



**BITTERROOT CONSERVATION DISTRICT
(BCD)
1709 NORTH FIRST STREET
HAMILTON, MONTANA 59840
Draft MINUTES
September 8th, 2026**

Bitterroot Conservation District (BCD) Board of Supervisors scheduled meeting for Tuesday the 8th of September 2026, 7:00 p.m., 1709 North First Street, Hamilton, MT.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Tommy Dobberstein; Mike Hansen; Kent Myers; Brent Pristis; Paul Rosenberg; Todd Reagan; Bob Nelson; Dan Kerslake

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Jeff Mark; Chad Sutherlin

OTHERS PRESENT:

Alison Devlin, Stevensville resident; Roy Fenster, Stevensville resident; Jason Lindstrom, Ravalli County Fish Biologist, Fish, Wildlife, & Parks; Rob Livesay, Ravalli County Planning and Floodplain Department; Tim Puczkowskyj, District Administrator, (BCD); Michael Miller (by Zoom)

MINUTES

Rosenberg motioned to approve the August 25th, 2026 Meeting Minutes. Reagan seconded; motion carried.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

1. Adopted Rules and Appendix Public Hearing Review. Myers motioned to approve the Adopted Rules and Appendix. Rosenberg seconded; motion carried.
2. Puczkowskyj Request to Attend MACD Area V Meeting, September 29, 2026, Eureka, MT. 9:00AM-4:00PM. Puczkowskyj will not attend, due to needing to be present for the BCD board meeting that same evening. He will try to attend the Area V meeting via Zoom.
3. Reviewed the Bitterroot Water Partnership Thank You Card
4. MACD Fundraiser Auction Item Donation Request. Tabled in order to strategize on what to donate that will be unique to our area.
5. Open Position for BCD Supervisor Associate - Area 2

BCD COST-SHARE/EDUCATION/GRANT PROGRAMS

1. BCD Cost Share
 - a. BCD CS-003-2027 Julie Maker: work completed and receipts submitted. Dobberstein motioned to approve the final contracted reimbursement payment for BCD CS-003-2027. Reagan seconded; motion carried.

BCD COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Myers, Open Lands
 - a. The August Board meeting was canceled. Next week's meeting on September 17th, 2026, will be introducing a new project. Myers will be absent from this meeting.
2. Reagan, Education Committee.
 - a. Sawhorses were stationed to begin work on the Watershed Trailer. They will begin by removing the top of the trailer.

PARTNER REPORTS

1. Rob Livesay, Ravalli County Planning and Floodplain Department.
 - a. More utility fiber project applications have been submitted. Spectrum and Charter are beginning permit applications.
 - b. A landowner up West Fork Road had piles of woody debris in the floodplain. A letter has been sent to notify them of the violation.
 - c. The County is partnering with the Montana Bureau of Mining and Geology to start a groundwater well monitor pilot program. There are aquifers in the Bitterroot valley showing a decline in their water levels.
 - d. Exempt wells are seen as the primary cause of the declining aquifer levels. Currently there are 22,000 exempt wells, which account for 88% of withdrawn water from wells. It is a water supply that is not being managed currently. The county will give the Montana Bureau of Mining and Geology access to wells and then the Bureau will be responsible for monitoring and managing the data collection for the program. No entity is tracking ground water on the state level. The Eight-Mile area is an ideal example of an area needing to be monitored. This area has a very low depleting water table because it lacks irrigation water to recharge aquifers. The Rye Creek area is a groundwater depletion zone.
2. Jason Lindstrom, Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
 - a. Abundant rain has increased water flows on the rivers. There was a 500 CFS flow increase at Bell Crossing.
 - b. Lindstrom will be starting electrofishing on September 9, 2026.
3. Other partner reports.

NOTICES

Reviewed:

1. Bitterroot Water Partnership: River Rooted Event, September 12, 2026, River Park, Hamilton, MT 4:00PM-7:30PM
2. Montana Watershed Coordination Council: Cornhole for Clean Water Tournament, September 19th, 2026, 11:00AM at Big Sky Brewing
3. Montana Organic Vegetable Expo, Missoula, MT, January 8th & 9th 2027.

OLD BUSINESS

1. 310 Complaint BT057-2026/Mary Ann Cusenza/Harlan Creek: Landowner altered stream channel without a 310 Permit. (Rosenberg) Waiting for landowner response.
2. 310 Complaint BT065-2026/Jason Lindstrom/Bitterroot River: Vegetation Removed Along Immediate Bank of River (Reagan, Hansen) Reagan motioned to accept this complaint as valid and there is no mitigation work to be completed. Myers seconded; motion carried.

