

The McCone Conservation Board of Supervisors met on July 2, 2014 at 7:00pm at the USDA Building in Circle, MT. Those present were Steve Wanderaas-Chairman, Larry Nagel-Urban Supervisor, Casey Nay-Urban Supervisor, Johnna Blankenship-NRCS, and Mary Hendrix-Administrator. Supervisors Matt Beery, Jenny Garoutte and Brant Quick were not in attendance. Meeting was called to order at 7:15pm.

Meeting minutes from May 2014 were reviewed and motions to approve were not made due to a lack of quorum.

Treasurer's Reports from May 2014 were reviewed and motions to approve were not made due to a lack of quorum.

Following Correspondence & Visitors

Bison Update—Rachel Frost sent out an email on updates on bison in Montana. FWP has tentatively scheduled the next Bison Discussion Meeting in Billings on July 14th and 15th. Two articles along with email were provided to Supervisors.

FY2015 Admin/310 Grant Awards—Karl Christians sent out an email update on awards for Admin/310 Grants for FY2015. DNRC will hold back 20% of grant initially and if funds are available, will send out the remaining 20% toward the end of the fiscal year. 310 permits are worth \$88.89 this year.

Permissive Mill Levy—Laurie Zeller sent out an email on permissive levy for group benefits (MCA, 2-9-2-212). The email was provided to Supervisors to review for next board meeting.

Baseline Groundwater Monitoring—Jane Holzer sent out an email update to the program requiring action from participating counties by July 30th. Letters to 5 producers from Category A & B wells have been mailed on July 1st with participation requests by July 21st. Press releases have been submitted to the Circle Banner & Wolf Point Herald. If producers are interested in having their wells sampled, they are requested to contact the District no later than July 25th. Supervisors were given copies of the email and press release.

Governor's Range Tour—we have received flyers for the 2014 Range Tour. It will be in St. Ignatius September 4-5.

Public Comments on District Business

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

Administrator's Report

Soil Health Field Trip: The tour has been cancelled due to lack of producer participation. Mary has contacted all vendors to cancel services. Discussed the possibility of alternative dates with Petroleum County, their board is leaning towards a tour sometime next year after a soil health workshop in their area. Steve would still like to consider a soil health tour this fall with Petroleum and Garfield Counties. Garfield County may also cancel their tour scheduled for July 23rd due to low producer participation.

If individuals would like to travel to Menoken Farm for a tour, they can contact Ken Miller with Burleigh County Conservation District. They offer weekly tours at Menoken Farm through September.

GRANTS

223 Grant for Conservation Planning on Grazing Lands: The draft was sent to both Mark Henning and Karl Christians for feedback. Minor changes were made to the document. It was signed and mailed to DNRC for first round of 2014-2015 HB223 grant considerations.

Education Grants: Will be working on two different education grants. One will be for 7th & 8th graders (topic still to be determined) and the second one will be for high school students/FFA and tied in somehow with Envirothon.

Other Grants: Mary asked the board if there were any new grants that they would consider for the new fiscal year. The board is very interested in continuing with soil health and cover crops. They would like to have another workshop in the spring with a cover crop seed cost share program available again.

New district development grants: Mary shared her interest with the board on applying for 223 grants for grant writing, QuickBooks and Excel trainings.

Equipment

Mary asked the board if we would either consider selling or donating the binding machine to the Extension Office. They use it every year for fair literature. We have not used it in the past year and it is stored in the closet. Larry asked for board vote when there is a quorum. This will be tabled until the next meeting.

There is a file cabinet in the cleaning closet that needs to be moved to the tree building.

The tree planter is still in front of the tree building and it needs to be moved into the building.

Thank you to Mandi Nay for mowing the tree building lot.

County Fair: We will have a table at the McCone County Fair. This year's theme will be Pollinators. Mary has ordered and has received "Be a Friend to Pollinators" brochure and Pollinator Poster (Orchids) from NRCS. She also has multiple handouts. She will have wildflower seed packets as give-a-ways.

Financials: Mary and Mandi have audited QuickBooks for 2013-2014 fiscal years and will be closing the year in the next week.

Mary also asked if the current financial reports given at each board meeting was adequate. Reports run are: P & L, Balance Sheet, Monthly Transaction and Income/Expense reports. The board felt these reports were fine.

Cover Crop Field Tour: Mark Vogel with North 40AG has expressed interest in hosting a cover crop field tour, dinner and a Q&A session with area producers. The date will be between July 28 – August 1. Mary to contact Mark to set this up.

