



**BITTERROOT CONSERVATION DISTRICT
(BCD)
1709 NORTH FIRST STREET
HAMILTON, MONTANA 59840
MINUTES
February 10, 2026**

Board of Supervisors regular scheduled meeting, Tuesday the 10th of February 2026, called to order at 7:02p.m. by Jeff Mark, Chairman.

MEMBERS' PRESENT:

Tommy Dobberstein; Howard Eldredge; Mike Hansen; Joel Johnson; Jeff Mark; Kent Myers; Paul Rosenberg.

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Dan Kerslake; Bob Nelson; Chad Sutherlin; Todd Reagan.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Steve Davis, General Public; Sam Durfee, 310 Applicant; 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; Stacy Welling, District Conservationist Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

MINUTES

Rosenberg moved to approve the 27th of January 2026 minutes as presented. Dobberstein seconded; motion carried.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

1. Reviewed a letter from the City of Darby that appointed Dan Kerslake and Kent Myers as its Urban Representatives on the BCD Board to serve another 3-year term.
2. Reviewed the City of Hamilton's Resolution No. 1572, to reappoint Dan Kerslake and Kent Myers for another 3-year term as Urban Representatives on the BCD Board.
3. Davis presented drone footage of woody debris hazards and a potential "widow maker" hazard located on the East Fork of the Bitterroot River at the Spring Gulch Campground. Because the woody debris hazard is on or came from the US Forest Service property, the BCD Board advised Davis to contact the Forest Service for the removal of the hazards.
4. Reviewed the Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp request for a contribution. Rosenberg moved to sponsor one area student's registration for \$300.00. Myers seconded, motion carried.
5. Rosenberg presented the proposed amendments and updates on the 310 Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) and the newly proposed civil penalties. The proposed updates are to help with consistency in the administration of the 310 Law and the definition of a natural perennial flowing stream. The updates will go through legal review in April and will be made available for public comment sometime in August. Adoption of the updates will not take place until September. The BCD Board discussed posting two separate legal notices of rule modifications as it would like to move forward with its proposed appendix to the BCD's adopted rules. Rosenberg moved to post legal notice for the BCD appendix to its adopted rules. Dobberstein stated he would like to point out that the board is low on members at this meeting and should vote on this topic at another meeting. Myers seconded; motion carried 3-1. The BCD Board will review the proposed appendix to its adopted rules at the next meeting but will not move forward with the adoption of the appendix until the required legal notice of the appendix has been posted and public comment has been reviewed.
6. Puczkowskyj stated he has been working with the BCD IT person (Gary Long-Zito) to repair the broken links on the BCD website and to update outdated forms and/or information. He also wanted to provide 310 applicants with the ability to submit a 310 application directly from the BCD website, much like the BCD no-till drill agreement. In his research he discovered that two 310 applications for Ravalli County had been filed through the

state's 310 Gilly Platform. However, the applications were never sent directly to the BCD, so they were never processed. Puczkowskyj contacted both Gilly and the applicants. He believes the issue has been resolved.

BCD COST-SHARE/EDUCATION/GRANT PROGRAMS

1. Reviewed and signed the BCD no-till drill rental agreement request for Kootenai Springs Ranch.
2. Discussed a request to use the no-till drill outside of Ravalli County. Mark moved to limit the use of the no-till drill to Ravalli County for the first year. Rosenberg seconded; motion carried 3-1.
3. Reviewed a request for volunteers at the Montana State Envirothon Competition in Great Falls April 19-21, 2026. Rosenberg moved to cover mileage, per diem, and motel expense for three people to volunteer at the State Envirothon Competition. Myers seconded; motion carried.

BCD COMMITTEE REPORT

1. Mark presented an update report from the Water Pollution Control Advisory Council concerning rulemaking to implement Montana House Bill 685: "Feasibility Allowances Under Non-Degradation Policy." The proposed changes to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) rules will better align with the Federal Safety Water Act three tiers of protections: Existing Uses; High-Quality Waters; Outstanding Resource Waters. All the proposed changes will be listed on DEQ's website and public comments can be submitted through April 21, 2026. Final adoption of the changes will take place sometime in September 2026.
2. Myers reported: The Open Lands Board (OLB) conducted a site visit last Friday (February 6th) for the Griffin Cattle application. The property consists of approximately 111 acres located in the Corvallis area fitting in nicely with existing conservation easements. The OLB will meet on the 19th of February to determine its recommendation on the Griffin Cattle application.
3. Puczkowskyj submitted a written report on the Western AG Conference. The report can be found on file at the BCD office and reviewed upon request. He stated it was an informative event, great to experience networking with other area Conservation District members, and he was able to save the BCD its \$250.00 in sponsorship fee as his volunteer work at the event was sufficient.

