially in cases where there are altercations between landowners and it could end up in court. Filing the complaint paperwork is what initiates a site visit and the district decision following the onsite visit. Motion by Christians to approve as a 1 year permit only, not as an annual maintenance permit, waiving the 15 day waiting period. The landowner/manager needs to provide 2 days minimum advance notice of when the work will take place so that the CD has an opportunity to be onsite. Second by Ryan, motion carried.

LC-13-26 Matzinger-this application came in on the Missouri River/Canyon Ferry, some extensive rip rap, about 50 CY of fill and rip rap with a geotextile fabric underlayment. Ryan said that in a stream environment, they'd ask for "dirty rip rap" with vegetation involvement. Baucus asked if they could pierce the geotextile material and put in willows or another type of vegetation. Ryan said that yes, they could do that. In fact, ACOE permitting typically wouldn't allow geotextile fabric. Motion by Christians to approve as proposed, second by Frederick; motion carried.

LC-14-26 M. Wirth-This project is on Stickney Creek and they want to replace the box culvert with a bridge (the board saw an application on this site a few years ago). Comment from Adam at FWP is that there is to be no instream work between April 1 and June 15 due to spawning concerns, if the site is not dry, and that they should fix the "perch" on the downstream side of the current box culvert. They would like to waive the 15 day waiting period. Motion by Christians to approve with the FWP comments and 15 day waiting period waiver, second by Ryan; motion carried.

LC-15-26 Ledcor-This application is on Sweeny Creek and is a directional bore. This was a resubmitted application, the board had approved it in December 2024 but it expired, so they resubmitted the application. Motion by Ryan to approve as proposed, second by Christians; motion carried.

LC-16-26 Rickman-This application is on North Fork Little Prickly Pear Creek. This is a resubmitted application following the board's denial of his first application. The applicant is working with Nathan at FWP to obtain stringers. The proposed bridge will be 2 feet above the current bank, spanning the channel completely. They plan to use Eco-Blocks as a foundation/abutment. Motion by Baucus to approve this as proposed, second by Frederick; motion carried.

LC-17-26 Phillips 66-This permit application is primarily vegetation removal on Beaver Creek (east side). The plan is to use hand tools and chainsaws. Ryan asked how often they've had to do the work in this area. Those who were online with Phillips 66 said that it was routine work that they do on all of their pipelines. Corridor width for clearing is approximately 10 feet on either side of the pipeline. Christians asked how long ago the last time it was cleared, the answer was around 2016. The materials that are cleared are stockpiled away from the stream. The application was for an annual maintenance permit. Motion by Christians to approve with a 5 year annual maintenance permit, second by Frederick; motion carried. Christians made a further motion to waive the 15 day waiting period, second by Baucus; motion carried.

Review Governance Calendar for March/April—The calendars were reviewed with comments from Evans.

Minutes—Motion by Ryan to approve the February Minutes as submitted, second by Christian; motion carried.

Financial Statement & Outstanding Bills—Motion by Ryan to approve the financial statements, second by Baucus; motion carried. Motion by Nordahl to pay the outstanding bills, second by Ryan; motion carried.

Supervisor absences—No absences.

Correspondence—Evans passed around correspondence from the Big Hole Watershed group, the Montana Biocontrol Project and a thank you note from the Sun River Watershed Group.

Reports

NRCS—Andrew was present to make the NRCS report. The office has about 100 applications

including some from Jefferson County. The invasive annual grass workshop is coming up next week. Dr. Mangold will be presenting and we'll follow it with a Local Work Group discussion. The RCPP program that has been around for a while is being aimed at some smaller groups/partners and Andrew is considering working with the Tri County Fire Safe group. Andrew said that if the board knows of any small groups that are looking at concerns to let him know and he'll see if they might be a good fit for the RCPP.

DNRC—Written report.

SRWG—Madison was on zoom to give their report. Their activities are pretty calm this month. She gave another thank you to the board for the annual support for them. WGM was selected to do a preliminary report for their project. They are seeking engineers for the Muddy Creek project, the watershed stakeholder meeting is April 14th in Fairfield. The irrigation efficiency workshop went well and they're probably going to do it again next year. The rain barrel workshop will be May 9th in Great Falls. The speaker series continues on March 19th next week.

MRCDC—Jeff Ryan sat in on the last executive meeting. There was a written report in the packet as well.

LHWG—Joe said their annual meeting is at Ten Mile Brewery tonight from 5-7. They are setting a date for the Watershed Festival, probably August 8th.

Helena CORE—Joe didn't make the last CORE meeting.

