

**LINCOLN CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING**
Lincoln County Annex, Eureka
April 17, 2024, 4:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Board of Supervisors: Kathleen Johnson, Chair; Don Crawford; John DeLeo; Gary Pershall, Joe Lewicki

Absent:

Associate Supervisor(s): Wayne Maahs

Advisor(s): Brian Ressel, NRCS

District Administrator: Rae Lynn Hays

Administrative Assistant: Rhonda Rockwell

Guest(s): Jesse Haag, Lincoln County Planning Department, Mark Peterson and Joe McAfee, Glen Lake Irrigation District

Called to order: 4:00 p.m. by Kathleen Johnson, Chair

Public Comment: None

Minutes:

- March 20, 2024, regular meeting minutes
 - **Motion** by Gary Pershall to approve the March 20, 2024, meeting minutes. **Second** by John DeLeo
 - **Motion** passes unanimously.

Financial Report:

- John D. presented the March 2024 treasurer's report.
- **Motion** by Don Crawford to approve the treasurer's report. **Second** by Joe Lewicki. **Motion** passes unanimously.

NRCS Report – Brian Ressel

- Brian R. reported he is the acting supervisor for the Kalispell area for the next four months. The Inflation Reduction Act funding continues to fund projects. So far, they have been able to fund all applications. Snowpack is about the same as last month which is 72 percent of average. The drought monitor indicates that we are abnormally dry.

MTFW&P Report – Brian Stephens

- No report.

District Administrator's Report – Rae Lynn Hays

- Volunteer hours were recorded.
- AIS employees will be traveling to Helena for training.
- Rae Lynn H. attended the Area 5 Employee Meeting. The administrators discussed the pollinator program and grants.

- The AIS station will be opening on May 4, 2024.

Planning Board Report – Jesse Haag

- According to the MCA, a member of the Lincoln Conservation District or an associate designated by the board, must sit on the planning board. Don C. asked if Jesse would be able to fill that role since he is not a member of the board. Jesse said he would be willing to do that but will check to see if there would be any issues.
- Development shows no signs of slowing down. In the southern end of the county, much of the land has been developed and is pushing out toward other areas such as Happy's Inn. Green Diamond is the largest landowner in the state. Much of its land is in conservation, but some will be sold off to other developers. Jesse will be applying for grant funding for a hydrologic study through the Montana Bureau of Mines to see how all the development will affect water quality. There is a lot of concern about water quality regarding ground water and the lakes.
- Lincoln County is the third fastest growing county in the state. Fifteen years ago, the planning department consisted of 4-5 people. Now, Jesse is the only employee and is spread very thin. The county commissioners just approved hiring an assistant planner.
- The floodplain is a challenging program for the county. Most of the county was mapped in 1980 using data collected in the 1970s. A small area around Libby is digitized. Most of the county is delineated on old paper maps making it difficult for landowners to determine whether they are in the floodplain. Jesse is working with DNRC to conduct a new study. It will be a 5–7-year project as Lincoln County has 626 miles of waterway. The data will be digitized with overlay map options. This information will enable a landowner, consultant, or planner to combine the elevation with a contour map and determine information such as the location of the setback. Phase 1 will cost \$1.6 million, and Phase 2 will cost a couple million dollars.
- Brian R. asked about fuel mitigation regarding subdivisions. Jesse said one of the county employees must evaluate fire risk and then the developer must bring the fire risk to low prior to final approval. The county has four fire risk evaluators.

310's

C-10-02-22, Neumann, Phillips Pleasant Valley Fisher River Civil Penalty

- Rae Lynn H. has not heard back from the attorney.

C-04-01-24, St. Pierre, Big Cherry Creek

- The site visit has not been conducted.
- **Motion** by Don C. to accept the complaint and postpone until the next meeting.
Second by Joe L.
- **Motion** passes unanimously.

Li-04-02-24, Noble, Flower Creek

- Don C. reported that the work is being conducted by Rosaurer's and the hardware store. There is no intrusion into Flower Creek.
- **Motion** by Don C. to accept the application and declare it not a project under the 310 law. **Second** by John D.
- **Motion** passes unanimously.

Postponed 310's.

Li-03-04-24, Anderson, O'Brien Creek

- Don C., Brian Stephens, and John D. participated in site visits to the property. Don C. reported that Mr. Anderson plans to move the eco blocks back and fill the front with large riprap. He will key the riprap in at the same level as the bottom eco blocks.
- **Motion** by Don C. to approve the amended application. **Second** by Joe L.
- John D. said he is concerned about the stability of the eco blocks. Don C. said the blocks have not moved in five years and Mr. Anderson plans to band them.
- **Motion** passes. John D. opposes.

