

Model Rule Instructions

Please review before proceeding

Commented [1]: The first section will be deleted.

All formatting and text color will be fixed prior to adoption.

Background:

These model rules are for use by Conservation Districts, Grazing Districts, and County Commissioners (hereafter, districts) administering the Montana Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act, known as the 310 law.

Pursuant to MCA 75-7-117, districts are required to adopt rules setting standards and guidelines for projects and exclusions within their districts that meet, exceed, or are not covered by the minimum standards set by DNRC. The minimum standards and guidelines set by DNRC are codified in MCA 36.2.4. *These model rules are a template* that can be used by districts for adoption of their rules.

Items shown in **red** below, and signified by either [LAW] or [ARM], are **required** for adoption. All other items are *recommended* for adoption. Districts may add additional rules that meet, exceed, or are not covered by the required items. However, districts may not adopt rules that are in contravention of the required items, create exemptions to the Law or ARMs, or otherwise reduce the standards of review described in the Law and ARMs.

This document has no legal status. However, after a district formally adopts the rules, they become law and are referred to as the district's Adopted Rules. This process requires a public hearing. Additional public notice and a formal resolution by the supervisors are also recommended.

New Changes:

In 2025, the legislature adopted SB10, which extended the timeline associated with the review of emergency notifications when there has been a governor declared state of emergency. This is the only substantive change to these model rules. All other changes are formatting changes designed to make this template document easier to use and understand.

How to Use This Document:

This document is a template. Explanations are provided throughout and are intended to help the district decide what of the optional language they would like to include. Before adoption, the explanations should be removed, blanks filled in, text color changed to all black, and the formatted should be checked for consistency in numbering (especially if optional items are not adopted or other items are added). If desired, a draft can be sent to the DNRC stream permitting coordinator for review and comment, prior to the public hearing, at hailey.graf@mt.gov.

Once rules have been adopted, CDs must send a completed copy to DNRC for recordkeeping. It is also highly recommended that CDs include their adopted rules on their website for the public.

ADOPTED RULES

For
Lewis and Clark Conservation District

to
Implement the Natural Streambed and Land
Preservation Act of 1975
Chapter No. 463, Montana Session Laws 1975;
Title 75, Chapter 7, MCA
Senate HB 310, 1975 Legislature

Amended by 1977 Legislature
Amended by 1979 Legislature
Amended by 1987 Legislature
Amended by 1995 Legislature
Amended by 2003 Legislature
Amended by 2019 Legislature
Amended by 2025 Legislature

Compiled by
Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation
in consultation with
Montana Association of Conservation Districts
1625 Eleventh Avenue
P.O. Box 201601
Helena, Montana 59620-1601

Revised: 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Commented [2]: Page numbers will be edited once everything is added or deleted as needed.

CHAPTER 1

RULE 1. TITLE	5
RULE 2. POLICY	5
RULE 3. PURPOSE	6
RULE 4. DEFINITIONS	6
RULE 5. APPLICABILITY	9
RULE 6. AQUATIC AND RIPARIAN ATTRIBUTES - EXCLUSIONS	11
RULE 7. FORMS	12
RULE 8. PROJECT REVIEW	13
RULE 9. APPLICATION PROCESS	13
RULE 10. DECISION	17
RULE 11. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	19
RULE 12. PROJECT CONSTRUCTION	21
RULE 13. DISPUTE RESOLUTION	23
RULE 14. INSPECTION OF PROJECTS - PROJECT FOLLOW-UP	24
RULE 15. EMERGENCIES	25
RULE 17. PENALTY - RESTORATION	27
RULE 18. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE	28
RULE 19. ORDERS ON VIOLATIONS	29
RULE 20. DECLARATORY RULING	29
RULE 21. PROCESS FOR DECLARATORY RULING	30
RULE 22. JUDICIAL REVIEW OF DECLARATORY RULING	31
RULE 23. SURETY BONDS	32

CHAPTER 2

RULE 24. RESERVOIR /STREAM PROJECT STANDARDS	32
RULE 25. MISSOURI RIVER BOAT LAUNCH SITE STANDARD	38

CHAPTER 1

RULE 1. TITLE.

- (1) These rules may be cited as the Lewis and Clark Conservation District Adopted Rules for implementation of the Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act of 1975, as amended, commonly referred to as the 310 law.

Explanation:

Most rules normally contain a short title such as the above. The name of the local district or county adopting the rules will be inserted in the blank space. Remove additional words in parenthesis. Adoption recommended.

Commented [3]: This will be deleted

RULE 2. POLICY.

- (1) It is the policy of the Lewis and Clark Conservation District that the natural rivers and streams, and the lands and property immediately adjacent to them, within this District are to be protected and preserved to be available in their natural or existing, state, and to prohibit unauthorized projects, and in so doing to keep soil erosion and sedimentation to a minimum, except as may be necessary and appropriate after due consideration of all factors involved. [LAW]

- (2) Further, it is the policy of this District to recognize the needs of irrigation and agricultural use of the rivers and streams of the state of Montana and to protect the use of water for any useful or beneficial purpose as guaranteed by the constitution and laws of the State of Montana. [LAW]

- (3) The legislature, mindful of its constitutional obligations under Article II, section 3, and Article IX of the Montana constitution, has enacted the Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act of 1975. In recognition of the legislature's intent, it is the district's intent that the requirements of this Act and implementing rules provide adequate remedies for the protection of the environmental life support system from degradation and provide adequate remedies to prevent unreasonable depletion and degradation of natural resources. [LAW]

Explanation:

Section (3) added to incorporate 2003 legislative change to 75-7-102. Section (1) and (2) are from 75-7-102. Insert district or county name in (1) and remove additional words. Choose either "district" or "county" in (2) and remove additional words.

Commented [4]: This will be deleted

RULE 3. PURPOSE.

- (1) The purpose of these rules is to provide guidance to all concerned parties regarding the administration of The Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act in the Lewis and Clark

Conservation District; and to specify procedures for compliance with the policy contained in Rule 2.

Explanation:

Add name and remove additional words in parenthesis. Adoption recommended.

Commented [5]: Delete in final version

RULE 4. DEFINITIONS.

Unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions are applicable to these rules:

- 1) "Act" means The Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act. [ARM]
- 2) "Activity" or "activities" means a proposed physical alteration or modification to a natural perennial-flowing stream or river, its bed, or its immediate banks.
- 3) "Applicant" means any person presenting notice of a project to the supervisors. [LAW]
- 4) "Application" means a notice of proposed project on a form provided under Rule 7, Forms, and containing all of the required information.
- 5) "Bed" means the channel occupied by a stream. [ARM]
- 6) "Channel" means the area of a stream measured from mean high water mark to mean high water mark. [ARM]
- 7) "Department" means the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.
- 8) "District" means:
 - (a) a conservation district under Title 76, Chapter 15, in which the project will take place;
 - (b) a grass conservation district under Title 76, Chapter 16, where a conservation district does not exist; or
 - (c) the board of county commissioners in a county where a district does not exist. [LAW]
- 9) "Directly affected person" means a person who by means of an affidavit establishes that as a result of the proposed action the person's property or water rights will more likely than not be impacted by soil erosion, sedimentation, flooding, or channel alteration, or the stream flow, turbidity or water quality will more likely than not be altered at or near the person's property or diversion point, or that the fish or aquatic habitat in the stream in which the person has a management interest will more likely than not be altered by the project. For purposes of this definition, person includes a government entity.