3. 310 Complaint BT066-2026/Brad Johnson/Christinsen Creek: Drone Footage of Pond Excavated in Creek. (Reagan, Hansen) Reviewed an email from County Attorney. Puczkowskyj will contact MACD legal team and will send the complaint notice via certified mail.
4. 310 Application BT069-2026/Michael Mang/West Fork Bitterroot River: Directional Boring (Reagan, Hansen) Tabled until scour depth analysis is completed – September 29th, 2026
5. 310 Application BT070-2026/Michael Mang/East Fork Bitterroot River: Directional Boring (Reagan, Nelson) Tabled until scour depth analysis is completed – September 29th, 2026
6. 310 Application BT072-2026/ Ravalli Electric Co-op/North Burnt Fork Creek: Directional Boring (Sutherlin, Kerslake). Kerslake motioned to approve as proposed. Rosenberg seconded; motion carried.
7. 310 Application BT073-2026/Kelly Cole/Nelson Creek: Irrigation Diversion Replacement (Reagan, Hansen). Reagan motioned to approve as proposed with a 15-day waiver. Kerslake seconded; motion carried.
8. 310 Application BT074-2026/Pamela Johnson/Mill Fork Creek: 10-Year Maintenance Woody Debris Removal (Sutherlin, Kerslake). Kerslake motioned to approve without a 10-year maintenance permit. The stream is too dynamic for a 10-year maintenance permit. Reagan seconded; motion carried.
9. 310 Application BT078-2026/Jay Meyer/ Mill Creek, Spring Creek: 2 Diversion Replacements (Sutherlin/Kerslake). Kerslake motioned to approve as proposed, Reagan seconded; motion carried.
10. 310 Application BT079-2026/Roy Fenster/Mitchell Slough: Channel Dredging for Fish Habitat at 6 Locations. (Sutherlin, Kerslake) Discussion was had about what makes a project like this acceptable compared to other dredging projects affecting the natural state of a stream. Lindstrom commented that due to the channel conditions of the Mitchell Slough, silt naturally builds up and there is no run-off to flush it out. Kerslake motioned to approve as proposed; Reagan seconded; motion carried.

OTHER OLD BUSINESS

1. 310 Application BT052-2026 Trevor Stotka/Cow Creek: Channel Dredging- Project completed (Dobberstein) Dobberstein requested a follow up inspection to be scheduled.

NEW BUSINESS

1. 310 Application BT080-2026 Jason Floyd/Little Creek: Culvert Crossing Installation (Sutherlin/Kerslake) Tabled for inspection.
2. 310 Complaint BT081-2026 Alex Brown vs Mark Huson/Kootenai Creek: Irrigation Diversion in Stream Without 310 Permit (Sutherlin, Kerslake) Tabled for inspection.
3. 310 Application BT082-2026 Robert Kubiak/Little Sleeping Child Creek: 10-Year Maintenance Permit to Remove Sediment from Stock Watering Site in Creek (Rosenberg) Tabled for inspection.
4. 310 Application BT083-2026 NorthWestern Energy/Larry Creek & One Horse Creek: Electrical Pole Replacement. NWE is seeking a “Not a Project” Determination. Kerslake motioned to approve as proposed. Rosenberg seconded; motion carried.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

1. Charles Swanson/Coyote Gulch: Dam installation- The board recommended Swanson apply for a 310 permit.
2. Hansen commented that there are fallen lodgepole pines in the West Fork Bitterroot River that are leaning up against a steep bank. He questioned what the rules are for falling trees into the channel and removing them. The consensus of the board was that the project will need a 310 permit and that leaving a tree in the channel is a case-by-case decision. Conversely, the County Floodplain

Department does not allow cut trees to be left in the channel. The landowner should contact the County Floodplain Department for this project.

3. Lindstrom commented that the fallen tree at the Spring Gulch Campground has been removed by an unknown individual even though the USFS agreed to remove it.

PUBLIC OPEN MIC

Kerslake proposed discussion on the BCD's response to the Sheep Creek mine. He suggested inviting the Bitterroot Water Partnership to present information about the mine. This will be added to an upcoming meeting agenda.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

1. Rosenberg motioned to approve County checks 107333-107337. Myers seconded; motion carried.

INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE

1. MACD District Dispatch
2. Western Landowner Alliance – Leadership from the Land-August 2026
3. September CD Report
4. RCEDA Producer Newsletter
5. Watershed News

Myers adjourned the meeting at 8:19PM

The next BCD Board meeting will be held in person on Tuesday, the 29th of September 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

Jeff Mark, Vice Chairman

Tim Puczkowskyj, District Administrator

Date: 09-29-2026