

SWEETWATER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCCD)  
MONTHLY BOARD MEETING  
Thursday May 6, 2021- 4:00 p.m.  
79 Winston Drive, Suite 103, Rock Springs, WY 82901

**REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD MEETING**

**Call to Order**

**Tom Burris, Chairman** called to order the meeting of the Sweetwater County Conservation District (SWCCD) at 4:00 PM on **May 6, 2021**, at the Sweetwater County Conservation District, 79 Winston Drive, Suite 103, Rock Springs, WY 82901

**Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance**

**Tom Burris, Chairman** conducted a roll call and introductions. The following persons were present.

Tom Burris, Chairman and Rural Supervisor (SWCCD)  
Jean Dickinson, Treasurer and Urban Supervisor, (SWCCD)  
Stephanie Anderson, Secretary and Rural Supervisor (SWCCD)  
Larry Folks, Rural Supervisor (SWCCD)  
Karen Pecheny, District Clerk (SWCCD)  
Dwight Bliss, Associate Supervisor (SWCCD)  
Brandy Dewar, Associate Supervisor  
Randy Shipman, Associate Supervisor  
Nick Walrath, Trout Unlimited (TU)

**Minutes**

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Stephanie Anderson, to approve the April 1, 2021 regular minutes as written. Motion carried.

**Agenda**

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Stephanie Anderson, to modify the agenda and move Larry Folks Oath of Office up on the agenda, add Nick Walrath's presentation to Special Reports and add Larry Folks under Supervisor's Report. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report**

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Larry Folks, to approve the Treasurer's Report, and pay the bills in the amount of \$29,688.45. Motion carried.

**Reconciliation Report**

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Stephanie Anderson, to approve the reconciliation report for January, February and March 2021. Motion carried.

### Department of Audit

Staff will be working on the FY 2022 proposed budget to the state. Budget is due June 1.

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Stephanie Anderson to submit the budget to the State and county. Motion carried.

Staff will contact the Board regarding any county budget workshops.

The SWCCD Budget Hearing will be held on Wednesday, July 14, at 10:00 a.m. Staff will send out a reminder.

### Oath of Office Larry Folks

Dickinson read the letter from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture to approve the appointment of Larry Folks to the Sweetwater County Conservation District Rural Supervisor position.

Larry Folks read the Oath of Office. Staff will notarize and send to the County and Wyoming Department of Agriculture.

### **Special Reports**

#### Nick Walrath, Trout Unlimited

Gave an update on the Green River Scots Bottom Project and grant deadlines. (Green River Urban Habitat Improvement Project – anticipated construction by August 2022). The project will not be able to meet the December 31, 2021 deadline and the District will need to send a letter to small water informing them the project will not be completed. Staff will send the letter to the Wyoming Water Development Office. If the District moves forward with another application, the project will need to be submitted as “shovel ready.”

Trout Unlimited (TU) is partnering with NRCS and would like to do some irrigation structure improvements and beaver dam analogs on Trout Creek. (Private land) TU is looking at applying for 319 money for projects. Walrath said the listing on Trout Creek will be for sediment. (private ground).

- Trout Creek Project DEQ Study 2017 -2018 (Draft) Final to come out in 2020.
  - The lowermost 4.7 miles of Trout Creek (about the uppermost active headcut downstream to Sage Creek) was not attaining state surface water quality standards protective of aquatic life due to excess sediment caused by physical instability of the channel. The sources are identified as historical anthropogenic activities and natural events (fire and flood).
  - The remaining 9.1 miles of Trout Creek was attaining state surface water quality standards protective of aquatic life

Partnering with the Green River FFA and Expedition Academy students on starting seedlings and establishing roots in water, testing what trees will work best for planting in the fall.

Walrath is looking at partnering with the Farson FFA group about building another hoop house in Farson and establishing willows.