- 10) "Emergency" means an unforeseen event or combination of circumstances that call for immediate action to safeguard life, including human or animal, or property, including growing crops, without giving time for the deliberate exercise of judgment or discretion under the Act. [ARM]
- 11) "Immediate banks" means the area above the mean high water mark and directly adjacent to a stream which when disturbed will physically alter or modify the state of a stream in contravention of 75-7-102, MCA. [ARM]
- 12) "Extreme Drought" means a prolonged period of less than normal precipitation such that the lack of water causes a hydrologic imbalance as designated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as, at least, abnormally dry.
- 13) "Livestock grazing activities" means grazing animals.
- 14) "Mean high water mark" means the line that water impresses on the land for sufficient periods to cause physical characteristics that distinguish the area below the line from above it. Characteristics of the area below the line include, when appropriate, deprivation of the soil of substantially all terrestrial vegetation and destruction of its agricultural value. [ARM]
- 15) "Natural perennial-flowing stream" means a stream, which in the absence of diversion, impoundment, appropriation, or extreme drought, flows continuously at all seasons of the year and during dry as well as wet years. [ARM]
- 16) "Permit" means the written consent of the supervisors authorizing a proposed project.
- 17) "Person" means any individual, corporation, firm, partnership, association, or other legal entity, not covered under 87-5-502. [LAW]
- 18) "Physical alteration or modification" means human-caused actions resulting in the placement, removal, or disturbance of materials of any nature or character.
- 19) "Plan of Operation" or "annual maintenance plan" means an annual plan for a project of recurring nature that, if approved by the supervisors, authorizes a specific activity for a period not to exceed 10 years. [ARM]

Explanation:

"Plan of Operation" is the term defined in the ARM. However, districts and applicants often refer to it as the annual maintenance plan. The district is required to include the

definition for "Plan of Operation," but may choose to include the additional term of "annual maintenance plan."

Commented [6]: Delete in final version

20) "Project" means a physical alteration or modification that results in a change in the state of a natural, perennial-flowing stream or river, its bed, or its immediate banks.

Project does not include:

- (a) an activity for which a plan of operation has been submitted to and approved by the district. Any modification to the plan must have prior approval of the district.
- (b) customary and historic maintenance and repair of existing irrigation facilities that do not significantly alter or modify the stream in contravention of 75-7-102.
- (c) livestock grazing activities. [LAW]

21) "Stream" means any natural, perennial-flowing stream or river, its bed, and its immediate banks except a stream or river that has been designated by district rule as not having significant aquatic and riparian attributes in need of protection or preservation under 75-7-10, [LAW] and includes the stream's channels from its mouth to its source, even if portions go dry periodically. [Optional]

Deleted: immediate banks, and its channels and includes the entire stream from its mouth to its source even if portions go dry periodically. The term does not include

Deleted: 102, MCA.

22) "Supervisors" means the board of supervisors of a conservation district, the directors of a grass conservation district, or the board of county commissioners where a proposed project is not within a district. [LAW]

23) "Team" means one representative of the supervisors, one representative of the department, and the applicant or the applicant's representative. [LAW]

24) "Written consent of the supervisors," means a written decision of the supervisors approving a project and specifying activities authorized to be performed in completing the project. [LAW]

RULE 5. APPLICABILITY.

(1) The district will make determinations on the applicability of these rules, the Act, and the streams covered under the Act.

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(2) The act and these rules apply to projects on any natural perennial-flowing stream or portions thereof, including its channels, unless the stream has been designated as not having significant aquatic and riparian attributes in need of protection or preservation. A district may consider a stream to flow perennially if it dries up periodically due to man-made causes, or extreme drought. [ARM]

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(3) A person who is directly affected by the applicability, interpretation, or implementation of these rules or the Act and who disagrees with a jurisdictional determination made by the supervisors may request a declaratory ruling under Rule 20, Declaratory Ruling. A person may not request a declaratory ruling under Rule 20 for a final action of the supervisors' approval, modification, or denial of a proposed project or an emergency action. [LAW]

Explanation:

This portion of the statute references numbering that does not match the formatting found in this document. The wording has been updated slightly to better reflect the exact wording of the statute while still fitting within the formatting of this document. Adoption is required.

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(4) These rules do not apply to ditches, intermittent streams, or wetlands not associated with the bed or immediate banks of a stream.

Commented [7]: Delete in final version

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(5) In order for a stream to be covered under the Act, it must:

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(a) be a natural waterway.

Natural rivers or streams that have been rechanneled for road construction, flood control, irrigation, or other public works are considered natural waterways.

Natural rivers or streams that are used as part of an irrigation delivery system as allowed under 85-2-411, MCA, are considered a natural waterway, but only if those natural streams had perennial flow prior to diverting water through them.

Artificial or man-made waterways that have been constructed for the purposes of conveying water for any purpose are not considered a natural waterway.

Flood channels, high water channels, and side channels of natural, perennial-flowing streams are considered part of a stream if water naturally enters the channels during high water or normal flow.

(b) contain continuous natural flows.

- i. Water diverted into a natural channel for the withdrawal or diversion downstream shall not be considered part of the natural flow of a stream;
- ii. Water feeding a natural channel from any ground water source, tributary, springs, or other natural source, shall be considered part of the natural flow.
- iii. Water stored in a reservoir that maintains or raises the flow of a stream shall be considered natural flow.

iv. Streams that dry up because of diversion, impoundments, appropriation, or extreme drought shall be considered to have continuous natural flows.

Explanation:

Rule 5(5) has been included in the model rules for the last several iterations. It is included as highly recommended (but optional) language to help clarify what streams do and do not fall under 310 jurisdiction. The overall concepts are backed by statute and administrative rule and adoption is recommended.

(6) The district may use, but is not limited to, the following information to make its determinations:

- (a) USGS maps;
- (b) Water Resource Surveys;
- (c) Water rights records;
- (d) Landowner and resident interviews;
- (e) Hydrology reports;
- (f) On-site evaluations to gather information on geomorphology, vegetation, insects; past human activity;
- (g) Historical information;
- (h) Aerial photos;
- (i) Stream flow data; or
- (j) Any other relevant information.

(7) The district, either on its own motion, or if petitioned to review the designation of a stream, will use the factors set forth in this rule to make a determination.

(7) **Persons dissatisfied with the supervisors' determination may petition with district to make a declaratory ruling, as outlined in Rule 20, Declaratory Ruling.**

(8) All lakes and reservoirs located on the Missouri River within Lewis & Clark County shall be considered part of the Missouri River and therefore part of a perennial stream.

RULE 6. AQUATIC AND RIPARIAN ATTRIBUTES - EXCLUSIONS

(1) This rule describes the process for excluding natural perennial-flowing streams from district jurisdiction where there is no need for protection under 75-7-102, MCA. The process for determining whether a stream is a natural perennial-flowing stream is described in Rule 5, Applicability.

Commented [8]: Delete in final version

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 2 + Numbering Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 0.5" + Indent at: 0.75"

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(2) The district may exclude a stream, or portion thereof, upon determination that the stream does not have significant aquatic and riparian attributes in need of protection or preservation under the Act [ARM].

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(a) In order to make a determination, the district must conduct a public meeting to gather information relative to the aquatic and riparian attributes of a stream. Notice of the public meeting shall be publication of a notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the area at least twice with an interval of at least 14 days between the two publication dates. The first notice must be published at least 28 days prior to the meeting.

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 2 + Numbering
Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned
at: 0.5" + Indent at: 0.75"

(b) If after a public meeting, the district determines that a stream has no significant aquatic and riparian attributes in need of protection or preservation, the district may exclude the stream, or portion thereof, from jurisdiction of this act by adoption of a district rule. [ARM]

Explanation:

If a district has perennial-flowing streams that are excluded, these could be added here, too. The process described here, to exclude perennial-flowing streams, is different from the process to determine if a stream is perennial. (1) was added to clarify this. If a district has criteria it uses to determine if a stream has "aquatic or riparian attributes in need of protection," it should be added here.

Commented [9]: Delete in final version

RULE 7. FORMS.

(1) The district and the applicant shall use the following forms.

(a) Form 270 – Notice of Proposed Project is the application form to be submitted by the applicant to the supervisors for project review. The Joint Application for Proposed Work on Streams, Wetlands, Floodplains, and Other Water Bodies is considered Form 270.

