



Petroleum County Conservation District

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Local Common Sense Conservation

www.petroleumcd.org

Laura Kiehl – *Chairman, Rodney Rowton, Vice-Chairman*

Brenda Brady – *Treasurer & Secretary, Ralph Corbett* – *Urban Supervisor, Jay King* – *Rural Supervisor,*

Butch Arthur – *Urban Supervisor, Tye Lund* – *Rural Supervisor*

February 25, 2026

Call to order (regular meeting): Chair Laura Kiehl called the regular Petroleum County Conservation District meeting to order at 5:01pm. Those present were Laura Kiehl, Jay King, Ralph Corbett, Butch Arthur, Rodney Rowton, and Tye Lund. Others present in person were Lesley Rolls, PCCD Water Coordinator; and Brent Smith, CEMIST; Katie Lund, PCCD Fiscal Manager; and Trish Smith, PCCD Administrator. Virtual attendees were Desi King, Winnett ACES; Molly Masters, MRCDC Coordinator; Allison Martin, MWC Coordinator; Bill Milton, MWC/Producer; Katie Lund, PCCD Fiscal Manager (attended in person later); and Trish Smith, PCCD Administrator. Brenda Brady was absent.

Approval of PCCD Minutes:

Ralph Corbett moved to approve the January 28, 2026, meeting minutes; Jay King seconded. Motion passed.

Guest/Public Comment: Officer elections were moved to the beginning of the meeting. Ralph Corbett & Butch Arthur took their oath of office, and were sworn in by Krista Rowton from the Petroleum County Courthouse.

Partner Reports:

MRCDC: Molly reported that the next MRCDC Quarterly meeting will be in Lewistown, March 23, coinciding with the Woody Invasives Working Group Meeting the following day. The WIWG is working on getting funding. Working with the Invasive Species Action Network; trying to limit funding through the PCCD. Hoping that ISAN will have funding later. Putting on a Test Flow presentation during MonDak days next week. Also have a trade show booth. Presentations during the MRCDC Quarterly Meeting will be on the Fox Hills Aquifer and a 310 presentation by Hailey Graf. Heard back from DNRC; they still need a couple things and then good to go.

MWC: Allison reported on the last MWC meeting that took place February 12, discussing the Coalition direction and the importance to partners. MWC website has been upgraded; Bill Milton paid the difference. Updating their strategic plan. The NRCS grant is only good till the end of September so need to find more funding to keep MWC going. Focusing right now on the outlook and direction of the Coalition and what prioritizing for projects. Next MWC meeting will be April 9 in Roundup. The USGS gaging station invoice needs to be approved and signed. Southfork Musselshell gaging station was in jeopardy of being shut down but DNRC took over. Bill gave a brief history of MWC. It was established in 2009 to resolve water user conflicts along the 300-mile river. Now they are reassessed its relevance of MWC due to declining engagement. The strategic plan hadn't been reviewed in over five years. Key priorities include addressing the NRCS grant ending next year and preparing for challenges like droughts and floods, with

a proposed co-coordination by Leslie for the lower watershed and Allison for the Upper Musselshell. Allison will discuss options with NRCS, such as using unused funds for projects like the Cushman Bridge restoration. Would like MWC and the PCCD to meet soon and go over strategic plan and discuss funding; look at leveraging staff resources. The PCCD Board would like Lesley to focus on local projects. The PCCD Water Committee, Allison and Bill will meet and look at options. Jay King moved to pay Bill Milton for the last three years of facilitating the MWC Meetings; Ralph Corbett seconded. Motion passed. Jay King moved to pay the Stream Gaging Invoice; Rodney Rowton seconded. Motion passed.

MSGOT: No report.

MSU Extension: Laura stated that there is a new MSU Extension agent in the Lewistown office.

DNRC: Board looked over Veronica's report. Laura stated that the Oath of Candidacy forms are due at the office for Brenda, Tye and Laura by March 4; \$15 fee.

NRCS: No report.

