



LOCAL COMMON SENSE CONSERVATION

**18 Main Street
 PO Box 669
 Chester MT 59531
 Phone: 406-759-5778, ext. 102**

The Liberty County Conservation District Public Meeting March 13, 2025

Present:

<i>Lanny Jones</i>	<i>Tyler Jones</i>	<i>Megan Hedges</i>	<i>Julie Gagnon</i>
<i>Diane Roberts</i>	<i>Kurt Matkin</i>	<i>Geoff Osterman</i>	<i>Mike Nelson</i>

Absent/Excused:

<i>Robert Pugsley</i>	<i>Ray Morkrid</i>	<i>Rodney Svenson</i>	<i>Rod Oraw</i>	<i>Tyler Streit</i>
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CALL TO ORDER: *Lanny Jones called the meeting to order at 7:08 P.M.*

DISTRICT BUSINESS

Motion by *Megan Hedges*, seconded by *Kurt Matkin* to approve the minutes of the February meeting. Motion carried.

Motion by *Tyler Jones*, seconded by *Mike Nelson* to file the Treasurer’s Report for February 2025. Motion carried.

Motion by *Tyler Jones*, seconded by *Mike Nelson* to pay February bills. Motion carried.

02/27/25

Accrual Basis

**Income
 February 2025**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Memo</u>	<u>Account</u>	<u>Amount</u>
▶ 02/03/2025	MSU Extension	Reiumbursement for food Croppi...	3418200 · Education Income	59.01 ◀
02/19/2025	Liberty Co.	7350 Special Assessment	317350 · Special Assessment	105.59
02/19/2025	Liberty Co.	7351 Permissive Health	317351 · Permissive Health	39.25
02/19/2025	Liberty Co.	7352 Regular Assessment	317352 · Regular Assessment	46.75
02/27/2025	Sage Creek Waters...	reiumbursement for postage & en...	3414300 · Administrative Fees Income	70.40
02/27/2025	Postmaster	2 wall maps	3417003 · Maps	60.00
TOTAL				381.00

02/27/25
Cash Basis

Payments
February 2025

Date	Num	Name	Memo	Account	Paid Amount
02/02/2025	250	MCDEO	2025 Dues	332 · Dues Expense	30.00
02/10/2025	251	HSA Bank	HSA LCCD Contribution Feb.	130.1 · LCCD contr...	34.58
02/10/2025	251	HSA Bank	HSA Permissive Levy Contri...	130.2 · Permissive ...	529.42
02/13/2025	252	Reed Accounting, PL...	Payroll Accountant services f...	350 · Professional F...	50.00
02/22/2025	DB	Walmart	Coffee filters	210 · Office Supplies	3.72
02/22/2025	DB	Sam's Club	Coffee	210 · Office Supplies	14.68
02/27/2025	253	High Plains Conserva...	Envirothon Registration 2 tea...	380.3 · Envirothon	300.00
02/28/2025	Auto...	Montana State Fund	Workers comp insurance diff...	140 · Workers Com...	1.88
02/28/2025	ACH	PERS	Feb pers payment D Roberts	131 · Retirement	209.08
02/28/2025	BP	Diane M Roberts	Feb Net Pay D Roberts	Net Payroll	1,002.47
TOTAL					2,175.83

LCCD Savings Account: The LCCD Savings Account was changed to a Business Money Market account on February 28th. Signers on the account are Megan Hedges, Rod Oraw, Kurt Matkin and Diane Roberts. The interest of 2.5% earnings for February was \$51.03.

McAfee Computer Protection: It was discussed that the LCCD would not renew the McAfee computer protection for the LCCD laptop at this time.

NRCS Written Report – Misty Vermulm, (written report below.)