(b) Form 271 – Arbitration Agreement to be used by team members who are requesting to resolve disputes through arbitration.

(c) Form 272 – Team Member Report for team members to submit project recommendations to the supervisors.

(d) Form 273 – Supervisors' Decision, or permit, to convey district's decision to the applicant and team members.

(e) Form 274 – Official Complaint Form for a person to notify the district of an activity taking place without written consent of the supervisors.

(f) Form 275 – Emergency Report for a person to notify the district of projects undertaken during an emergency to safeguard life, property, or growing crops. [ARM]

(2) A district may add to the standard forms and may create additional forms. Any district modifying or creating additional forms must provide a copy to the department of natural resources and conservation [ARM].

(3) The district will accept forms generated by other districts, however, additional information may be required of the applicant. [Optional]

Explanation:

Section (3) is optional. If your district will not accept forms from other CDs, omit (3).

RULE 8. PROJECT REVIEW.

(1) A person planning to engage in a project that will physically alter or modify a stream or river, its bed or immediate banks, must receive a permit prior to undertaking the project. [ARM] To receive a permit, a person must follow the application process.

(2) The district shall review all projects to ensure they are achieved in a manner consistent with the policy set forth in the Act. The supervisors in making their decision to approve, modify, or deny an application, shall determine the purpose of the project and whether the applicant is using a reasonable means of accomplishing the project. [ARM] The onsite inspection and decision-making process is outlined in 75-7-112, and these rules.

(3) The district may reject notices of proposed projects that are not complete. The time frame for project review starts when the application is accepted by the district [ARM].

Explanation:

Rule 8(3) was summarized in the previous template; however, it is included in the ARM and is required for adoption.

Commented [10]: Remove in final version

RULE 9. APPLICATION PROCESS.

(1) It is the applicant's responsibility to provide sufficient information for the district to make a reasonable determination to approve, modify, or deny the application. Incomplete applications may not be accepted. To be complete, the information submitted must be

credible and all of the necessary parts of the form filled in with the required information.

Information to be provided by the applicant, must include, but is not limited to:

- (a) The location of the project;
- (b) The purpose of the project;
- (c) A detailed description of how the project will be accomplished;
- (d) Project plans and drawings;
- (e) Maps of the project site;
- (f) Proposed dates of construction;
- (g) Length of time to complete the project;
- (h) If required by the district, engineering designs; [ARM]
- (i) And for commercial timber projects on private land, the Forest Practices Notification under Streamside Management Zone law.

Explanation:

Rule 9(1)(a) is not actually listed in the ARM as required, but obviously it's a good idea to require. Rule 9(1)(i) was added to highlight that districts may require an applicant to submit information detailing their intention to follow SMZ requirements.

Commented [11]: Delete in final version

(2) The supervisors may require an applicant to provide additional information for projects that appear, from a review of the application, to have the potential to impact the flow characteristics of the stream.

- (a) The following additional information may be required if requested by the district:
 - i. Names and addresses of landowners that may be potentially impacted by the proposed project;
 - ii. A description of the potential impacts to the stream from the project wherever they may reasonably be expected to occur;
 - iii. Design drawings(s) that clearly depict the plan, profile, and typical cross-section views of the proposed activity;
 - iv. Engineering designs;
 - v. Project alternatives considered; and
 - vi. Any other information needed to make an informed decision.
- (b) If required, the information required in subsections (2)(a)(i) and (ii) must be developed with the assistance of a person with experience in identifying potential impacts to stream flow characteristics. The information required in subsection (2)(a)(iii) must be developed with the assistance of a person with experience in the design or construction of projects. Information required in subsections (2)(a)(i) through (iii) must be accompanied by a certified statement from the person who assisted with the

development of the information documenting the person's engineering education and/or qualifications to provide assistance under (2)(a)(iv) must be provided.

(3) Notice of Proposed Project/Permit Application

- (a) **The notice of proposed project (permit application) shall be made on Form 270 [ARM].**

The application may be either hand delivered, mailed to the supervisors at the district office, emailed to the district, or submitted through www.Gilly.org.

- i. The application will be officially accepted by the district or its representative if the application is complete and is for a project located in a stream or river or the lands immediately adjacent as described in these rules. The time frame specified in these rules begins upon acceptance of the application.

- (b) **Plans of Operation.** If a person is submitting an application for an activity that is conducted annually, such as maintenance of a bridge, culvert, or irrigation structure, the applicant may submit a plan of operation to the district. The district may approve the annual activity for a period of up to 10 years as described in Rule 10, Decision. Plans of operation that have been approved are subject to annual inspection by the district. In addition to indicating on Form 270 that the activity will be done on an annual basis, the applicant will provide the following information to the conservation district:

- i. The reason for on-going activity and why it is necessary;
- ii. Time of year -- the dates for which the activity will start and be completed each year, including the number of days the activity will take place;
- iii. Where the activity will take place;
- iv. How often the activity will take place;
- v. An explanation, in detail, of how the activity will take place; and
- vi. An explanation of how the applicant will keep soil erosion and sedimentation to a minimum.

- (c) **The district or the district's representative shall, within 10 working days of accepting an application, send a copy of the application to the Department [LAW].**

- (d) Where a single land use activity, such as a timber sale or utility boring, involves multiple locations of a single overall project, such as the placement of several culverts, application for all proposed stream alterations in conjunction with land use activity may be made on a single application. The application shall include a map and legal description of all the multiple locations of the projects.

- (e) **If, at any time during the review process, the supervisors determine that the proposal is not a project or that these rules are otherwise inapplicable to the activity, the applicant will be notified in writing that written consent of the supervisors is not necessary [LAW].**

(4) Formation of a Team

- (a) The department shall, within 5 working days of receipt of the application, inform the supervisors whether the Department requests an on-site inspection by a team [LAW]
- (b) The supervisors shall call a team together within 20 days of receipt of the request of the department for an on-site inspection. A member of the team shall notify the supervisors, in writing within 5 working days after a notice of inspection if the team member waives participation in the inspection. [LAW]
 - i. If the Department does not request an on-site inspection within the time specified in the subsection, the supervisors may approve, modify, or deny the project. [LAW]
- (c) Each member of the team shall recommend, within 30 days of the date of inspection approval, modification, or denial of the project to the supervisors, using the Team Member Report (Form 272). [LAW]
 - i. The applicant may waive participation in this recommendation. [LAW] A non-response is considered a waiver. [Optional]
- (d) The supervisors may extend, at the request of any team member, the time limits provided in this rule, when, in their determination, the time provided is not sufficient to carry out the purposes of the Act and these rules. The time extension may not exceed one year from the date of acceptance of the application. The applicant must be notified of the initial time extension within 60 days of the date of acceptance of the application and must be notified within 7 working days of the supervisors' action granting the extension. [LAW]

Explanation:

Subsection (1) repeats ARM and is mandatory, Subsection (2) provides flexibility or options for a district to request more information if needed, Subsection (3) is derived from 75-7-112. Note: Revisions to the law in 1995 eliminated the need for a board meeting to determine whether an application is for a project. The law says a supervisor can designate someone to officially accept an application. To be accepted, an application must be complete and for a project as designated by these rules. If there is any doubt, the application should be accepted and a team inspection scheduled, if requested by FWP. If the board determines at any time during the process that these rules don't apply to the application, the applicant may be notified that a 310 permit is not required.

The board can still choose to "accept" applications at their regular board meetings. In this case, alternate language can be used for (3)(a)(i) such as: Form 270 will be officially accepted by the district at its regularly scheduled board meeting if the application is complete and is for an activity that will alter or modify a stream.

Deleted: ¶

Paragraph (3)(d) provides an option to simplify applications for multiple activities. Only one application needs to be filed where each activity is part of an overall project conducted by the same applicant. Note: CDs must follow time frames outlined in law. Timeframes may be extended, but require a motion to do so. Be sure to record in minutes that a decision was made to extend timeframes.

