

WRC UCF Minutes
September 7, 2021
Public Meeting

Those Present:

John Hollenback – WRC/DLVCD, Susie Johnson – DLVCD/WRC, Pete Dallaserra – WRC/MHCD/landowner, Bruce Thomas – WRC/landowner, Dan McQueary – WRC/landowner, Eric Hassler – WRC/BSB, Cam Balentine – WRC/MHCD/Brown's Gulch, Glen Green – WRC, Brian Bartkowiak – NRDP, Mark Mariano – Rampart Solutions and Ted Dodge – WRC.

Agenda:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Hollenback.

Treasurer Report:

- Invoices were reviewed and approved at the previous Board meeting.

Minutes:

It was moved by Bruce Thomas, seconded by Pete Dallaserra and motion carried to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

Project Updates:

- **CREP Proposal:** Meeting held with Lynn Harrington Hershey, her husband and Heidi on work proposed CREP project is now underway. Waiting for FSA to scheduled training session for NRDP partners & presentation of new rental rates.
- **Upper Clark Fork Stream Flow Working Group:** First meeting will take place September 14th starting at 10:00 – noon at the Board room at the Pen Convention Center.
- **Milltown Water Right/Drought Plan:** No update.

Terrestrial Priority Areas:

Garnet:

Hollenback: Finished narrative writeup on the Hollenback proposed projects and wildlife benefits for G. Mullen. Working on the NRDP Landowner Agreements for Hollenback, Dutton Ranch and DNRC. Took another field trip with Greg Mullen to show him the areas proposed for conifer removal from the Bitterbrush/native grasslands. The final proposed project list becomes part of the NRDP Landowner Agreement that needs to be finalized and submitted to NRDP for review and approval. Met with Josh Schrecengost and Kevin Bossert of NRCS to inform them of proposed projects that NRDP may fund on Hollenback's property as compared to what is in his EQIP contract. And to continue to try and coordinate implementation. Continue to assist Hollenback with getting a contractor to complete the one scheduled (and required) project in

his EQIP contract that has to be completed in 2021. Met with and took two contractors out to the project site to get bids and will continue to do so until one has been secured to get the project completed this year. Contacted Josh to get contact information from another potential contractor and he said he would prefer to do that one himself. Finished the NRDP landowner agreement and met with John to review and get his signature and will submit to NRDP for review and approval.

Dutton Ranch: No contact made. Some work on updating the proposed project map.

DNRC: No contact made – Some work on updating the proposed project map.

Cynthia Montagne: Ted, Greg and Glen met with Cynthia and her son to look at property she has recently purchased and is interested in making improvements. She is really interested in focusing on wildlife habitat – there is livestock grazing occurring and after this year she wants to defer that for 3-5 years before she leases it out for grazing. Greg agreed that we could conduct a field inventory for the purpose of completing a conservation plan (which will include grazing management recommendations/strategies) for the property that would also include resource issue identification and recommended projects/management to address those issues.

Deer Lodge North & South:

Lampert Ranch: Contractor has moved onto the Lampert stock water projects and has started work. With Kevin Bossert, NRCS Technician to check on progress. They were just getting the pipeline route cleared and ready for trenching. It will probably be another 2-3 weeks at least before they are completed. Contractor has encountered an issue with pipe length: his bid was on an amount of pipeline that was approximately 1300 feet less than what is needed to complete both projects. Not sure of where the specific error was made but it was in the NRDP bidding process. Greg has prepared and approved a change order to secure the additional funding needed to correct this.

Aspen Grove Ranch (Sherm Anderson): Made contact with Sherm Anderson (Aspen Grove Ranch) concerning their participation with WRC and the NRDP. He is still interested in participating and continuing with the planning that Fred Staedler had initiated with him. I met with Sherm and reviewed the draft landowner agreement he signed in 2020 and made plans to start the necessary field work to finalize that agreement. Started work on the map for his property. He also does not participate in the FWP Block Mgmt. program and NRDP is requiring public access on at least a part of his property so need to work that out with him. I met with Troy and TerriJo Anderson to discuss the access issue. They are confident that something can be worked out where they would be willing to put a portion of the property in the FWP's Block Management Program. So based on this I have started the field inventory and looking at the projects that Fred had proposed.

Habitat Enhancement

Graveley Bros.: Field tour of planned conifer removal project site with Ted, G. Mullen, Craig Carr, MSU Range Dept. and Sandy Graveley. MSU rep. looking at the site as a potential for a research project to monitor effects/benefits of conifer removal to the local ecology and water regime of that landscape.

Working on the contract documents for the Vegetation Management contract which includes conifer encroachment removal from Bitterbrush/native grasslands and Aspen clones on the Graveley Bros. ranch and the Hollenback ranch in Gough Creek.

Aquatic:

Cottonwood Creek –

Applegate fish screen and Aspen Grove Phase 2 design documents/bids closed. Aspen Grove continues to look like owner construction, while Applegate project would be bid out. I have been commenting on these documents and continuing to work through the Aspen Grove water rights changed required by NRCS, which is now in later stages of review for “correct and complete” designation by DNRC.

The Rock Creek Cattle/Dippold upper diversion upgrade, with screen, is still on the docket, while waiting for landowner confirmation from Dippold.

Operation and Maintenance work on McQueary screen is still ongoing. We had Brent Mefford the designer out there inspecting in late June to review and comment on operational fine tuning. We need to install better system for sealing off bays not in use when flows decline. Should be simple. The TU team (Casey and intern) are evaluating all the corrugated water screens (10 or more) for performance.

O’Neill Creek – No updates due to unresolved landowner change.

Gold Creek – Working with Hollenback and Thomas and other landowners.

Racetrack Creek: No update.

Brown’s Gulch: Site visit by NRCS, FWP, & WRC contractor carried out in June. A follow up meeting is scheduled for Oct October 5. Final work begun on the Brothers Diversion after an August site visit by NRDP, Ted, Confluence, & Mark as well as Randy Brothers.

Flow:

- **Racetrack/Dempsey:** No update.

Deer Lodge Landfill Compost Project:

Work on feasibility study completed and submitted to the Deer Lodge Landfill Committee. Waiting for responses from same. Continued implementation of the NRCS Conservation Innovation grant. Carcass pickup still under way.

Partners/Board Members reports were given.

Next meeting: October 5, 2021

Submitted by Susie Johnson, September 15, 2021