PCCD Water Program: Lesley reported that she has been busy working on budgets for several grants, using past budgets of \$25,000-\$29,000 as a reference, with plans to increase them after the first year. Brent has suggested adding 1-2% to the salary budget to accommodate potential increases. Leslie is also exploring DNRC grants for McDonald Creek, which offer up to \$75,000, and is keeping an eye on March deadlines. Discussed the Flatwillow Creek Water Restoration Plan; issues such as salinity and sediment. Proposed goals include restoration, protection, and assessment efforts, justified by the need for enhanced funding and addressing infrastructure challenges.

Winnett ACES: Desi reported that she attended the Soil Health Symposium with Skylar. Charsi is back to work. Montana Main Street program work with quarterly check-ins; last was February 18. Charsi, Skylar and Desi are doing outreach for the grant received to help fund Charsi's time; outreach to membership and past clients to get feedback for future projects. Land committee has been meeting and working on their communication plan with TNC. Conservation work reporting, and plan to work with FFA students again on fencing projects (or another group) this summer. Next ACES Board Meeting is March 3; Rachel Frost & Stacey Barta will be in attendance. Land Committee is meeting weekly for 6 weeks. The Conservation Committee meeting will be 8:30am-10:00am, prior to the March 11 Invasive Annual Grasses Workshop. Jennifer Solf is returning to work sometime in March. Board meetings march 3 – Rachel frost and Stacey Barta. Land committee meeting weekly for 6 weeks. Inv annual grasses, cc meeting 830-10 prior. Jennifer returning to work sometime in march. Charsi is working on getting the 55 Main upstairs finished. Laura is in DC with Shaylie Ahlgren with the Northern Great Plains Joint Venture. Working on Ai and data policy.

CEMIST: Brent reported that himself, Trish, Dona Stafford, and Megan Hoyer staffed the MATE show table in February; engaged over 700 contacts and promoted the citizen science program (iNaturalist). They are putting on an Invasive Annual Grasses workshop (with ACES and PCCD) March 11; free lunch and 6 applicators credits. CDB grant hearing is coming up. A probable new population of eastern snails has been detected 80 miles west of Augusta, near the packer corral on the Rocky Mountain Front. The Department of Agriculture is confirming this with samples collected a week and a half ago. If confirmed, plans will be made to delineate boundaries and coordinate with the Forest Service and outfitter.

BLM: No report.

Supervisor Reports:

Brenda Brady: No report.

Laura Kiehl: PID working on funding for 5 SCADA stations. FCA is working on an RRG to fund those. Planning another tubing section where it is high risk. WWC will probably take on that RRG. Possibly something the PCCD could help support with a grant. Laura stated she is stepping down from her MRCDC representative position so will need to find a board replacement.

Ralph Corbett: No report

Jay King: No report.

Rodney Rowton: No report.

Butch Arthur: Butch asked if anyone was interested on being elected to the Fergus Electric Board. It is a lot of time and commitment, but they do offer board members health insurance.

Tye Lund: No report.

Governance Calendar (Current Month): Governance calendar reviewed for February.

Old Business:

- A. McDonald Irrigation – Lesley reported that she is looking at planning and project grants; deadlines in March. She has a meeting scheduled with Clint Smith to discuss funding options. Ralph Corbett moved to approve Lesley applying for DNRC planning and/or project grant(s) for the McDonald Creek project(s); Jay King seconded. Motion passed.
- B. Annual Workplan – Tabled until March meeting; 4pm.
- C. Office status – Trish stated she is willing to add another in-office day for now and see how it goes. She will be in the office Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, starting in the next couple weeks. She will get the new hours/days posted. There was discussion on different office locations in the event that the June mold test doesn't come back favorable to stay in the office.

New Business:

- A. 310 Updates: None at this time. Trish stated that we should be expecting 310's soon for the fiber optic line being put in (Mar/Apr).
- B. CDA Budget – Jay stated that the draft budget needs to be submitted by February 28; use the same budget as last year, just remove MSGOT. Butch Arthur moved for Katie to submit the draft PCCD budget for FY27, with the same FY26 budget (MSGOT removed); Rodney Rowton seconded. Motion passed.
- C. Oath of Office (move to beginning of meeting) – Prior in public comment.
- D. MACD Dues – Jay King moved to pay the \$4000 MACD dues; Ralph Corbett seconded.