A written record of all decisions must be made and kept in the 310 files. It is a good idea to also note conversations with dates.

Commented [12]: Delete in final version

RULE 10. DECISION.

(1) The supervisors shall review the proposed project and affirm, overrule, or modify the individual team recommendations and notify the applicant and team members within 60 days of the date of application, of their decision. [LAW] The Supervisor's Decision Form 273 is used and is provided to the applicant as their permit. [ARM]

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(2) The team, in making its recommendation, and the supervisors, in denying, approving, or modifying a project, shall determine:

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(a) the purpose of the project; and

(b) whether the project is a reasonable means of accomplishing the purpose of the proposed project. To determine if the project is reasonable, the following must be considered:

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 2 + Numbering
Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned
at: 0.5" + Indent at: 0.75"

(c) the effects of soil erosion and sedimentation, considering the methods available to complete the project and the nature and economics of the various alternatives;

(d) whether there are modifications or alternative solutions that are reasonably practical that would reduce the disturbance to the stream and its environment and better accomplish the purpose of the proposed project;

(e) whether the proposed project will create harmful flooding or erosion problems upstream or downstream;

(f) the effects on stream channel alteration;

(g) the effects on stream flow, turbidity, and water quality caused by materials used or by removal of ground cover; and,

(h) the effect on fish and aquatic habitat. [LAW]

(3) If the supervisors determine that a proposed project or part of a proposed project should be modified, they may condition their approval upon the modification. [LAW]

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(4) The supervisors may not approve or modify a proposed project unless the supervisors determine that the purpose of the proposed project will be accomplished by reasonable means. [LAW]

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(5) Decisions to approve, modify, or deny an application must be made by a concurrence of a majority of the supervisors.

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(6) The applicant must notify the supervisors in writing within 30 days of receipt of the permit if the applicant wishes to proceed with the project in accordance with the permit. No work may begin on a project before the end of the fifteen-day waiting period unless all team members and the district give written permission. [LAW]

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(7) Unless otherwise stated, the term of a permit is one year from the date of the supervisor's decision. An applicant may request, and the district may approve a one-year extension if for any reason the project could not be completed within the initial term of the permit.

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(8) A plan of operation may be approved for activities of a recurring nature for a period not to exceed 10 years. [LAW] In order to qualify for an approved plan of operation, the activities must occur in the same location and in the same manner on an annual basis. No time extensions will be given on annual maintenance permits. When the term of a permit for an annual maintenance permit has expired, a person must submit a new application.

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

Explanation:

This section follows decision process outlined in the law. (6) was updated to reflect HB383 in the 2019 legislature extending appeal timeframe from 15 to 30 days. (10) from the previous model rule was moved to a new section, Public Participation, Rule 11, which consolidates rules pertaining to public participation. Note: (8) deals with decisions pertaining to plans of operation, applicant must provide all the information required in Rule 9, application process. A CD may approve a multi-year project based on a number of conditions and may require the applicant to notify the CD when work starts and ends. Care should be given when modifying a project.

Commented [13]: Delete in final version

RULE 11. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

(1) All business of the supervisors shall be conducted in an open meeting after reasonable notice has been given. [LAW]

(2) A team inspection is not a meeting of the supervisors, however, the public may participate in a team inspection if the landowner has given permission. The district is not responsible for securing this permission or providing transportation to the site.

(3) Unless privacy interests of an applicant outweigh the public's right to know, all district records are available to the public. [LAW] The district chair shall make determinations regarding privacy issues in accordance with applicable statutes.

- (a) The district chair may close a meeting during the time of a meeting that the discussion relates to a matter of individual privacy and then if and only if the district chair determines that the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merit of public disclosure. The individual about whom the discussion pertains may waive the right to privacy. In that event, the meeting shall remain open.

(4) The district shall keep minutes of its meetings and decisions under these rules. [LAW]

(5) Conduct of Regular Meetings/Public Information Meetings

- (a) Before a meeting is held to take final action on a notice of proposed project, the supervisors shall give reasonable notice to the applicant and other persons who may be directly affected by the decision.
 - i. Notice of regular, special, and public information meetings shall be given a minimum of 5 days in advance of the meeting by posting the notice in 5 conspicuous places, or by advertising in the local media, by a news story, or by posting a notice on the district's website.
 - ii. The district may require the applicant to give written notice to any person the district determines may be directly affected by a proposed project.
- (b) Meetings shall be conducted at the discretion of the Chair under normal rules of meeting procedure. All directly affected persons, including the applicant, shall be provided an opportunity to state their case and to present relevant evidence supporting their positions. At the discretion of the Chair, each directly affected person may also ask relevant questions of another directly affected person.

(6) The district may hold a public informational meeting when the supervisors determine a proposed project to be controversial, or where additional information is desired prior to final action by the supervisors. If the matter is of significant interest to the public, members of the public shall be given the opportunity to comment on the proposed project prior to final action by the supervisors.

(7) The district may hold a public hearing to gather information relative to making an initial designation of a perennial-flowing stream.

(8) Adopting Rule Changes/Public Hearings to Remove Perennial Streams

(a) The district shall conduct a public hearing before adopting any changes in these rules.

[LAW]

(b) The district shall conduct a public hearing, if petitioned, to gather information about whether a natural perennial-flowing stream has significant aquatic and riparian attributes in need of protection or preservation under 75-7-102.

(c) Notice of public hearing to be conducted under (6)(a), and (b), shall be given by publication of a notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the area at least twice with an interval of at least 14 days between the two publication dates. The first notice must be published at least 28 days prior to the hearing.

Explanation:

(5)(a) describes the recommended timeframe for providing public notice of 310 permit meetings. If your CD has received different guidance from a county attorney or other legal advisor, substitute timeframes given by them.

(8)(c) mimics the timeframe for public notice for procurement. While not required under 310 law, it is recommended that CDs provide additional public notice of hearings related to declaratory rulings, changes to these rules, and exempting streams due to lack of aquatic or riparian attributes in need of protection.

Commented [14]: Delete in final version

(9) Hearings for Declaratory Rulings.

(a) Hearings for declaratory rulings shall be conducted in accordance with the Act and Rule 20, Declaratory Ruling.

(b) Notice of hearing for declaratory rulings shall be given as described in this (6)(c) of this rule.

RULE 12. PROJECT CONSTRUCTION.

The following standards shall apply to all projects:

(1) Projects must be designed and constructed using methods that minimize:

(a) adverse impacts, both upstream and downstream;

(b) future disturbance to the stream. [ARM]

(2) All disturbed areas must be managed during construction and reclaimed after construction to minimize erosion. [ARM]

- (3) Temporary structures used during construction must be designed to handle high flows reasonably anticipated during the project construction period. Temporary structures must be completely removed from the stream channel at the conclusion of construction and the area must be restored to a natural and stable condition. [ARM]
- (4) Channel alterations must be designed to retain original stream length or otherwise provide hydrologic stability. [ARM]
- (5) Streambank vegetation must be protected except where removal is necessary for completion of a project. When removal of vegetation is necessary, it must be kept to a minimum and revegetated as soon as possible. [ARM]
- (6) Riprap, rock, or other material used in a project must be of adequate size, shape, and must be properly placed to protect the streambank from erosion. [ARM]
- (7) The district may:
 - (a) limit the time and duration of construction to minimize impacts to the stream or associated aquatic life;
 - (b) require the applicant to submit engineering designs; when in the district's judgment, the project's complexity requires greater assurance of project stability to minimize impacts to the stream;
 - (c) require the applicant to provide project completion documentation, which may include photographs. [(8) (a-c) ARM]
- (8) Unless specifically authorized by the district, the following projects are prohibited:
 - (a) The placement of road fill material in a stream;
 - (b) The placement of debris or other materials in stream where it can erode or float into the stream;
 - (c) Projects that permanently prevent fish migration; and
 - (d) Excavation of streambed gravels. [ARM]
- (9) For streambank stabilization projects, the district encourages the use of methods that preserve or enhance natural stream habitat and function.
 - (a) Applications proposing the use of riprap or other hard streambank stabilization methods shall include information establishing that due consideration has been given to methods that use organic materials (e.g., root wads, riparian vegetation,

biodegradable geotextile fabrics, tree revetments) as the primary means of stabilization and that such methods are not practicable because:

- i. Sufficient long term durability would not be achievable;
- ii. Hydrodynamic considerations make it likely that the project would not meet its intended purpose;
- iii. The project would result in the same or greater impact on channel stability, flooding, erosion, and/or aquatic habitat; or
- iv. Economical considerations prevent the use of such methods.