Field Office Report

PROGRAMS

Email from David Pratt: "I think the MCA can take satisfaction in the efforts related to programs—we are leading the state for this year."

EQIP 2014: All applications in preapproved status can now be promoted to APPROVED status. Contracting deadline August 15, 2014. (Three).

Montana allocation: \$13,883,117

Miles City Area: \$5,266,735 for 45 preapproved applications; 38% of the state dollars for EQIP.

MCA: 12 grazing, 10 irrigated crop. McCone: 2 grazing, 1 irrigated crop

2014 CSP: McCone: 4 preapproved and 6 approved. One applicant may not go to contract. Current allocation: \$298,715. Five applications capped at \$40,000.

Circle Field Office: All but one Field Verification complete. Six part folders nearly complete. All applicants will have to come to the Field Office to sign CSP contracts within the next few weeks. Contracts will be either peer-reviewed or reviewed by Area Office staff.

Message from David today: All pre-approved applications can now be promoted to APPROVED status.

It does not look like there will be 2014-2 CSP sign-up.

2010 CSP: Miles City Area has 162 contracts from CSP 2010-1 and 2. McCone has 7. These contracts are set to expire on September 30, 2014.

- The National Office is extending the option to re-enroll contracted acres into 2015 CSP without having to go through ranking.
- In order to be eligible participants must be willing to adopt a new activity for each land use.
- Expired contracts will be ineligible for this option. Participants must modify their 20101 CSP contracts prior to expiration to extend the term of their contract to December 31, 2014 if they wish to renew their CSP contract. Renewal application cutoff date is September 12, 2014.
- Contract renewal obligation must occur prior to the initial contract expiration date. No exceptions.

Field Office has contacted all 2010 CSP participants regarding contract expiration. Guidance from the Area Office:

The Program Support Specialists are in the process of finalizing the letter for participants. They will be sending those letters out in the next few days. At this time the FO does not need to do anything except be familiar with the bulletin and the due dates. FO work on renewals is expected to be a minimum between now and October 1. Here is what needs to happen:

- *Producers with existing 2010-1 or 2 CTP contracts can apply to renew no later than 9/12/14. Producers who might be interested, but are not sure should apply. The application is in the regular 1200.*
- *Applicants must complete and sign the NRCS-CPA-1248 and return it to the office at the time the 1200 is submitted and no later than 9/12/14—the form will be mailed to them.*
- *Contract holders of 2010-1 sign up will have to have their contracts modified to extend the expiration date to 12/31/14. This needs to be completed by 9/12/14.*
- *Registration in SAMs was not required in 2010, so those entities from that sign up for renewal will need to have a SAM registration ASAP—contracts will not be obligated without an active SAM registration. Please note that the 1200 indicates that the SAM registration is required at time of signup. Information about contacting PTAC will be provided.*

FIELD OFFICE:

Archaeology Training in Bozeman/Livingston was fun.

FSA Compliance flights are completed. McCone was tagged for 2 field verifications which were completed by Linda Peterson (Glendive) last week.

Johnna will be attending Wildlife Habitat training in Miles City next week Monday-Friday. She will be commuting each day.

TERRY HECK has agreed to spend a day in McCone County conducting a rangeland monitoring workshop for NRCS personnel later this summer. Topics may include plant identification, rangeland trend determination, sage grouse habitat, and prescribed grazing systems. If interested, I could ask Terry if landowners/managers could also attend.

Old Business

CWA with DNRC & NRCS: Per David Pratt, this is still at the State Office awaiting signature. This will be noted in the old business section until completed.

Upcoming Events:

8/27/2014 Salt Cedar Team, Jordan

New Business

Mill Levy: We have received an invitation to visit with the County Commissioners with regards to floating mill levies. Steve and Larry will meet them on Monday, July 7th at 2pm.

McCone County Planning Board: Casey will be representing the Conservation District on the Planning Board. He attended the meeting last week and presently, they are going through organizational by-laws.

MACD Committee – Districts Operations: Steve will be on the Districts Operations Committee.

Monitor Fest Contribution: Since this event may not happen due to the FWP Bison Meeting in Billings on July 14-15, this has been tabled pending MRCD decision.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:48pm.

Next board meeting will be held on the first Wednesday of the month, August 6, 2014.

Mary Hendrix
Mary Hendrix, Administrator

8/20/14
Date

Steve Wanderaas
Steve Wanderaas, Chairman

8-20-2014
Date