

YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

*PO Box 80888, Billings MT 59108 1670 48th St. W Suite 2, Billings, MT 59106
Phone: 406.690.9326 email: livie@mt.gov*

YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

January 14, 2025

November/December Board Meeting Minutes

1670 48th St. West Suite #2, Billings MT 59106

1:00 pm

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chad Sedgwick - Chair; Brad Kraft - Vice-Chair, Jackie Haaland, Bryan Mothershead, Stacey Robinson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Leroy Gabel

NON-BOARD PRESENT: LaVerne Ivie - YCD; Crystal White - YCD/PF; Mike Waters, Yellowstone Co. Commissioner
Christine Schweigert - DNRC; Ronni Tallerico - Yellowstone County Floodplain;
Zoe Craft, NRCS; Michelle Yeager, Jack Bernhardt - DNRC;
Shannon Blackburn & Demi Blythe - FWP; Anthony Sammartano - Yellowstone Co. Extension
Jill Hickson - Yellowstone River Parks Assoc.; Don Sasse
Virtually: Seanna Torske - NRCS; Veronica Grigaltchik, DNRC
Francisco Gamboa Herrera - Yellowstone Co. Extension
310 applicants: Joy Stevens & Jens Selvey

Chair Sedgwick called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Roll Call

After introductions, Chair Sedgwick informed attendees: All issues will be addressed to the Chair; public comments are always welcome but ask that you wait until the issue is addressed on the agenda, ask to be recognized by the chair, and then limit comments to 3 minutes; no action will be taken on any item, not on the agenda. Attendees were reminded to sign the attendance sheet.

Agenda Changes: None

Oath of Office: YCD Board Supervisors recited and signed the Oath of Office administered by Christine Schweigert, DNRC & Notary Public. The affidavits will be provided to Yellowstone County Clerk and Recorder.

Election of 2025 YCD Board Officers: Mothershead made a motion to retain the same slate of officers for 2025 as in 2024,, second by Robinson, motion passed.

Minutes: Robinson made a motion to approve the November 20, 2024 Minutes as written and reviewed, second by Haaland, motion passed. Robinson made a motion to approve the December 23, 2024 Conference Call Minutes as printed, second by Haaland, motion passed.

Board member absences: Kraft made a motion to approve Leroy Gabel's absence from today's meeting, second by Mothershead, motion passed.

310's

- **Applications, Emergencies, Complaints & Violations:**
 - **YE-12-22 Joy Stevens, Alkali Creek** - submitted an updated 310 application for the continuing violation area. Steve Williams, Yellowstone County Attorney and YCD's legal counsel had a last minute conflict thus unable to attend today's meeting. **Board decision:** Kraft made a motion to table the application until the Feb.

2025 YCD Board meeting on the grounds legal counsel was unable to attend today, second by Haaland, motion passed.

- **YE-09-25 - Jim Hein, Yellowstone River riprap maintenance** - Supervisors signed this permit today that was approved during the 12-23-24 conference call.
- **YE-09-25 - Triangle Telephone, multiple locations in the Worden, MT area** - Robinson declared all horizontal directional boring sites as non- projects because the construction will not impact the immediate bed or banks of any perennial flowing streams, second by Mothershead, motion passed.
- **YE-10-25 - Edward Skierka, farm ground on his Pompey's Piller property** - not a project because it is a considerable distance from the nearest water body.
- **YE-11-25 - River Ranch Retreat, HOA, Yellowstone River riprap maintenance** - Project description: maintenance of existing structure as described by team member Mothershead - repair 25 linear feet on existing bank stabilization and stabilize 20' linear feet of existing ditch to properly tie in the existing bank stabilization to prevent the river from taking out an irrigation return ditch. Some of the sloughed rock riprap will be retrieved from the river and utilized in the repairs. **Team inspection:** 1-3-25; Sedgwick, Haaland, Mothershead, Ivie, Blythe, Tallerico and Dena Bolton. **Board decision:** Mothershead made a motion to approve as proposed, second by Kraft, motion passed.
- **YE-22-24 - Briarwood Golf Course project completion notice** - provided before and after pictures of the project intake site on the Yellowstone River. Board accepted as complete.