WQPD—No report, but Jeff Ryan took a look at their agenda for their meeting. They're finalizing their 3 year work plan.

MACD—Madi was present to talk about MACD. She thanked the board for approving the pollinator seed donation for their xeriscaping project. She said that they welcome ideas for increasing visibility of the CD and the Pollinator program with that project. MACD is a sponsor for the Old Salt Festival and the hope is that sponsors will bring activities. Joe said that the Trailer has been there the last few years and could count. Madi said that there is some flexibility involved in attendees for that event too. The 310 Penalties group has an initial document prepared and the group should have something in the next month for comment from districts. The plan is to draft a resolution for area meetings and that would translate directly into legislation for the 2027 legislative session. They've set the date and location for this year's convention. The date will be the week after Thanksgiving and will be at Fairmont. Karl recommended a tour in the area that the DLVC worked with on a sheep grazing project for control of leafy spurge. Andrew said that the Tri County Fire Safe Working group just finished a xeriscape/fire safe garden project that MACD might be interested in. Karl said that another possible topic for convention might be how the Spotted Dog area range health has changed—and not for the better—with no cattle grazing. Jeff Ryan also said that a possible good topic at convention might be something tying back to stream permitting, a basic stream dynamic presentation, diversions, bridges, bankfull width definition and identification, stream types, size of material that the stream moves.

Supervisor Reports

Jeff Ryan—Is working on getting a generator plugged in at his place. FWP is doing a project at the causeway for bank stabilization. It's an area that gets hit really hard. They're planning to use vegetated concrete mats laid on the bank.

Karl Christians—In the middle of calving and it's going well thanks to the weather; spring appears

to be coming early, weeds are coming. Also 310 inspections.

John Baucus-They're still moving hay, calving and finished shearing. They're working on rebuilding a lambing shed that the wind took out before lambing starts in a few weeks.

Elena Frederick-she has been recovering from knee surgery. She's been sharing weed information with developers, HOAs, and realtors. She said that they really don't realize the severity of the weed problems. Property owners seem to be more in-tune with the problem. She said that she just found out that new property owners have to register their wells.

Stan Frasier-Stan will be back in the state in April.

Jeanette Nordahl-Wind is blowing and it's snowing!

Sarah Howe-Cobb-Sarah said that they are just really hoping for moisture in the next few days.

Staff Reports

Evans-most of Evans' report is in Old Business, but the CD is about out of the pens and they are popular. Motion by Ryan to approve a pen purchase, second by Frederick; motion carried. In addition, it's time to apply for the FY27 CDA grant to get 310 reimbursement and funds to pay MACD dues. Motion by Ryan to approve application, second by Frederick; motion carried.

Kremer-Herman-Site visits and dealing with DNRC.

Old Business

WCFC Grant update and question-Now that the court case has wrapped, Erling at GID is working with the landowners of concern on determining what access will be granted. Until that is wrapped, it's uncertain what activity will be taking place with the grant. DRNC is requiring an updated scope of work and an updated budget before moving forward with the grant.

Update on grant reports-As noted in the Admin report, the Threemile project funding has FINALLY come through from DNRC for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarters for the RITP grant and both Threemile related grants have closed out.

Update on QuickBooks Online migration-Evans is still working through some issues with the changeover, most notably report formats, payroll and some other odds and ends.

Update on records disposal-the office has received a few emails from SOS on corrections to make to the forms that have been submitted. Evans has made those corrections and returned the forms. We anticipated hearing back from them later this month on all of the submissions, hopefully.

New Business

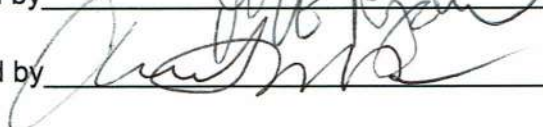
Staff evaluations are coming up in April-Evans will prepare the blank forms and will provide those to Jeff Ryan and Karl Christians. If the rest of the board members have comments for the evaluations, please provide those comments to Jeff and Karl.

Other Business

Jeff Ryan said that tentatively, the brushy toe project will happen on the 31st. The Carroll College Class will be there to cut willow that day. Installation should happen starting that day, but may not finish that day. It would be good to provide food/drinks for the group. Elena volunteered to take out the pizza if she knows where to pick it up, but will see if she can get the pizzas donated. Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:56 pm.

Announcements

Next meeting—April 9, 2026, Helena USDA Service Center Field Office, Helena Montana, 1 pm.

Approved by  Date 4/9/26
Recorded by  Date 4/9/2026