Motion passed.

- E. CDB Project Grant application for CEMIST E&O – Brent stated that he would like to apply for a CDB project grant for \$50,000 to support the operating costs of the CEMIST. Last year, a grant request for \$62,000 resulted in only \$37,500 being awarded, which was approximately 62% of the available funds at that time. This cycle, however, is expected to have more funds available compared to the fall cycle. Ralph Corbett moved for Brent to apply for \$50K with the CDB Project Grant application; Tye Lund seconded. Motion passed.
- F. Travel credit card for Lesley – There was discussion if the travel card was necessary. Trish will continue to make hotel reservations and Leslie will handle meals and fuel reimbursements through state rates.
- G. Bonfire – CD website store – Tabled till March meeting.

Administrative:

A. Grant & District Updates: Everyone

- 1. LinkPass renewal – Trish stated that her LinkPass is about to expire but she only used the NRCS computer for the larger CD newsletter print jobs. NRCS is fine with still continuing to print the quarterly newsletters and letting Trish's LinkPass expire. The board agreed it is okay to not renew her LinkPass.

Financial:

- A. Petroleum CD:** Ralph Corbett moved to pay the PCCD unpaid bills; Rodney Rowton seconded. Motion passed.
- B. Missouri River CD Council:** Ralph Corbett moved to pay the MRCDC unpaid bills; Tye Lund. Motion passed.

Laura reported that the CD has received two applicants for the fiscal manager position. The hiring committee has an interview tomorrow morning. Jay King moved to allow the CD hiring committee to offer the fiscal manager position to an applicant they see fit (in pay wage selected); Tye Lund seconded. Motion passed. Ralph Corbett moved to approve paying the MWCC membership; Jay King seconded. Motion passed. Katie discussed the audit; everything submitted to be approved. Has to be approved by the state first. The accountant hopes to start working on our CD audit paperwork the 1st couple weeks of March. Katie stated that she might drop to hourly (instead of salary) during the month of March, depending on the applicant hired and their knowledge. She will continue to help through the April 15 grant reporting deadlines.

Correspondence: None.

Governance Calendar: The Governance Calendar was reviewed for March.

Announcements:

- A. Next Regular Board meeting: March 25, 2026, 4pm– PCCD Office.

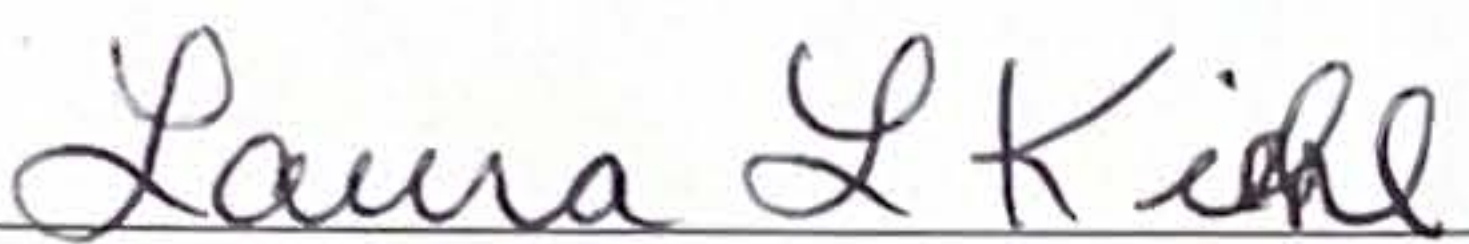
Approval of absences: Laura Kiehl called for a vote on approving Brenda Brady's absence. Butch Arthur made a motion to approve Brenda Brady's absence; Tye seconded. Laura Kiehl, Rodney Rowton,

Butch Arthur, and Ralph Corbett all approved Brenda's absence. Jay King and Tye Lund did not approve Brenda's absence. The absence of Brenda Brady was approved due to majority voting in approval.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Closed Session):

A. Water Conservation Coordinator 6 Mth Review/Evaluation – Minutes are separate.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 8:08pm



Laura Kiehl, Chair



Trish J. Smith, District Administrator



Brenda Brady, Board Secretary