Burriss mentioned the Farson FFA research project on establishing different varieties of trees and suggested they meet with the school before the end of the school year. Staff will send Walrath the Farson contact information.

Hillary Walrath, NRCS partner, is working on the Henry's Fork Project regarding fish and irrigation structure passages. There are five diversions she is working on in Sweetwater County, six in Uinta County and two in Utah. The designs will be done this year with construction to start this fall or next year. Hillary could come and give an update to the Board.

#### Jeff Lewis (written report)

##### Conservation Planning

Courtney and I were out at the Ramsey Ranch on April 30<sup>th</sup>. We are trying to give Jackson some options on FSA programs and NRCS programs for him to consider for long term improvements to Gooseberry Creek riparian area and for possible irrigation improvements. Trout Unlimited and USF&W are working on some projects with Ramsey on Trout Creek.

Lewis will be meeting with Pete Arambel on Monday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, to look at some irrigation projects up by Boulder

##### Farm Bill Activities

Currently applications are being reviewed and approved

##### Meetings Coming Up

A local workgroup meeting needs to be scheduled. The State Technical committee meeting is scheduled for June 22<sup>nd</sup> (virtual meeting)

##### Staff Coordination

Courtney is working on 2021 applications

I will be on leave from May 17 to May 28<sup>th</sup>. Courtney will be acting for me while I'm on leave.

##### Project Activities

Helped Hillary Walrath with the RCCP proposal for replacing 39 rock diversions (pushup dams) on the Henrys Fork. Still waiting to hear if it was accepted/approved.

No meetings attended since we got shut down a year ago other than internal meeting via the internet.

##### Associate Supervisors

Brandy Dewar, Associate Supervisor, thanked the Board for their letter of support to attend Casper College (remotely).

##### Dwight Bliss, SWCCD Office Update and Discussion

- Reported on the moving schedule, timeline (behind schedule – possible mid-June completion) and the layout of the office furniture.
- Mentioned staff was moving boxes to the new office.

## Unfinished Business

### Drop Structure Maintenance

Larry Folks gave an update on the drop structure and said there is some water going underneath the grout. Folks said he would like to be included in the D&D on the ground assessment. Staff will contact D&D.

### Bitter Killpecker Creek Watershed Advisory Group (BKWAG) Meeting

Tom Burris gave an update on the Bitter Killpecker Creek Watershed Advisory Group (BKWAG) meeting and reported there was very good participation from the City of Rock Springs regarding Bitter Creek. The city accepted a bid from Debernardi for the Bitter Creek Restoration—Segment 1 Project, in the amount of \$5,040,192.90.

Resolution 2021-58 from the Rock Springs City Council Meeting 4-20-2021

*“The project generally consists of reconstruction involving creek channel restoration and associated improvements along the Bitter Creek through Rock Springs: in-stream profile improvements including bed stabilization and natural drop structures; bank stabilization; revegetation and armoring; excavation to widen the south flood channel bank; sheet pile retaining wall; creek-side maintenance trail, access point trails and sidewalk; a 144- ft. pedestrian and utility bridge crossing the creek; a new parking lot and trailhead; recreational bike park of 2.2 acres; utility pipeline relocations for natural gas; grading; landscaping; and associated misc. work.*

### Community Enhancement Grants

The District received one application. After discussion.

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Stephanie Anderson, to approve the Community Enhancement Grant application in the amount of \$3,848.41 from the Farson-Eden Middle / High School and The Little Sandy FFA. Motion carried.

## New Business

### Small Water Project Update

#### Wyoming Water Development Office (WWDO) – Small Water Program Projects

Staff gave an update

1. Francis Ditch Check Structure Rehabilitation
2. Francis Ditch Diversion Structure Rehabilitation
3. Francis Ditch Drop Structure Rehabilitation

Three projects are ready to go to final payment for the Francis Ditch Projects after notification of a 40-day NOTICE OF ACCEPTANCE OF AND FINAL PAYMENT. The Board scheduled a June 24 meeting to pay the final payment from small water. Staff will send out a reminder to the Board and advertise the meeting.