(b) Live vegetation used in a project must remain viable and functional for one year after completion of the project. The district may perform follow-up inspections of projects involving live vegetation and may require that dead vegetation be replaced. [(12) (a) (i-iv) and (b) Optional]

Deleted: five years

(10) Instream woody debris should only be removed from the stream when necessary to complete a project or if significant property damage is imminent. If it is necessary to remove instream woody debris, the amount that is removed must be kept to a minimum. [Optional]

(11) All permanent stream crossings (e.g., bridges, culverts) should, at a minimum, span the width of the stream at the mean high water mark. [Optional]

(12) The applicant must notify the district in writing, either within 15 days of completion of the project, or prior to the end of the permit period, whichever comes first. [Optional]

Explanation:

These standards repeat ARM 36.2.410. Adoption Mandatory except where noted. (9-12) are optional. General standards such as the above will aid applicants in knowing what will be required of them in the construction of a project. If the district has other specific requirements for project approval, it is recommended that the district add to this section. Examples would be stipulations typically included in the supervisors' decision form, such as standard requirements for projects such as bridge spans, culverts, fords, dredging, riprap size and materials, retaining walls, use of BMPs. Use care in developing standards to ensure that standards do not change the law. Generally, the CD may not prohibit activities, but may set standards for approval to avoid certain impacts.

Deleted: ¶

¶

(14) Applications for the following activities are discouraged because they generally do not meet the reasonable means test required under 75-7-112(9)(b):¶

¶

- a. operation of construction equipment in a stream;¶
- b. excavation of streambed gravels;¶
- c. construction of in-stream ponds;¶
- d. construction of concrete retaining walls;¶
- e. construction of multiple crossings in a single reach of a stream;¶
- f. placement of railroad ties, tires, snow fence, concrete debris, or other materials that could be construed as debris in a stream

Commented [16]: Delete in final version

RULE 13. DISPUTE RESOLUTION.

(1) Any permit decision or decision regarding an emergency may be reviewed by an arbitration panel or by judicial review in the district court in the county where the project is located. Judicial review of an arbitration panel's decision may be made under the provisions of MCA,

Title 27, Chapter 5, Part 3 of the uniform arbitration act and must be brought in the county where the action is proposed to occur.[LAW]

- (2) The applicant may request arbitration as the method to resolve disputes by signing an arbitration agreement either before the application review process or within 30 working days of receipt of the supervisors' decision. [Arbitration Agreement]
- (a) If an applicant signs an arbitration agreement prior to the application review process, the applicant waives their right to judicial review. [Arbitration Agreement]

Explanation:

MCA 75-7-117 requires DNRC to develop an arbitration agreement. This agreement is Form 271 and is generally included on the back of the Supervisor Decision Form 273 and is required to be used by CDs. The Arbitration Agreement describes the process and timelines for arbitration.

Commented [17]: Delete in final version

- (3) The applicant may request judicial review of the supervisors' decision by filing a petition in district court within 30 working days of receipt of the supervisors' decision. [LAW]
- (4) Any member of the team other than the applicant may seek formal dispute resolution only through arbitration by signing an arbitration agreement within 5 working days of receipt of the supervisors' decision. [LAW]
- (5) The arbitration agreement is outlined on Form 271 and contains provisions for the appointment of arbitrators; the exercise of power by the arbitrators; the hearing process; and fees and expenses of arbitration. [ARM]
- (6) An applicant's choice of the judicial review remedy prevails over any other team member's request for arbitration. [LAW]
- (7) Subsection (1-6) do not preclude more informal means of dispute resolution. A meeting or meetings, to include, at a minimum, all of the team members and the supervisors, may be scheduled, at the discretion of the supervisors, at any time in order to discuss and attempt to resolve disputes. This subsection does not relieve the team member(s) wishing to dispute a permit decision of the duty to submit a request for arbitration or file a petition for a judicial review in district court in compliance with subsection (3) or any party from any other provision of the statute. [Optional, but highly encouraged]
- (8) An appeal of the determination made by judicial review may be made to the Montana Supreme Court. [LAW]

(9) Judicial review of an arbitration panel's decision may be made to district court under the Uniform Arbitration Act (Title 27, Chapter 5, Part 3, MCA). [LAW]

RULE 14. INSPECTION OF PROJECTS - PROJECT FOLLOW-UP.

- (1) The supervisors, team members, or their designated representative may inspect any project during or after construction to ensure that the conditions of the permit were followed and to provide technical assistance to the applicant.
- (2) The district shall notify the landowner prior to entering land to inspect a project, either orally or in writing.
- (3) The district may require the applicant to provide project completion documentation which may include photographs. [ARM]

Explanation:

CDs may follow up on projects to ensure compliance and this rule stipulates that, as well as the permission required. Subsection (3) is required, but subsections (1-2) are optional.

Commented [18]: Delete in final version

RULE 15. EMERGENCIES.

- (1) Except as provided in this rule, the provisions of these rules shall not apply to those actions that are necessary to safeguard life or property, including growing crops, during periods of emergency. The person responsible for taking action under this rule shall notify the supervisors in writing within 15 days of the action taken as a result of an emergency. [LAW]
- (2) The emergency notice given under subsection (1) must be provided on Form 275 and must contain the following information; [ARM]
 - (a) the location of the action taken;
 - (b) a general description of the action taken;
 - (c) the date on which the action was taken; and
 - (d) an explanation of the emergency causing the need for the action taken. [LAW]
- (3) The supervisors will determine if the action taken meets the definition of emergency as defined in ARM 36.2.402 and Rule 4 (10). Violations of the emergency procedures are subject to provisions of Rule 17, Penalty/Restoration. [LAW]

- (4) If the supervisors determine that the action taken meets the definition of a project, the supervisors shall send one copy of the Notice within 5 working days of its receipt, to the department. [LAW]
- (5) A team, called together as described in Rule 10, shall make an on-site inspection within 20 days of receipt of the emergency notice, unless the Governor has declared a state of emergency, in which case the team shall be called together within 30 days. [LAW]
- (6) Each member of the team shall recommend in writing, within 30 days of the date of the emergency notice, approval, modification or denial of the project, unless the Governor has declared a state of emergency, in which case their recommendation shall be made within 40 days. [LAW]
- (7) The supervisors shall review the emergency project and affirm, overrule, or modify the individual team recommendations and notify the applicant and team members of their decision within 60 days of receipt of the emergency notice.
 - (a) If an action is approved no further action is necessary in the part of the district or the applicant.
 - (b) In an emergency action that has been modified, the applicant must submit written notice on Form 270 to mitigate possible damages to the stream caused by the emergency action and to achieve a long-term solution, if feasible, to the emergency situation. Notice under this subsection must be filed within 90 days after the supervisors' decision.
 - (c) A person who has undertaken an emergency action that is denied shall submit written notice on Form 270 to obtain approval to remove the project to avoid further damages to the stream caused by the emergency action and to achieve a long-term solution, if feasible, to the emergency situation. Notice under this subsection must be filed within 90 days after the supervisors' decision. [LAW]
- (8) Disagreements with the supervisors' decision may be formally resolved according to Rule 13, Dispute Resolution. [LAW]
- (9) The failure of a person to perform the following, subjects the person to civil and criminal penalties:
 - (a) failure to provide emergency notice under subsection (1);
 - (b) failure to submit a notice of the project under subsection (7)(b) and (7)(c); or

(c) failure to implement the terms of a supervisors' decision for the purpose of mitigating the damage to the stream caused by the emergency action and of achieving a permanent solution, if feasible, to the emergency situation. [LAW]

Explanation:

This section was updated to reflect changes made by the 2025 legislature extending the emergency timelines when a governor-declared state of emergency is in effect. This entire section is required.

