



**BITTERROOT CONSERVATION DISTRICT
(BCD)
1709 NORTH FIRST STREET
HAMILTON, MONTANA 59840
MINUTES**

January 27, 2026

Board of Supervisors regular scheduled meeting, Tuesday the 27th of January 2026, called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Jeff Mark, Chairman.

MEMBERS' PRESENT:

Tommy Dobberstein; Howard Eldredge; Mike Hansen; Joel Johnson; Jeff Mark; Bob Nelson; Todd Reagan; Paul Rosenberg; Chad Sutherlin.

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Dan Kerslake; Kent Myers.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Steve Davis, General Public; Jason Lindstrom, MT Fish Wildlife & Parks (FWP) by Zoom; Rob Livesay, Ravalli County Planning and Floodplain Department; Tim Puczkowskyj, Associate Administrator, (BCD); Julie Ralston, District Administrator, (BCD); Kimberly Richardson, Resources/Horticulture Agent, MSU Ravalli County Extension, by Zoom.

MINUTES

Dobberstein moved to approve the 13th of January 2026 minutes as presented. Sutherlin seconded; motion carried.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

1. Reviewed a legal opinion concerning the appointment of its Urban Supervisors by the municipalities of Ravalli County.
2. Reviewed the proposed 310 Civil Penalties and Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) update. It was determined by the Board to give a comment that it was opposed to the requirement of bonds when an applicant applies for a 310 permit and that CDs should have discretion and flexibility to levee penalties according to individual circumstances.
3. Ralston reported that due to changes in Flathead CD's April 30th scheduled event, it will no longer need to use the BCD watershed trailer as previously requested.

BCD COST-SHARE/EDUCATION/GRANT PROGRAMS

1. The BCD in partnership with the Teller Wildlife Refuge, will host a no-till drill workshop on March 17th from 1:00pm-5:00pm at the Teller Wildlife Refuge. Rosenberg moved to spend up to \$100.00 on refreshments for this event. Dobberstein seconded, motion carried.
2. The Board discussed 310 permitting for producers who signed up for the Farm Service Agency Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP).
3. The Board suggested that the Hamilton High School Envirothon Team contact Alan Maki and/or Dan Cassens to see if they would be willing to mentor the team in Rangeland education.

4. The Board reviewed an email from the Department of Natural Resources Conservation (DNRC) stating that the BCD's email asking to withdraw its RRGL Union Ditch grant, was sufficient to cancel the grant.

BCD COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Reviewed Myer's Open Lands Board written report. The Report is available upon request.

PARTNER REPORTS

1. Jason Lindstrom, Fish Wildlife & Parks (FWP), in Helena, reported:
 - a. The snowpack for the Bitterroot is below average. However, the heavy moisture received in November and December was enough to fill Painted Rocks Reservoir. To leave room in the reservoir for spring run-off, water is currently being released at a rate of 200cfs.
 - b. Due to the recent windstorms, there are a significant number of downed trees in the East Fork of the Bitterroot River. Downed trees and an ice jam caused flooding to occur at the Spring Gulch Campground. The US Forest Service removed a few of the trees from the river to mitigate the flooding.
2. Rob Livesay, Ravalli County Planning and Floodplain Department, reported:
 - a. The Ravalli County Floodplain Department has had very few floodplain applications.
 - b. The subdivision proposals are also down.
 - c. The Open Lands Board received a new application from the Griffin Cattle Company for 111.7 acres located northeast of Corvallis. A site visit has been scheduled for the 5th of February.
3. Kimberly Richardson, MSU Ravalli County Extension Resources/Horticulture Agent reported:
 - a. Richardson stated that her contact information may be given to the Hamilton High School Envirothon Team to assist in the mentorship of its Rangeland education.
 - b. The Ravalli County AG News & Brews Series will begin Thursday, January 29, 2026, at 6:00 pm, Wildwood Brewing. The topic for this series will be on "Pesticide Licensing".

NOTICES

The BCD Board reviewed:

1. The Department of Natural Resources Conservation (DNRC) Forest Pest Management webinar Thursday, February 19, 2026, from 1:30-2:30pm. Registration required.
2. Montana Climate Office Introduction to the Montana Mesonet and Drought Assessment Tools Thursday, January 29th from 11-12:30pm. Registration required.
3. Ravalli County Extension notice of Gardening in Montana Collaboration Meeting 23rd of January at 6:00pm and AG News & Brews Pesticide Licensing Wildwood Brewing Thursday, January 29, 2026, 6:00pm.
4. RCEDA Natural Resource Management Class Series "Wildlife Mitigation and Preparedness" February 10th, 6:00-8:00pm and "Water Rights" March 10th, 6:00-8:00pm, RCEDA Conference Room, Hamilton, MT.