March 13, 2024, Liberty County Conservation District Meeting

NRCS Report

- **Workload:** NRCS has completed assessments and rankings for 2026 CSP applications and EQIP applications and these are going through review and awaiting funding decisions.
- The agency has paused the obligation, contracting, and payments in IRA funded contracts while the agency reviews and responds to the department. On February 20, [Secretary Rollins instructed](#) the Natural Resources Conservation Service to resume issuing payments to farmers and ranchers for three programs funded in part by the Inflation Reduction Act: the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. Portions of these programs funded by the Farm Bill had not been paused.
- A Peer-to-Peer Workshop was held in Chester March 13 geared toward producers in the Soil Health EQIP programs
- **Personnel:** No changes - Shelby and Chester staff cooperate across county lines to ensure the work gets done.
- USDA is optimizing building capacity and consolidating underutilized offices to reduce inefficiencies while continuing to prioritize frontline services for farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.
- We are operating under a Continuing Resolution until Congress passes a budget for the year. The Continuing Resolution ends March 14. During the last government shutdown, NRCS had enough mandatory funding prior year that allowed us to remain operational. It is unknown if we have that this time around. If there is a federal government shutdown, no one can work in NRCS field offices or utilize government furnished equipment, space or vehicles. Conservation partners may still utilize their alternative funding sources.

Extension Report – Jesse Fulbright (not in attendance)

District Business

LOCAL ACTIVITY

CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP: A membership application was received from the Chamber of Commerce for FY 2025-2026. The membership fee would be \$95.

Motion by Megan Hedges, seconded by Kurt Matkin to renew the Chamber membership. Motion carried.

MONTANA Forest Products: An email was sent to the LCCD from Jim Petersen, at Evergreen Magazine asking for a donation to help support the Montana Forest Products Story. They are looking to raise \$20,000 to pay for the research, publication and distribution of an eight to 10 page pamphlet to make the public, state and federal politicians aware of the magnitude of the decline in Montana's forest production. After discussion it was decided to not contribute at this time.

DNRC Administrative Grant application: The DNRC FY2026 Administrative Grant applications open March 1st. The preliminary FY2025-2026 LCCD budget shows a shortfall of \$11,494.59 to meet the \$60,000 operating budget that the MACD allows. After discussion it was decided to submit an application before May 1st, 2025, for administrative grant funds.

Motion by Tyler Jones seconded by Mike Nelson to apply for the 2026 Administrative grant before May 1, 2025. Motion carried.

Peer to Peer Workshop: The Peer to Peer Workshop was a success with 25 people in attendance. The LCCD hosted the event and served lunch. Cory Fauque presented tissue sampling and the tools he currently uses to collect tissue sampling. Susan Massar presented data on soil trends and soil health. The event ending with a panel discussion. Those included in the panel discussion were Chris Diekhans, Steve Skierka, Clark Jones and Korey Fauque.

ENVIROTHON: The LCCD was able to sponsor 2 teams from CJI High School to participate in the Envirothon this year. The event is April 28 & 29th in Great Falls. Diane will work the event both days and be there for oral presentations.

PUGSLEY BRIDGE UPDATE: The LCCD received an update from Luke Holmquist, FWP, that they have been approved for \$50k from the Tiber Fish fund and awarded \$20k from MoTAC (NWE) for the fall project to restore the riverbank. The final part of the puzzle is the Future Fisheries Funds that will be applied for in the spring. Luke and Michelle will work to get that application finalized within the next two months. RDG engineering is finishing the designs and plan to do permitting and wetland delineation in April. With this funding and the final documents from RDG/SWCA the project should be on track for the 5/15 deadline for Future Fisheries.

SUPERVISOR ELECTIONS: The LCCD has no supervisor elections for FY 2026. The next supervisor elections will be for FY 2027. Paperwork should be submitted in December of 2026 for **Kurt Matkin, Lanny Jones, and Rod Oraw**. Urban Supervisor **Tyler Streit** will need to be added to the City Council agenda in December of 2025 for approval for another 3 year term.

REGIONAL AND STATE

A handout was presented as an update from Kasydi Lucas.

Next Meeting – April 17, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

Diane Roberts, Administrator

Lanny Jones, Chairman

Diane Roberts

Lanny Jones

District meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the USDA Service Center, Chester, 7:00 p.m. unless otherwise noticed.

MISSION: TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS BY PROVIDING LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAMS TO CONSERVE, IMPROVE AND SUSTAIN OUR NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT.

VISION: Having a community that is economically stable with the natural resources conserved by:

1. providing education and encouraging control of nuisance weeds and eradication of noxious weeds
2. having no soils blowing above their tolerance level—ideally no soil or water erosion
3. sustaining and improving water quality, with rivers and streams running clear.
4. encouraging tree planting for shelterbelts and wildlife
5. encouraging recycling
6. working jointly with all other agencies/organizations to enhance conservation practices within the district.
7. improving the public perception of the Conservation District