Commented [19]: Delete in final version

RULE 16. COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER LAWS.

- (1) Approval for proposed projects or alternate plans does not relieve the applicant of the responsibility of complying with Title 76, Chapter 5, MCA, floodway management and regulation where designated floodplains or designated floodways have been established in accordance with that chapter. [LAW]
- (2) These rules shall not impair, diminish, divest, or control any existing or vested water rights under the laws of the state of Montana or the United States. [LAW]
- (3) The issuance of written consent of the supervisors does not relieve the applicant of the responsibility to obtain other permits or landowner permissions that may be necessary to undertake a project. [Optional, but highly recommended]

Explanation:

A 310 permit is a separate approval needed to work in or near a stream. The applicant is responsible for complying with all laws. The joint application provides information for the applicant to inquire to other agencies about other requirements.

Commented [20]: Delete in final version

RULE 17. PENALTY - RESTORATION.

- (1) Except for emergency action, a project engaged in by any person without prior approval, or an activity performed outside the scope of written consent of the supervisors, is a public nuisance and subject to proceedings for immediate abatement. [LAW]
- (2) A person who initiates a project without the written consent of the supervisors, performs activities outside the scope of written consent of the supervisors, places a junked motor vehicle in a streambed or bank, or violates the emergency procedures of Rule 16 or the Act is:

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

- (a) guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction, the person shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$500; or
- (b) subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$500 for each day that person continues to be in violation. [LAW]

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 2 + Numbering
Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned
at: 0.5" + Indent at: 0.75"

(3) Each day of a continuing violation constitutes a separate violation. The maximum civil penalty is the jurisdictional amount for purposes of 3-10-301. A conservation district may work with a person who is subject to a civil penalty to resolve the amount of the penalty prior to initiating an enforcement action in justice's court to collect a civil penalty. [LAW]

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(4) In addition to the criminal fine or civil penalty provided in subsection (2), the person:

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

- (a) shall restore, at the direction of the court, the damaged stream, as recommended by the supervisors, to as near its prior condition as possible, or:
- (b) is civilly liable for the amount necessary to restore the stream. The amount of the liability may be collected in an action instituted pursuant to 3-10-301 (justice court) if the amount of liability does not exceed \$7,000. If the amount of liability for restoration exceeds \$7,000, then the action must be brought in district court. [LAW]

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 2 + Numbering
Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned
at: 0.5" + Indent at: 0.75"

(5) Any person may report a violation of these rules or of the Act to the county attorney or to the supervisors.

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

RULE 18. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE.

When a conservation district receives a complaint alleging a violation, the conservation district will follow the steps below:

- (1) Request that the complainant submit a written complaint on Form 274. The complaint should specify the nature of the alleged violation, who is involved, where it is taking place, and when it occurred.
- (2) Contact the alleged violator either by telephone or in writing and advise the person of the complaint and that a field investigation will take place. Inform the violator that if a violation is occurring, it must cease immediately.
- (3) Conduct a field investigation, collect evidence, and document the time, date, location, nature of activity, and the person(s) involved in activity. The district will acquire information to confirm or deny that the complaint was valid complaint and whether there is a violation of that Act. If the field investigation does not verify a violation, the district will notify the complainant and the alleged violator, in writing, of the districts findings.

(4) If a field investigation affirms a violation, the district will send a letter certified with return-receipt requested, setting forth the results of investigation, the course of action required to rectify the violation, and a deadline date for taking the corrective action. If the violator acknowledges the district's request and is willing to work with the district to correct the violation, the district may postpone issuing an Order assessing a civil penalty or forwarding the complaint to the county attorney. If the violator is not responsive to the letter and is not cooperative in correcting the violation, the supervisors may proceed with the violation in accordance with 75-7-123 and may issue a cease and desist order.

Explanation:

The complaint procedure is not described in MCA or ARM. This section was put together as a guide for CDs. While not required, it is highly recommended. Any changes to this procedure should be reviewed by legal counsel prior to adoption.

Commented [21]: Delete in final version

RULE 19. ORDERS ON VIOLATIONS.

(1) If the district determines that issuance of an Order is appropriate, the district shall send a letter to the violator, enclosing an order assessing a civil penalty not to exceed \$500 per violation per day. The letter will identify the specific violation, the district finding on noncompliance, the required corrective action, and time frames for compliance, the date the civil penalty commences, and the district's intent to seek judicial enforcement of the civil penalty if it is not paid. If the violator takes corrective action within the required time frame, the district may waive the order for civil penalty.

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

(2) If a violator fails to respond to the order, or to take corrective action, the district may seek judicial enforcement by turning the matter over to the county attorney or other legal service provider for the district.

Formatted: Outline numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering
Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left +
Aligned at: 0" + Indent at: 0.25"

Explanation:

Similar to the complaint procedure, this process is not outlined in MCA or ARM. This section was developed as a guide for CDs, and it reflects the CD's authority and responsibility to follow up on complaints and violations. Adoption is highly recommended. Any changes to this section should be reviewed by legal counsel prior to adoption.

Commented [22]: Delete in final version

RULE 20. DECLARATORY RULING.

(1) A person who is directly affected by the supervisors' determination of applicability, interpretation, or implementation of the law, these rules, a written consent, or a designation

of a stream, including a portion of a stream, and who disagrees with a determination may petition the supervisors for a declaratory ruling. [LAW]

(2) Upon receipt of the petition, the supervisors' will determine whether the matter constitutes significant public interest.

(a) If the issue raised in the petition for a declaratory ruling is of significant interest to the public, the supervisors shall provide a reasonable opportunity for interested persons and the petitioner to submit data, information, or arguments, orally or in written form, prior to making a ruling. [LAW]

(b) If the issue raised in the petition for a declaratory ruling is not of significant interest to the public, the supervisors shall provide a reasonable opportunity for the petitioner to submit data, information, or arguments, orally or in written form, prior to making a ruling. [LAW]

(3) Data and information may be submitted at a hearing before the supervisors. Data and information submitted to the supervisors outside of the hearing process must be made available for public review prior to the hearing being conducted before the supervisors. [LAW]

(4) A proceeding held under this section is not a contested case proceeding. A declaratory ruling under this section is not subject to the provisions of the Montana Administrative Procedures Act. No party may cross examine any party submitting data and information to the supervisors, but all data and information must be verified by the party submitting it. [LAW]

(5) This rule may not be interpreted or construed to allow a person to petition for a declaratory ruling under this section for an administrative review of a decision of the supervisors to grant, deny, or condition a written consent for a project or a project undertaken during an emergency. Review of these decisions is exclusively provided for in 75-7-121 as it pertains to arbitration or judicial review. [LAW]

Explanation:

This section added because of the 2003 legislative change. This Rule and Rule 22 describe the process to make a formal, binding decision regarding questions of jurisdiction.

Commented [23]: Delete in final version

RULE 21. PROCESS FOR DECLARATORY RULING.

(1) A directly affected person must submit a petition that states how and why the person is directly affected by the district's action and the specific question or initial determination

made by the district to be addressed in the declaratory ruling. The petitioner must also indicate if they are requesting a hearing before the supervisors.