OLD BUSINESS

1. 310 Application BT033-2025 Michael David Stephenson/Bitterroot River-recreational dredging. Tabled.
2. 310 Application BT082-2025 Cooper Loop Water Rights LLC, Sherman Bennett/Lost Horse Creek-stabilize 75' of eroding bank to protect irrigation delivery system. Mark tabled waiting for a modified design.
3. 310 Application BT087-2025 Wesley Jones/Three Mile Creek-irrigation sump pump and removal of sediment in an existing pond. Sutherlin moved as not a project. Dobberstein seconded, motion carried.
4. 310 Application BT089-2025 Laura Merrill/Willoughby Creek/Pine Lake-restore stream flow by removal of encroaching cattails and sediment. Reviewed an addendum to the application that described the method for temporarily draining the pond and diverting any flow around the project area during removal of sediment and cattails. Sutherlin moved to accept as a project. Dobberstein seconded, motion carried.
5. 310 Application BT092-2025 NorthWestern Energy/Bitterroot River Floodplain-bury utility power line. Dobberstein moved as not a project. Mark seconded, motion carried.

OTHER OLD BUSINESS

Reviewed:

1. Notice of project completion 310 Permit BT097-2024 Barbara Johnson/Pine Hollow Creek-culvert crossing.
2. Notice of partial project completion and cancellation of second bridge crossing 310 Permit BT001-2025 Glenn Construction/West Fork Bitterroot River-install two prefab bridge crossings. Reagan requested to schedule a follow-up site visit.
3. Notice of project completion 310 Permit BT025-2025 Nicole & Del Post/Woodchuck Creek-culvert crossing.
4. Notice of project completion 310 Permit BT080-2025 & BT083-2025 Ian Northcott/Sleeping Child Creek-mitigation and culvert crossing. Rosenberg reported that a follow-up site visit was conducted, and the permittee was asked to place a little more armor on the inlet and outlet of the culvert. Rosenberg will revisit the site during high water. He also suggested to Northcott that a 10-year annual maintenance permit may be necessary for this site.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Emergency Notice 310 BT002-2026 Larry Rose/Tin Cup Creek-removed two blown down trees for flood protection. Reagan moved to approve as completed. Rosenberg seconded, motion carried.
2. 310 Application BT003-2026 VantagePoint Julie Brecht/West Fork-utility crossing. Reagan moved to approve as a project. Rosenberg seconded, motion carried.
3. 310 Application BT004-2026 Justin Patzer/Roaring Lion Creek-remove fallen tree for flood protection. Lindstrom and Mark requested a site visit.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

1. 310 10-year Maintenance Application BT005-2026 Shelli Rennaker/Sweathouse Creek-irrigation. Lindstrom and Dobberstein requested a site visit.

PUBLIC OPEN MIC

1. Steve Davis reported that both the East Fork and West Fork of the Bitterroot River have had a lot of downed trees. He stated that the East Fork, if left in its current state, will no longer be accessible to recreational floating or guided fishing floats. Dobberstein stated that floating the East Fork may be a thing of the past. The BCD Board discussed the economic impacts to the area if floating was no longer accessible, the portage possibilities, hazardous site concerns, applicants' disappointment and/or waste of time to fill out a 310 application just to have it denied, and the purpose of the Woody Debris Task Force. Davis was advised to submit 310 applications for the different hazardous sites of concern.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

1. Rosenberg moved to approve BCD county checks 107224-107227. Mark seconded; motion carried.
2. Dobberstein moved to reinstate the existing BCD officers. Sutherlin seconded; motion carried.
3. Reviewed the BCD February Calendar. Mark reported he will be out of the state from the 15th-22nd of February.
4. Mark moved to continue the same monthly HSA contribution of \$600.00 as a medical stipend instead of an HSA contribution for Ralston. Dobberstein seconded, motion carried.
5. Reviewed an estimate for BCD software and new laptop. Dobberstein moved to purchase laptop and adaptor for \$1,155.23. Reagan seconded; motion carried.
6. Mark moved to pay the MACDEO dues invoice for two employees. Dobberstein seconded; motion carried.
7. Reviewed T-Mobile's notification that its monthly fees will go up by 50 cents.

INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE

Available for review:

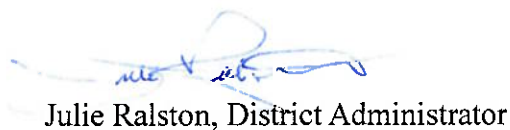
1. MACD District Dispatch.
2. NCPP Renewed Strategic Direction.
3. NorthWestern Energy December Newsletter.
4. Uline

Mark adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm

The next BCD Board meeting will be held in person on Tuesday, the 10th of February 2026, at 7:00 p.m.



Jeff Mark, Chairman



Julie Ralston, District Administrator

Date: 2-10-2026