Li-03-05-24, Caley, Tobacco River

- Gary P. and Brian S. conducted the site visit. Gary said Mr. Caley plans to tie into the restoration project downstream.
- **Motion** by Gary P. to approve the application with modifications. The base layer should be keyed in at scour depth. Work in the wetted channel can only be conducted from September 1 to November 15 to minimize potential impacts to migrating bull trout. **Second** by John D.
- **Motion** passes unanimously.

New Business:

- **Personnel Policy**
 - Chris with Rocky Mountain Insurance said he would provide the district with a personnel policy addressing AIS employees. The policy provided was the DNRC Model Policy that the district already uses.
 - **Motion** by Don C. to postpone until the next meeting. **Second** by Don C.
 - **Motion** passes.
- **Fiscal year 2023/2024 Budget Amendment**
 - The district agreed to fund the Glen Lake Dam repair. A transfer of \$10,000 from savings to checking is needed to cover the expense.
 - **Motion** by John D. to transfer \$10,000 from savings to checking. **Second** by Gary P.
 - **Motion** passes unanimously.
- **Glen Lake Irrigation District Dam Repair Project Funding**
 - Joe McAfee, GLID chairman, reported that the Glen Lake Dam Repair Project is complete. The irrigation district did not find piping within the dam. They filled a cavity the size of a beach ball, cleaned up the rotten concrete, poured new concrete and backfilled with clay. The district also armored 200 feet of the shore that extended the protection of the existing 140 feet that was previously completed. Mark Peterson and Joe M. thanked the board for their support. Mark P. invited the board to tour the repair. Rae Lynn H. said she could try to arrange a tour prior to the June meeting.
- **LCD 2024-2025 Preliminary Budget**
 - Rae Lynn asked the board if they had any suggestions for the next fiscal year. Workshops such as noxious weed management, soil health, and real estate were suggested. The training section of the budget might need to increase to \$2,000.
- **Graves Creek Stream Restoration**
 - Rae Lynn H. reported that the CD was awarded \$40,000 for a planning grant on Graves Creek. She worked with Shawn Higley and WWC Engineering to prepare the application. The board could use WWC Engineering for the Preliminary Engineering Report since the amount is under the \$50,000 threshold for procurement. WWC is the engineer of record for Glen Lake Irrigation District and is very familiar with Graves Creek.

- **Motion** by Don C. to approve the workorder and contract with WWC. **Second** by John D.
- **Motion** passes unanimously.
- **Local Working Group**
 - Rae Lynn H. said the Local Working Group is planned for May 29 at the Lincoln County Fairgrounds. The meeting will begin at 4:00 pm Brian R. said he wants to make it as useful as possible and to identify ideas for spending funding. Consideration should reflect the larger landscape rather than small projects.
- **Bridger Plant Donation**
 - The Bridger Plant Center is asking for a \$35 donation from each of the Conservation Districts in Montana for operations
 - **Motion** by Gary P. to provide a \$35 donation. **Second** by Joe L.
 - **Motion** passes unanimously.

Unfinished Business

Final Inspection Reports

Li-04-01-22, Miller, Lake Creek – Close

Li-10-03-22, Swanson, Kootenai River – Close

Li-10-04-22, Ness, Stewart Creek – Close

Li-09-01-22, Burnett, Kootenai river - John D. will conduct the site visit.

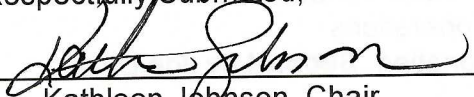
Li-05-02-23, Wheeler, Tobacco River – Gary conducted the site visit. The work looked exceptional. File can be closed.

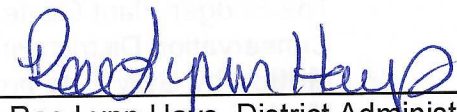
Open Mic and Other Business –

Kathleen J. said she has been reviewing grant applications with CDAC. Two were for planning grants. One was for \$10,000 and the second was over \$12,000. The purpose of these grants was to hire someone to facilitate strategic planning efforts and identify strengths, weaknesses, goals, and objectives. Lincoln Conservation District is ahead of the curve. She congratulated the CD for developing the plan without grant funding. The next meeting will be in Libby.

Meeting adjourned at 6:12 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,


Kathleen Johnson, Chair


Rae Lynn Hays, District Administrator

Date: 5-29-24