PARTNER REPORT

1. Reviewed Catey Bauer, Conservation District Specialist Conservation Districts Bureau, (CARDD), February written report. The report is on file and available upon request.
2. Kimberly Richardson, MSU Ravalli County Extension Resources/Horticulture Agent reported:
 - a. AG News and Brews Pesticide Licensing was moved to this Thursday (February 12, 2026) at Wildwood Brewing.
 - b. To night she started the "Gardening in Montana" workshop.
 - c. The Beginning Landowner Presentation on Mitigating Wildfire is on March 10th.
 - d. The next AG News and Brews will be presented by NRCS on Soil Health. Detailed information is forth coming.
 - e. She plans to attend Dr. Jane Mangold's (Associate Professor Department of Land Resources Montana State University) presentation at the no-till drill workshop on March 17th.
 - f. She provided the local 4-H students with information on the BCD's scholarship program.
3. Rob Livesay, Ravalli County Planning and Floodplain Department reported:
 - a. Starting on March 2nd he will be out of the office on paternity leave for the next two months.
 - b. The US Forest Service has informed him that it does not need to get any permits when conducting work within the floodplain area of US Forest Service ground located on the East Fork, West Fork or main stem of the Bitterroot River. However, if a private individual is proposing to remove woody debris in the river or attached to US Forest Service property, the individual must get a floodplain permit and have verification of project approval from the US Forest Service. Livesay requested copies of the proposed woody debris removal submitted under 310 applications BT006-2026 Davis/West Fork, BT007, and BT008-2026 Dufree/East Fork Bitterroot River.
4. Stacy Welling, District Conservationist, Natural Resource Conservation Service, (NRCS) reported:
 - a. NRCS is in the process of updating and making changes to some of its programs. Guidance on these changes is pending.

- b. The NRCS Missoula Area (which includes Ravalli County) was awarded \$12.6 million dollars for producers applying for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) as identified through the Targeted Implementation Plans (TIPS) and Special Initiatives.
- c. The Hamilton Field Office has 28 EQIP applications. Applications for the general EQIP fund pool will compete in fund pools prioritized through TIPS with proposed practices like irrigation pivots, cover crops, soil health improvements, and forestry.
- d. NRCS's special initiatives available in Ravalli County consist of: Migratory Big Game Special Initiative; Beginner Farmer Rancher Program; Regenerative AG Pilot Project; and Community AG.
- e. The local NRCS Field Office will be short-staffed beginning early April.

NOTICES

Reviewed:

1. CEMIST "Annual Invasive Grasses Workshop" March 11, 2026, 10:00am-4:30pm, Community Center Winnett, MT.
2. Lewis & Clark CD notice of "Annual Invasive Grasses Workshop" Marcy 18, 2026, 4:00pm-5:30pm, 790 Colleen St, Helena, MT.
3. MACD notice of job vacancy for an Events and Outreach Coordinator, Helena MT.
4. RCEDA "Wildlife Mitigation & Preparedness Workshop" February 10th, 6:00pm-8:00pm, 274 Old Corvallis Rd., Hamilton, MT. "Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points Training", Tuesday, March 24 and Wednesday, March 25, 2025, Missoula College, Room 228, 1205 E. Broadway St.

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 moved to deny for the lack of a design. Dobberstein seconded; motion carried.
3. 310 Application BT004-2026 Justin Patzer/Roaring Lion Creek-remove fallen tree for flood protection. Mark moved to approve as submitted. Myers seconded; motion carried.

OTHER OLD BUSINESS

1. A follow-up inspection for 310 Permit BT001-2025 Glenn Construction/West Fork Bitterroot River-install two prefab bridge crossings is scheduled for the 24th of February.
2. Based upon written legal requests, all documentation related to 310 complaint BT063-2025 Watts against Bailey/Kootenai Creek has been provided.
3. Reviewed written request to modify 310 permit BT052-2025 Ryan and Jessy Sanden/Ambrose Creek-culvert crossing, by adding an additional 10' to the 40' culvert. Mark moved to approve the modification. Dobberstein seconded; motion carried.
4. Reviewed notice of project completion 310 permit BT073-2025 Roy Fenster/Mitchell Slough-fence crossing. Tabled for a follow-up site visit.

NEW BUSINESS

1. 310 10-Year Application BT005-2026 Shelli Rennaker/Sweathouse Creek-annual irrigation maintenance. Dobberstein moved to approve as proposed. Myers seconded; motion carried.
2. 310 Application BT006-2026 Steve Davis/West Fork Bitterroot River-remove hazardous woody debris. Tabled for inspection.
3. 310 Application BT007-2026 Sam Dufree, Dr. Thomas Parell/East Fork Bitterroot River-remove hazardous fallen tree. Tabled for inspection.
4. 310 Application BT008-2026 Sam Dufree, Dr. Thomas Parell/East Fork Bitterroot River-remove hazardous fallen tree. Tabled for inspection.
5. 310 10-year Application BT009-2026 Ian Northcott/Skalkaho Creek-annually remove debris from a culvert crossing to maintain flow, if necessary. Rosenberg moved to approve as submitted. Myers seconded; motion carried.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

1. Reviewed 310 Application BT010-2026 Mike Doleac/Sleeping Child Creek-fallen tree removal. Rosenberg requested a site visit.

PUBLIC OPEN MIC

1. Davis gave an informative drone presentation on three different types of drones and the different capabilities of each.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

1. Rosenberg presented the December budget report. Mark moved to approve the budget as presented. Myers seconded; motion carried.
2. Rosenberg moved to approve county checks 107228-107238. Dobberstein seconded; motion carried.
3. Reviewed TrailWest 2025 interest income report.
4. Dobberstein, Myers, and Rosenberg will meet to discuss the mid-term 2025/2026 annual plan and make recommendations for the BCD 2026/2027 annual plan.

INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE

Available for review:

1. MACD District Dispatch.
2. Montana Biocontrol 2025 annual report.
3. Montana Watershed News February 2026.
4. NAISMA February 2026 Field Note Newsletter.
5. RCEDA Producer Newsletter.

Mark adjourned the meeting at 9:02 pm

The next BCD Board meeting will be held in person on Tuesday, the 24th of February 2026, at 7:00 p.m.



Jeff Mark, Chairman



Julie Ralston, District Administrator

Date:[02-24-2026](#)