

The McCone Conservation Board of Supervisors met on December 3, 2014 at 1:00pm at the USDA Building in Circle, MT. Those present were Steve Wanderaas-Chairman, Larry Nagel-Urban Supervisor, Casey Nay-Urban Supervisor, Matt Beery-Rural Supervisor and Mary Hendrix-Administrator. Jenny Garoutte, Brant Quick and Johnna Blankenship were absent. Meeting was called to order at 1:17pm.

Meeting Minutes & Treasurer's Reports

Meeting minutes from November 2014 were reviewed. Larry made a motion to approve the minutes and Casey seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Reports from November 2014 were reviewed. Larry made a motion to approve the reports and Matt seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Following Correspondence & Visitors

Ken Nelson, MSU Extension was available to discuss the upcoming Soil Health Workshop in February 2015. He and Scott Heide may present on the topic of Salt Cedar. Applicator points may also be available for producers.

Mary shared correspondence from the McCone County Planning Board regarding a preliminary application and plat. The Board felt that there was no action required at this time.

A thank you card for Joyce Swartzendruber was passed around for signature and well wishes on her retirement.

Public Comments on District Business

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

Field Office Report (Johnna not here, provided for Supervisors to read on own)

PROGRAMS

CSP Renewal: Six applications. Deadline for submitting completed conservation application files to the Area Office is today. Applications will be reviewed, amended as needed, and submitted for approval before December 15.

CSP 2015: No applications submitted yet.

EQIP 2015: Work will begin again soon.

STATEWIDE DC MEETING, NOVEMBER 18, 2014

All Montana DC's met with Joyce Swartzendruber, Regional Conservationist Astor Boozer and all Assistant State Conservationists to discuss a number of issues.

Joyce Swartzendruber:

- **Receipt for Services:** This is a new process to deliver a paper receipt for services to anyone who comes to the Field Office for any reason. Leadership was not able to advise how this was preferable to the existing system using Conservation Planning ("Six") notes to keep track of who was here and why.
- **Retirement:** Joyce believes she is privileged to have worked in Montana. She thanked her employees for much good hard work. It is not known yet when the announcement for the position of Montana State Conservationist will be made public. There is no information about who may be under consideration for the position or how long an Acting State Con may be in office.

DC's expressed concern that recent upgrades to our tools such as the mapping software program Toolkit and the contract administration program Protracts have been disastrous. These two tools, according to Montana DC's, do not function as intended and often do not function at all. Toolkit has had numerous rebuilds since the new improved version was rolled out (untested) in February. It is still under re-construction and still does not function well. Astor assured the DC's that we will continue to use Toolkit the best we can until Conservation Desktop rolls out to replace it. He was not able to provide assurance that Conservation Desktop will work any better than Toolkit.

We didn't get much networking done as we were on our own for meals. I rode up with DC Linda Lohse from Glendive and Dick Scheetz from Terry. Morale is low in neighboring Field Offices due to losing Joyce, impractical programs deadlines and the trend to spend more time on CSP than EQIP, with EQIP losing precedence to CSP. Dick believes he has been treated with prejudice and would like to attempt to retire early in the next few years. This is common knowledge. Linda and Johnna will drop in the traces like old work horses. Johnna will attempt to NOT carpool in the future.

Circle Field Office Updates:

Johnna will attempt to take some time off in December, hopefully Fridays and sometime during Nathan's Christmas break.

We received a very nice complement from Joyce before the meeting in response to a positive email from one of our producers (Leonard Schock) who no doubt hopes to remain anonymous. Joyce mentioned this email message when she was thanking the DC's for their efforts at the DC meeting on the 18th. She did not name any names at the meeting.

Administrator's Report

MACDEO – State wide training for Administrators will be held in Great Falls on June 9th and 10th.

Upcoming Events

Holiday Open House: The Circle Chamber is sponsoring a Holiday Open House on December 12th. The Conservation District and NRCS will have coffee and treats available for those who may stop by. The Open House is from 10am – 4:00pm. Initially, it was thought to introduce Ashley Kiehl, new NRCS Soil Conservationist, to the public at this event, however, she will not be present that day. Johnna has invited Jeane from the Circle Banner to interview Ashley and the Conservation District will also have an article in the upcoming newsletter.

Circle Ag Show: The 2nd Annual Circle Ag Show will be held on January 24, 2015 at the Circle High School Gym. Speakers will present at the auditorium. The Conservation District, along with Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority (DRWA) will once again have a booth there.

Mother's Day: For the upcoming Mother's Day Sale, we will be offering hedge roses for sale. Orders have been placed with Schumachers Nursery in MN. Each rose will still be at \$1.25 each.

Website

14 New videos may be viewed at www.mcconecountycd.com. These soil health videos and interviews are from USDA, NRCS.

MACD Convention

Mary attended the Local Working Group (LWG) session and thought Justin Meissner was very effective in explaining it. Reaching goals may take 3 to 5 years with yearly LWG meetings to make sure everyone is still on task and board.

Mary spoke with Mark Henning and he is available to present. The District will need to let him know what specific topic in Soil Health that we want him to cover.

Workshop is set for February 18th. It will be a full day workshop with lunch. Applicator points may available.

Grants

The 223 grant for the post pounder will be submitted in the final round of funding depending on how much money is still available. Final 223 grants are due by April 30, 2015.

The Board will also speak with the Elevator Managers prior to discussing this with their Board. Casey will contact Sparky Dreesen and/or Loren Logan to set up a meeting. Steve and Larry will meet with them.

CWA with DNRC & NRCS: CWA received from DNRC and a copy is available for review in the District office.

Bison Ordinance: Laurie Z sent verbiage on fence specs. The Board had decided not to provide a District fence specs dictating the type of fence to be used to control bison requiring the applicant to produce a fence design that would be sufficient to prevent bison from escaping onto adjacent lands. Changes were discussed and completed application and decision forms will be available shortly. It was also decided by the Board not to have a complaint form. Steve asked Mary to contact Laurie Z for the procedure to strike a District fence spec previously voted by the supervisors.

Opening(s): There are openings on the Board. Matt Beery has been voted by acclamation to remain on the Board until a replacement can be found for him.

At the past board meeting, the Board was asked for any suggestions or recommendations for Rural Supervisors. Jenny mentioned asking Patsy White and Steve mentioned offering Sylvan Walden an Associate Supervisor position as she lives so far away. Mary and Johnna mentioned speaking with Carla Delp, too. There was been no update at the meeting.

String of Pearls—Brant had inquired about the "string of pearls" in the last meeting. Steve will discuss that with Rachel Frost, MRCD and report back to the group at the next meeting. This will remain under "Old Business".

New Business

Oath of Office

Maridel Kassner, Clerk and Recorder, will be here on Wednesday, January 7th at 1pm to administer the oath of office to Brant Quick, Casey Nay & Matt Beery.

Closed session began at 3:55pm. Session resumed at 4:15pm.

Adjournment of Meeting

Steve made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Casey seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:16pm.

The next scheduled board meeting will be held on the first Wednesday of the month, January 7, 2015 at 1:00pm.

Mary Hendrix
Mary Hendrix, Administrator

1/7/2015
Date

Steve Wanderaas
Steve Wanderaas, Chairman

1-7-15
Date