Other 310 Issues & Projects

- **Yellowstone River CD Council** - no report

Agency Report

- **YCD Administrator Report** - was received prior to meeting. No questions or concerns raised by Supervisors.
- **Partner Biologist Report** - Crystal White - in addition to the report provided prior to the meeting, White provided copies of the Prairie Dog workshop flyer that will take place 2-6-25.
- **Army Corps of Engineers** - unable to attend
- **Beartooth RC&D** - no current report
- **DNRC - Michelle Yeager, Jack Bernhardt** - attended meeting but did not provide a report; Conservation District's Bureau report from Grigaltchik, was emailed to YCD Supervisors prior to meeting.
- **Fish Wildlife and Parks** - Demi Blythe & Shannon Blackburn
 - Activity report submitted by Blythe before today's meeting included meetings and inspections FWP attended, personnel updates and an overview of the City of Billings Water Treatment Plant Intake #1 dredging project.
- **NRCS - Seanna Torske and Zoe Craft** - Field office report emailed to supervisors:
 - FY25 EQIP and CSP Applications- We received word from our State Office that program payment limitations (\$450,000 for EQIP and \$200,000 for CSP during 2018 Farm Bill), are being waived for the FY2025 signups since it is unlikely we'll have a Farm Bill.
 - FY25 EQIP Applications - Applications have been received for Pivots for Pollinators TIP and Invasive Annual Grasses TIP, Community Ag and Rooting for Soil Health. The Billings office is processing 42 applications
 - CSP Applications - NHQ is continuing to push the need for more CSP applications due to our increased funding for CSP. We'll continue to provide outreach on this program..
 - FY25 TIP Proposals - Seanna Torske has been working on TIP proposals for the remaining phases of our Pivot for Pollinators TIPs in Big Horn and Yellowstone Counties. Crystal White, our Pheasants Forever Farm Biologist in the Billings FO, is working on a "Ranching with Wildlife" TIP for Yellowstone County. The focus is on nonlethal methods for managing prairie dogs and other wildlife. These were presented at our area meeting and received comments for editing.
- **Yellowstone County**
 - **Yellowstone County Commissioner** - Mike Waters was present and contributed throughout the meeting. He again thanked the YCD for the opportunity to be a participant on the annual 310 jet boat tour of the Yellowstone River.
 - **Yellowstone Co. Extension** - Francisco Gamboa Herrera and Anthony Sammartano provided a brief report on upcoming activities and pesticide classes being offered. March 15th will be a community seed swap.
 - **Yellowstone Co. Floodplain** - Ronni Tallerico office update: still working on the Hruschka violation. Now that Miller retire, her plate is full.
 - **Yellowstone Co. Weed Department** - Joe Lockwood unable to attend but sent the following report:

- This year's salt cedar project treated 128.9 acres this fall. Approximately 500,000 trees were sprayed. All funds from the House Bill grant have been expended were expended last year.
- YCD was requested to write a support letter for the Yellowstone County 2025 Salt Cedar grant project. Ivie wrote the letter and Chair Sedgwick read to the board. Kraft made a motion to sign the letter of support and send to the Noxious Weed Trust Fund grant program, second by Robinson, motion passed.

BUSINESS MEETING

- **Old Business**
 - **Gallatin CD Resolution 24-01: Support for Reducing the Use of Neonicotinoids in Montana** - the resolution was passed as edited at the state convention.
- **New Business**
 - **Conservation District Day in Helena - Jan. 23rd** - Keeping the YCD budget in mind and the cost of traveling to Helena, YCD will skip participation in this year's event.
 - **New YCD equipment** -Robinson made a motion for YCD to purchase a new cell phone for Ivie, second by Haaland, motion passed.
- **T-Report**
 - **November & December T-Reports:** Mothershead made a motion to accept the November & December Treasurer's Reports as written and reviewed, second by Robinson, motion passed.
 - **Travel & Meetings** - None
 - **Dues and Donations:**
 - **NILE** - Referencing the verbal report the new NILE manager provided to the YCD at the Oct. 1st YCD board meeting and how he is planning to tighten up the business structure, the board wanted to revisit the dues request. Commissioner Waters provided an update on the new outdoor arena area on the METRA grounds and said the hope is to have construction completed in time for the 2025 MT State Fair. The NILE will hold its annual rodeo in the new arena. Robinson made a motion for YCD to purchase a corporate reserve membership for \$500, second to the motion by Mothershead, motion passed.
- **Standing Committee Reports**
 - **Realtor's Workshop: Irrigation Districts requirements for new landowners** - White sent the power point presentation to the Realtor's Association's education committee for approval. The workshop will be offered to realtors for two (2) CE credits. Four (4) irrigation districts and DNRC Water Rights will conduct the presentations.
 - **Yellowstone Conservation Area (aka West End Reservoirs/City Lakes)** - YCD committee members reported that revision to the Master Plan is underway. It should be available for early editing by the end of January.
- **Unscheduled Matters** - none
- **Public comments** - none
- **Next YCD Board Meeting** - The next YCD meeting will be held February 11, 2025
- Mothershead motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:00 p.m.