(2) A hearing before the supervisors will be held if either the petitioner requests it or the matter is determined to be of significant public interest under Rule 20. If a hearing is to be held, the following process will be followed:

- (a) Within 30 days of the filing of a petition, the district shall appoint a hearing officer, who may be a supervisor, to conduct the declaratory ruling hearing. The hearing officer will regulate the course of the hearing, and with a concurrence of the district, set the time, place and date of the hearing.
- (b) Within 30 days of appointment of a hearings officer, the district shall set a date for a hearing to gather information and data, allow public comment, and allow the public to submit written comment. The hearing may be continued if necessary. The district shall provide notice of the hearings as described in Rule 11, Public Participation. A quorum of the supervisors must be present at the hearing. The district shall maintain a record of the petition, notices, all information and data gathered, any proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law.
- (c) The hearing officer will make a recommendation to the supervisors for their approval and adoption within 60 days of the conclusion of the hearings process. The district may extend this time frame if necessary.

(3) The supervisors, and if a hearing is held, the hearing officer, shall consider the totality of all the circumstances based on all information presented.

(4) A declaratory ruling, consisting of findings of fact and conclusions of law, must be made by a concurrence of a majority of the board. Only those supervisors present during the hearing will participate in the decision.

Explanation:

This section was reformatted and minor changes were made to clarify the process differences for a declaratory ruling of significant public interest. Adoption is recommended.

Commented [24]: Note that the adoption of the preceding is optional. The old version is just below the explanation.

OLD VERSION

RULE 21. PROCESS FOR DECLARATORY RULING.

- (1) A directly affected person must submit a petition that states how and why the person is directly affected by the district's action and the specific question or initial determination made by the district to be addressed in the declaratory ruling
- (2) Within 30 days of the filing of a petition, the district shall appoint a hearing officer, who may be a supervisor, to conduct the declaratory ruling hearing. The hearing officer will regulate the course of the hearing, and with a concurrence of the district, set the time, place and date of the hearing.
- (3) Within 30 days of appointment of a hearings officer, the district shall set a date for a hearing to gather information and data, allow public comment, and allow the public to submit written comment. The hearing may be continued if necessary. The district shall provide notice of the hearings as described in Rule 11, Public Participation. A quorum of the supervisors must be present at the hearing. The district shall maintain a record of the petition, notices, all information and data gathered, any proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law.
- (4) The hearing officer will make a recommendation to the supervisors for their approval and adoption within 60 days of the conclusion of the hearings process. The district may extend this time frame if necessary.
- (5) The hearing officer and the supervisors shall consider information provided by the petitioning party to be persuasive unless the information is overcome by a preponderance of all available information presented at the hearing.
- (6) A declaratory ruling, consisting of findings of fact and conclusions of law, must be made by a concurrence of a majority of the board. Only those supervisors present during the hearing will participate in the decision.

RULE 22. JUDICIAL REVIEW OF DECLARATORY RULING

- (1) A directly affected person or an interested person dissatisfied with a declaratory ruling may seek judicial review in district court. The district court review shall be only on information and data established on record before the district. A district determination may be reversed or modified if the declaratory ruling is:
 - (a) in violation of a constitutional or statutory provision;
 - (b) in excess of the statutory authority of the supervisors;
 - (c) affected by error of law; or

(d) arbitrary or capricious, characterized by abuse of discretion, or a clearly unwarranted exercise of discretion. [LAW]

(2) Any aggrieved person who was a party to the declaratory ruling proceedings who is dissatisfied with the district court determination may seek judicial review by an appeal to the Montana Supreme Court. [LAW]

RULE 23. SURETY BONDS.

- (1) The supervisors may require the project applicant to furnish, prior to the commencement of a project and as a condition of the written consent of the supervisors, a sufficient surety bond approved by the supervisors, conditioned upon the proper reclamation of the streambed and land involved in the project and conformance with any conditions in the project permit.
- (2) Once an applicant has posted a sufficient surety bond and prior to the release of that bond, the supervisors shall inspect the applicant's completed project for proper reclamation and conformance with any conditions placed on the applicant's project permit. If the project passes inspection, the supervisors shall release the surety bond.
- (3) If an applicant's project is not properly reclaimed and does not properly conform to conditions placed on the applicant's project permit, and the applicant refuses after receiving a written warning containing notice of all deficiencies to properly reclaim the area in question or conform the project to the conditions on the permit, the supervisors shall, after granting the applicant an opportunity for a hearing before them, refuse to release said bond and shall take such legal action as is necessary to use such bond to the extent required to have the project properly reclaimed or to have all conditions of the approved project plan or permit met.

CHAPTER 2

Commented [25]: The entirety of chapter 2 is something that our board added in the 2013 revision.

RULE 24. RESERVOIR /STREAM PROJECT STANDARDS

- (1) Policy. The 310 Law's purpose is to fulfill the constitutional directive to prevent unreasonable depletion and degradation of natural resources. The following project standards are intended to balance the inalienable right to a clean and healthful environment with the inalienable right to acquire, possess and protect property understanding that each inalienable right carries with it recognition of corresponding

responsibilities. Article II, § 3, Montana Constitution (1972). The 310 Law recognizes that a person's reservoir/stream project can impact upon neighboring person's right to acquire, possess and protect property. The following standards are adopted to assure reservoir/stream shore stabilization, to minimize shoreline erosion, to foster the natural aesthetics of the reservoir/stream shoreline, and to assure the purpose of a project is accomplished by a reasonable means given consideration to the factors stated in Montana Code Annotated, 75-7-112(9)(b)(i) through (vi).

(2) Standards. A proposed project on a reservoir or perennial-flowing stream must meet the following standards:

(a) Dock, Warf, Pier

- (i) Docks must not exceed twenty (20) feet in length, not to include the ramp (gangway).
- (ii) Where the depth of the water, at the end of a twenty (20) foot dock on the Missouri River is less than five (5) feet), additional length may be allowed if the dock cannot be moved laterally to achieve the five (5) foot depth.
- (iii) The maximum length of the wing section on a dock, whether it shall be a T, F, 4 or L shaped dock, must not exceed the lesser of 30 feet or 30 percent of the lot frontage (See Figure #2, Dock Dimensions).

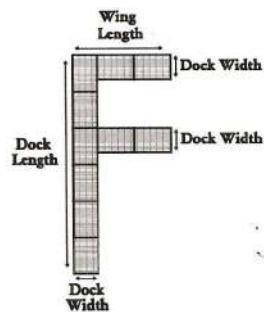


Figure 2. Dock Dimensions

- (iv) The width of the deck on a dock must not be greater than six (6) feet, except on a floating dock, width may be increased to eight (8) feet for greater stability.
- (v) If foam or similar easily damaged floatation systems are incorporated into the dock design, the material must be completely encased in solid wood or a suitable impervious, non-corrosive material such as aluminum or galvanized sheet metal so

as to avoid the breakup or scattering of materials. Plywood, particle board, or like materials, must not be used. Boards may be spaced up to one-half inch apart on the bottom or drain holes may be incorporated into other materials to aid in drainage.

- (vi) All floating docks must be suitably anchored to the river bottom or bank to avoid drift. Anchoring methods are limited to cable; galvanized chain or nylon or polypropylene rope attached to a suitable clean weight such as solid clean concrete, rock or steel blocks or a temporary pipe and post system which allows the dock sections to slide up and down. In addition, the end of the floating dock may be secured by cable, anchor, or post to keep the end of the dock stable.
- (vii) Only one dock is allowed per waterfront property ownership. This includes multiple contiguous lots under one family or related ownership, unless an individual dwelling or condominium type structure is constructed on each separate and legally defined lot, in which case more than one dock is allowed.
- (viii) Docks which have deteriorated to the extent that they may contaminate the river, such as having exposed white Styrofoam, must be immediately repaired as necessary to eliminate the risk of contamination or must be removed entirely from the water.
- (ix) It is a violation of these regulations to abandon docks or to otherwise allow docks or dock remnants to float out into the river unsecured.
- (x) Floating docks must be removed from the water by December 1 and anchored securely above the high water line.

