



**BITTERROOT CONSERVATION DISTRICT
(BCD)
1709 NORTH FIRST STREET
HAMILTON, MONTANA 59840
MINUTES
May 12, 2026**

Board of Supervisors regular scheduled meeting, Tuesday the 12th of May 2026, called to order at 7:23 p.m. by Paul Rosenberg, Treasure.

MEMBERS' PRESENT:

Tommy Dobberstein; Howard Eldredge; Mike Hansen; Dan Kerslake (by Zoom); Joel Johnson; Bob Nelson; Todd Reagan; Paul Rosenberg.

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Jeff Mark; Kent Myers; Chad Sutherlin.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jason Lindstrom, Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks (FWP), Fisheries Biologist; Rob Livesay, Ravalli County Planning and Floodplain Department (by Zoom); 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 28th of April 2026 minutes as presented. Reagan seconded; motion carried.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

1. The BCD paid the Stevensville FFA Team registration fee of a \$190.00 to attend the 2026 Montana Range Days, June 22nd to June 24th, in Malta, MT. There was a 3% credit card fee of \$5.70.
2. Dobberstein moved to allow Puczkowskyj to donate time to support the Bitterroot Discovery Children's Museum. Reagan seconded; motion carried.
3. 2026 Model Rules & BCD appendix notice will be posted in the Bitterroot Star on the 13th of May and again on the 27th of May. It will also be posted in the Ravalli Republic on the 12th of May and again on the 26th of May.
4. Reviewed Bitterroot Chapter of Trout Unlimited's letter that requested the BCD Board reconsider its determination to issue 310 permit BT021-2026 to the Bitterroot Valley River Ranch LLC. The project is for streambank restoration and riverbank stairways on the West Fork of the Bitterroot. Rosenberg read the letter to the board, and it was duly noted. Hansen commented that if organizations are opposed to projects like this, they should contact the landowner. Lindstrom commented that the public can potentially work with the landowner to come to an agreeable compromise. Further discussion mentioned that if these letters had arrived before the board decision, it may have had more of an influence.
5. Reviewed the Bitter Root Land Trust request for donations. Kerslake motioned to have BCD make a sponsorship donation to Bitterroot Land Trust for \$100.00. Reagan seconded; motion passed.

BCD COST-SHARE/EDUCATION/GRANT PROGRAMS

1. Application update for the BCD scholarship program – recommendation and decision. The Education Committee held interviews for each of the four applicants on May 6th & May 11, 2026. The applicants were ranked. Rosenberg detailed the decision points about each candidate and their strengths in each category. Representing the Education Committee, Rosenberg made the recommendation to award Miss Avery Stevens of Hamilton High School as this year’s scholarship recipient. Avery will be attending University of Montana, majoring in Wildlife Biology and Management. Both Rosenberg and Dobberstein commented on how impressed they were with all the applicants and are encouraged about our future with these young adults. Paul motioned to award Avery Stevens the 2026 Vogt Education Scholarship. Dobberstein seconded; Motion carried. Dobberstein ended the discussion proposing a possible secondary award when it is close between first and second place students. This will be discussed at a future meeting.
2. BCD reviewed Cost-Share project completion reports of CS001-2026 Cole and CS005-2026 Neibergs.
 - a. Rosenberg motioned to accept CS001-2026 Cole project as completed and pay per contract agreement. Reagan seconded; Motion carried.
 - b. Rosenberg motioned to accept CS005-2026 Neibergs project as completed and pay per contract agreement with the recommendations to install a wildlife ladder in the stock water tanks and add angular rock around the base of the tanks to prevent cattle from hanging out and mucking up the ground. Kerslake seconded; motion carried.

BCD COMMITTEE REPORT

1. Puczkowskyj reported on the pollinator seed bomb workshop he held at Daly Elementary School.
2. Reagan reported on the Farm Fair and Montana Youth Matters events. He commented on how successful the events were and the large crowds the BCD Watershed Station attracted. Three teachers requested BCD contact information to organize presentations for their students.

PARTNER REPORT

1. Jason Lindstrom, Fish Wildlife & Parks (FWP) reported:
 - a. Flows of the Bitterroot River are up and about to peak but not expected to get much higher.
 - b. Education events over the next few weeks.
 - c. Partner meeting was held about Western Cutthroat conservation. The meeting produced some draft targets for the Upper Columbia Western Cutthroat Conservation Draft Plan.
2. Rob Livesay, Ravalli County Planning and Floodplain Department reported:
 - a. The county is not currently experiencing any flooding.
 - b. The Open Lands Board committee meeting was held on May 11th, 2026, to approve the Fox Ranch conservation easement.
3. Kimberly Richardson, MSU Ravalli County Extension Resources/Horticulture Agent reported:
 - a. Ag News & Brews, May 21st, 2026, Blacksmith Brewery, Stevensville, MT, Wade Weber to present Personal Representatives and Powers of Attorney
 - b. MSU Extension workshop May 28th, 2026 at Lolo Distillery: Submitting plant ID samples and what is a good sample is to present,
 - c. Final Ag News and Brews June 11th at Backyard Taphouse, Florence, MT, How to Propagate Native Plants.
 - d. WARC Montana Heritage Orchard Program.