### SWC Draft Resolution regarding Oil and Gas Moratorium

The Board reviewed the draft resolution. No action was taken.

### Insurance Renewal – May open for Delta Dental

May is open enrollment for Delta Dental, there is a six-month waiting period for all new employees and supervisors.

### Schedule Local Work Group Meeting

The Board scheduled a Local Work Group Meeting at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 9. Staff will advertise the meeting and send out email invitations. (Location to be determined)

### Supervisors Reports

#### Tom Burris

- Attended the Bitter Killpecker Creek Watershed Advisory Group (BKWAG) Meeting.
- Attended the Coalition of Local Governments (CLG) meeting in Kemmerer.
- Burris helped with the tree delivery day that was held on April 27.
- Burris will send a draft letter out to the Board for review. The letter will be addressed to Governor Gordon. Burris commented the letter will be in line with our Land Resource Use Plan & Policy (LRUPP). The District supports the Governor in his efforts to push back on Washington policies that are impacted our local economies. Burris spoke with Hunter Petsch with the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts.

#### Jean Dickinson

- Attended the Coalition of Local Governments (CLG) meeting in Kemmerer.
- Reviewing the Environmental Assessment from the Rock Springs and Rawlins Field Offices proposed wild horse gather. Comments were due April 30, 2021.

#### Stephanie Anderson

- Anderson reported on the Forest Service native, genetic, tree stocking system. The Forest Service harvests native seeds and has nurseries that keep the seeds. The seedlings can be ordered and the process takes about a year and a half. Anderson was approached by a Girl Scout group regarding tree plantings.
- Attended the Flaming Gorge Working Group and the message was the snowpack is about 85% of normal in the Upper Green River Basin. Anderson reported we should see a different spring release.
- Attended the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI) meeting and said they have received quite a bit of funding from the BLM State Office.

### Larry Folks

- Reported on and attended the Bitter Killpecker Creek Watershed Advisory Group (BKWAG) Meeting.
- Folks would like to be included in the Drop Structure maintenance visit with D&D.

### Staff Reports

#### Karen Pecheny

- Attended the Bitter Killpecker Creek Watershed Advisory Group (BKWAG) Meeting.
- Submitted the SWCCD Budget to Sweetwater County for fiscal year 2022. The budget was due Friday April 10, at noon. Staff is continuing to work on the State Budget to the Wyoming Department of Audit, the budget is due by June 1.
- The tree delivery day was held on April 28, at the Sweetwater Events Complex. The District sold 1,122 trees.
- Staff distributed information and seedling trees at the “Trees for Recycling” event that was held on May 1.
- Staff is continuing to work on the office move, packing the office, contacting IT, phone and electrical contractors.

#### Joshua Coursey, At-Large Supervisor Resignation

Staff received the letter of resignation from At-Large Supervisor Joshua Coursey.

Tom Burris read aloud Joshua Coursey’s resignation letter and the Board will accept the resignation letter from Joshua Coursey. Staff will advertise the position.

A **motion** was made by Jean Dickinson, seconded by Stephanie Anderson, to accept the resignation and advertise the At-large position. Motion carried.

#### Information and Education

##### WDA Comment Letter - BLM Proposed Wild Horse Gather

The information was included in Supervisor packets.

##### WACD Comment Letter - EO Tackling Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad

The information was included in Supervisor packets. The information will be sent to Michele Irwin at her request.

##### 2021 WACD Annual Convention

The convention will be held in Cody November 29-December 1.

A **motion** was made by Tom Burris, to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 9, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. with a Local Work Group Meeting scheduled for 3:00 p.m. Location to be determined.

/s/ Tom Burris Chairman

/s/ Stephanie Anderson Secretary

//Submitted by Karen Pecheny/

(RP)