(a) Marina

- (i) All marinas will be reviewed on an on-site basis. The applicant shall provide information on:
 - (A) Current;
 - (B) Water depth;
 - (C) Stream width;
 - (D) Stream configuration;
 - (E) Soils;
 - (F) Bank configuration; and

(G) Design plan documenting the marina is limited to the anticipated sizing and capacity needs of the project.

(ii) The streambed and bank must not be excavated or dredged in order to provide channels and suitable water depth for boating access into the marina.

(b) Boathouse, Boat Shelter, and Shore Station

(i) The streambed and bank shall not be excavated or dredged in order to provide channels and suitable water depth for boating access to a structure.

(ii) Concentration of run-off into the stream during construction is prohibited. The design plan must demonstrate that construction activities will not result in the concentration of run-off.

(iii) No boathouse, boat shelter or shore station shall incorporate a roof deck or other elevated deck.

(iv) Boat shelters and shore stations must not be longer than the dock length at that location.

(v) Boathouses, boat shelters, and shore stations must be constructed with non-reflective materials and designed, constructed and placed to be compatible with adjacent surroundings.

(vi) Roofing material containing asphalt is prohibited.

(vii) Toxic chemicals and pollutants such as petroleum products must not be stored over water.

(c) Boat Ramp and Boat Rail System

(i) Footings and/or the base of the boat ramp must be constructed below the pre-existing grade of the stream bank.

(ii) All material excavated from the stream to construct the boat ramp and not used as the ramp foundation material must be immediately and completely removed from the floodplain and deposited in such a manner as to prevent its re-entry into the stream.

(iii) Boat ramps must be of the same elevation as the pre-construction streambed and banks.

(iv) Maximum grade must not exceed 15%.

- (v) All ramps shall be finished with non-skid surface to insure maximum traction for vehicles launching and retrieving boats.
- (vi) Concrete boat ramp edges must be thickened to a minimum of twice the average thickness of the ramp in order to prevent erosive undercutting or breaking of ramp edges.
- (vii) Launching rails must be securely anchored to the stream bottom.
- (viii) The rails of the rail launching system must not exceed four (4) inches in height and the rail system must lie on and follow the grade of the existing streambed and banks. No portion of the rail may extend more than 18 inches above the immediately adjacent land.
- (ix) Only one boat ramp per waterfront property is allowed.
- (x) Ramps may have a maximum width of twelve feet.
- (xi) Linked concrete planks are preferred to poured slabs for their durability and natural sediment trapping ability.
- (xii) Bank stabilization is required to insure the stability of the ramp and immediate upstream and downstream banks.

(d) Bank Stabilization

- (i) The use of retaining walls solely for landscaping is prohibited.
- (ii) Retaining walls designed to extend the land area into the stream are prohibited.
- (iii) Retaining walls shall be built at or landward of the mean annual high water elevation and shall conform to the contours of the existing shoreline.
- (iv) Riprap must constitute the primary retaining wall method. Riprap retaining wall standards are as follows:
 - A. Riprap rock must be angular and sized properly for the specific task unless otherwise specified.
 - B. All riprap rock shall be free of silts, sands or fines.
 - C. Rock may be handpicked from the immediate stream bank but removal of said rock may only be allowed if a solid armament of rock remains in place. The removal of any rock that exposes silts, sands or fines is prohibited.
 - D. Unless otherwise specified, riprap rock must be toed-in below bottom of the stream and be placed at a maximum slope of 1.5:1.

E. Prior to the placement of riprap, filter fabric may be required to be placed along the stream bank and incorporated into the riprap design to inhibit erosion and the washing of fines through the riprap.

F. Use of concrete is not allowed for bank stabilization unless approved by DEQ.

(v) Concrete and other structure type retaining wall standards are as follows:

(A) The landward side of the retaining wall must extend at least two (2) inches but not more than eight (8) inches above the level of backfill to inhibit surface water run-off that may carry sediments to the stream.

(B) Within five (5) feet landward of any retaining wall, backfill must consist of easily drained gravel, rock, stone, sand or a combination of the above. In any retaining wall there must be drain or weep holes. Grass or a yard may not be established immediately behind a wall unless a silt barrier is included in the construction design.

(C) All material excavated for placement of the footings may be used as backfill behind the wall or otherwise be deposited outside of the floodplain.

(D) Backfill must be limited to that amount necessary to re-establish the pre-existing slope and contours of the landward side.

(E) If an existing wall has to be replaced, it must be completely removed from the floodplain and the replacement wall must be constructed in approximately the same location as the existing wall. If removal of the wall proves unfeasible or will cause environmental hazards (sedimentation, bank failure, or similar condition), the Board will consider an alternative method.

(e) Dredge, Fill, and Swim Beach Creation

(i) The stream banks may not be undercut or damaged.

(ii) Stream bank vegetation may not be damaged.

(iii) Fuel and lubricants may not be allowed to enter the stream or reservoir; if fuel or lubricants enter the stream or reservoir all operations must stop immediately and remedial efforts must begin immediately.

(iv) The dredge may only be operated during daylight hours.

(v) Dredging and/or filling is only permitted at the time of year specified on the permit.

(vi) Discharge of fill material into the stream is prohibited.

- (vii) Dredged areas must be stabilized with a protective armament as soon as possible after excavation. In areas where there is a rock layer on the surface of the streambed or bank, such rock may be removed and set aside, then replaced as a protective layer subsequent to the excavation.
- (viii) Dredging for the purpose of creating, enlarging, or improving an artificial harbor, lagoon, or in-stream pond is prohibited.
- (ix) Fill projects for the purpose of expanding existing land areas is prohibited.
- (x) Filling of wetlands is prohibited.
- (xi) Filling for the purpose of creating a swimming beach may be allowed. All fill must be clean, washed material free of silts, sands or fines.
- (xii) Permits for any dredging and filling may also be required by the Department of Natural Resources - Land Office, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as others. It is the applicant's responsibility to acquire all necessary permits.
- (xiii) The applicant will need to obtain a Point-Source Discharge Permit for Turbidity from the Department of Environmental Quality. Other permits that may be necessary for the project. It is the applicant's responsibility to acquire all necessary permits.
- (xiv) If dredging outside the wetted channel, effluent from the dredge must be run over a gravel bar or through a settling pond to remove suspended solids.
- (xv) Pits created by dredging must be filled at the conclusion of the dredging operation.

RULE 25. MISSOURI RIVER BOAT LAUNCH SITE STANDARD

(1) Findings and Policy.

- (a) The supervisors find in April 2012, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) conducted an analysis of boat launch sites on the Missouri River that included a 14.4 mile stretch in Lewis & Clark County from Holter Dam to the Cascade County line. FWP manages the stretch of the river primarily as a trout fishery, but also as a whitefish and walleye fishery. The analysis concluded because of the importance of these fisheries to the economy of Montana, expanding the number of boat launch site within the 14.4 mile stretch of the river is not necessary and may result in impacts to the fisheries and fish habitat.
- (b) It is the policy of Lewis & Clark Conservation District to take the findings and recommendations of FWP into consideration when evaluating a 310 permit application

that propose constructing new boat launch in the 14.4 mile stretch in Lewis & Clark County from Holter Dam to the Cascade County line.

(2) Standard. A proposed project on a reservoir must meet the following standard:

(a) An applicant for a boat launch project located in the 14.4 mile stretch of the Missouri River in Lewis & Clark County from Holter Dam to the Cascade County line shall review the May 17, 2012 letter issued by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) containing the analysis of boat launch sites on the Missouri River, a copy of which is on file with Lewis & Clark Conservation District. The applicant shall provide information documenting how the proposed project will have minimal effect on fish and aquatic habitat in the 14.4 mile stretch of the Missouri River.