

McCone Conservation District
Board Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2014

A regular meeting of the McCone Conservation District Board of Supervisors was held on March 12, 2014 at the McCone County USDA field office. Those in attendance were Steve Wanderaas-Chairman, Larry Nagel-Urban Supervisor, Jenny Garoutte-Supervisor, Matt Beery-Supervisor and Mary Hendrix-Administrator. Emily Guldberg was not in attendance. Meeting was called to order at 1:12pm.

Meeting minutes from February 2014 were reviewed. Steve requested the following to be changed under Equipment purchase in New Business: Steve will contact Fergus County...to Steve will contact **Judith Basin** County. Larry made a motion to approve the amended minutes and Steve seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Reports were reviewed. Larry requested that in the Monthly Transaction Report, that the deposits on 2/7/14 (2) and 2/28/14 have a name associated with it. Mary advised that she will correct that to read "Cash". Matt made a motion to approve the reports and Larry seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Following Correspondence & Visitors

Report from Mandi Nay: In the next couple of weeks, DRWA will begin to collect deposits and signed contracts for meter installation for users south of Sidney.

Mary shared a thank you letter from Bruce Wright with the Board.

Public Comments on District Business

There were no public comments on the Districts business at this meeting.

Administrator's Report

Soil Health Workshop Evaluation: We received 13 responses from the mailed out evaluation forms for the workshop. Mary shared the results with the board. Overall, the topics and presenters received from good to very good marks in all categories.

Cost Share Program: Mary reported that we have 3 producers interested in the cover crop cost share program. She has received 2 contracts and is still waiting on the 3rd. Mark Henning, NRCS will be in the office 3/13/14 to discuss cover crop mixes with producers. We have one producer scheduled to meet with him then. She will check to see if he may be available at a later date for other meetings or by phone conference.

Tree Orders: Order deadline is Friday, March 14. We have had (22) orders with a total of 1595 trees. Also ordered were 10 rolls of fabric, 5000 staples, 3' x 3' tree mats and 4' x 4' tree mats. This should be delivered sometime mid-April. Trees should be delivered the end of April / first weeks of May, but schedules have not yet been determined.

Bug Orders: We have had 2 separate orders for biological control for Canada thistle (both stem weevils and gall flies). Orders will be delivered during June / July timeframe.

Grants

Kids Programs: Mary would like to have the board consider the following kids programs. This is a change up from the previous meeting and will need to be approved by the school boards.

4th-6th Grade Conservation Day: This will be the first in a series of 3 annual events. In year 1 (2014), 4th-6th graders will study geology (Badlands) at Makoshika. In year 2 (2015), 4th-6th graders will study riparian areas with a trip to

Medicine Lake Wildlife Refuge. In year 3 (2016), 4th-6th graders will study grasslands with a trip to Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Mary had spoken with Makoshika State Park to put together a conservation day on either May 19 or May 20. Board approved idea, will contact schools for approval. Education mini-grant is due by April 8, 2014.

Prairie Elk Colony School (Vida School District): We would like to utilize the Rolling River trailer to showcase for this small school of 6 students. The Rolling River trailer has been tentatively reserved for May 19 or 20. Logistics (moving the trailer & who would demonstrate) still need to be finalized.

Grant 2

Demonstration / Community Garden: Some more ideas were discussed. Mary and Larry to walk the property to collect more data in the upcoming week (weather dependent). This project is still a work in progress and will be tabled for the next meeting.

Grant 3

Administrative Grant: Mary will be working on the 2014-2015 Administrative budget for approval in the April board meeting. The completed grant application is due by May 5, 2014.

Grant 4

Air Conditioner for Tree Building: Current air conditioner is inadequate (not purposed) for cooling the tree room in the tree building. It would be better to have a high capacity cooler that is more tolerant of moisture. Larry suggested contacting McCone Electric to discuss heat pumps and other options.

Administrators Workshop: This training will be for the many new administrators in Eastern Montana. It will be held on March 25, 2014 in Miles City. Supervisors welcome.

Field Office Report

Johnna updated group that EQIP ranking is due by Friday, March 14 and CSP by Friday, March 24. 4-5 people have already inquired about 2015 EQIP. The deadline for that filing is by the end of June.

Working cooperatively with the Conservation District, two projects are on tap for building windbreaks in the County. Having attended the Shelterbelt Workshop hosted by Extension, she felt confident that both of the designs will work well.

McCone County will be a core area for the Sage-Grouse Initiative. More details will be provided as it becomes available.

Suggestions were solicited regarding getting the word out on programs etc. Board members thought that in addition to The Circle Banner, The Wolf Point Herald, Facebook, McCone New & Used (FB) and radio stations could be options.

Old Business

Financial Book Audit: We will contact Tax Masters in Glasgow after tax season to complete an audit. This will be noted in the old business section of the agenda until completed.

CWA with DNRC & NRCS: Has been approved, but still waiting on final agreement for signature. Mary to inquire with Johnna on the status of agreement.

Conservation District credit card: Having a district credit card for incidentals was discussed. The incidentals may be securing rooms for convention, speaker rooms etc. McCone Credit Union will be the lender and the account has to be made on behalf of a person, not an organizational entity. The board agreed that Mary should be on the application/credit card along with McCone County CD. The credit card limit should be set at no more than \$2,000.00. Matt made a motion to approve the credit card application and Matt seconded the motion. Motion carried. Mary will return credit application to credit union.

Tree planter / fabric layer: Larry has the seats for the fabric layer, but it still needs to be fabricated. Steve is still waiting to hear from the Engens regarding the tree planter seat. We have a tree planting request from one customer at this time.

Mill Levy: Mary spoke with Julie Goss last week regarding calculating the correct value of the Mill Levy. She forwarded information from the Department of Administration. Mary will review MCA laws and update the board at next meeting. Mill levies will also be covered at the New Administrator's training in Miles City.

Equipment purchase: The board is still interested in purchasing a post pounder. Steve contacted Steve Hedstrom from Judith Basin County and he agreed to send us a rental agreement that they use. Judith Basin has 2 post pounders. One is at Steve's home and he checks people in and out for the daily usage fee of \$75.00. The other post pounder is located in a different area of the county. The daily charge for use is \$90.00 as they will need to have someone on hand to check the equipment in and out. It was agreed by the board that we should look at equipment that would be useful to the community and revenue generating. Board will look at either applying for a grant (if possible) or a loan.

Baseline Water Monitoring: Scot Brown forwarded information regarding the possible impacted wells in the area. He also mentioned that springs may be impacted due to oil production and may include those in these studies (pending). Information was forwarded to Steve who will be in touch with Jane Holzer for more information.

New Business

Field Trip: Steve discussed the possibility of hosting a "field trip" to Rick Bieber's farm in Trail City, SD followed by a stop in Bismarck, ND to see some operations there. He will contact Garfield County to see if there is any interest in working cooperatively with us. Mary will contact Little Beaver CD to find out details of their program and update board at next meeting.

Upcoming Events:

3/20/2014 MRCDC Full Council Meeting & Social, Lewistown

4/17/2014 CMR Community Working Group, Circle

Jenny made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:46pm and Matt seconded the motion. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned.

Next board meeting will be held on the first Wednesday of the month, April 2, 2014 at 1:00pm.

Mary Hendrix, District Administrator

Steve Wanderaas, Chairman