- e. Anticipating a busy season. There will be an update on orchard production loss from WARC soon. Stone fruits are expected to have heavy production loss due to abnormal winter weather, and they are anticipating a loss in production from apple trees as well.

NOTICES

Reviewed:

1. Big Flat Irrigation District Improvements Project Comment request. Proposed improvements include inlet structure repair/replacement, flume structure repair/replacement, irrigation ditch repairs, and tree removal.
2. Western Montana Conservation Commission Meeting, May 20th-21st, 2026, Bitterroot River Inn & Conference Center. Attend in person or through Zoom.
3. Bitterroot Conservation District Conservation Field Days, May 18th – May 19th, 2026
4. Floodplain Permit Decision Package- Glen Construction (FA-24-01) and Wes Jones (FA-26-07)

OLD BUSINESS

1. 310 Application BT033-2025 Michael David Stephenson/Bitterroot River-recreational dredging. Request to withdraw application. Rosenberg motioned to accept request to withdraw. Reagan seconded; motion carried
2. 310 Application BT027-2026 Doug Gannett/Mitchell Slough-permanent ford crossing. Dobberstein, Eldredge. Tabled until inspection on the 26th of May.
3. 310 Application BT032-2026 Johnathon Wemple/South Burnt Fork Creek-utility crossing. Sutherlin, Kerslake. Tabled for inspection on the 26th of May.
4. 310 Complaint BT033-2026 Brad Johnson against Summit Heating & Cooling Inc./Christisen Creek-digging in the creek without a permit. Reagan tabled for a site visit on a Sunday at 1:30 pm. Tabled for inspection.

OTHER OLD BUSINESS

1. Signatures for approved 310 permit BT031-2026 Ben Sorensen, NorthWestern Energy/One Horse Creek-mitigation.

NEW BUSINESS

1. 310 Application BT034-2026 Matt Anderson/Mill Creek - 10 Year Irrigation Diversion Maintenance. Dobberstein, Eldredge – Dobberstein motioned to approve. Reagan seconded; motion carried.
2. 310 Emergency BT035-2026 Roger Mikesell/Eight Mile Creek - Removed washed out rocks from irrigation diversion due to high water. Sutherlin, Kerslake. Kerslake motioned to approve. Dobberstein seconded; motion carried.
3. 310 Application BT036-2026 Isis LaLand/Spring Creek – Directional boring for septic line. Sutherlin, Kerslake. As a precaution, Kerslake requested to recuse himself from voting, due to a personal potential conflict of interest. The board chose to table this application vote until next meeting on the 26th of May 2026.
4. 310 Complaint BT037-2026 Fichtler vs Cochell, Granite Creek - Culvert installation without a 310 permit. Sutherlin, Kerslake. Tabled for inspection

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

1. Reagan proposed repairing and updating the BCD Watershed trailer. Repairs needed include: sanding and refinishing; securing step-ups for safe transportation; and replacing rotting boards. Suggested additions include: informational handouts about the water cycle & watershed tailored towards youth and adults; BCD logo decal/wrap on trailer sides; spare tire; as well as a drill to adjust corner jacks. The Board asked Reagan to propose an estimated cost of updates and repairs.
2. Emergency 310 Jolene Mavros, North Fork Rye Creek – bridge repairs. Tabled for next meeting.
3. Call from landowner on Kootenai Creek stating an irrigation water user fell a tree in the creek to use as a diversion. The irrigators were contacted and stated they did not place the tree in the creek at their diversion.

PUBLIC OPEN MIC

1. Lindstrom reported on David Parkinson of Trinity Ranch where bank work was conducted in the past, located on the West Fork Bitterroot River. Due to debris build up, the landowner is concerned that the river will spill over the bank, putting pasture at risk. The landowner proposed to move logs that are holding up debris. FWP gave the landowner verbal permission to access FWP land to move the logs. Lindstrom recommended he submit an emergency 310.
2. Nelson reported on him being in possession of an old BCD road sign, in the event BCD would like to repost it.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

1. March budget report.
2. County checks 107274-107278 with the correction that the check numbers should be 107270-107278. Rosenberg motioned to accept agenda correction and the checks. Reagan seconded; motion carried.

INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE

Available for review:

1. RCEDA and MSU Western Ag Research Center Orchard Management Classes
2. MACD District Dispatch.
3. Montana Watershed Coordination Council
4. Pondera CD Newsletter.

Rosenberg adjourned the meeting at 8:56 pm

The next BCD Board meeting will be held in person on Tuesday, the 26th of May 2026, at 7:00 p.m.


Kent Myers, Vice Chairman


Julie Ralston, District Administrator

Date: 5/26/26