

**WRC UCF Minutes**  
**July 6, 2021**  
**Public Meeting**

Those Present:

John Hollenback – WRC/DLVCD, Pete Dallaserra – WRC/MHCD/landowner, Bruce Thomas – WRC/landowner, Cam Balentine – WRC/MHCD/landowner, Tina White – NRCS/filling in 4 Susie, Josh Schrecengost – NRCS, Glen Green – WRC, Georgina Kennedy – NRCS, Maxwell Bucher – NRCS, Stephen Bagley - FWP 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 Cam Balentine and motion carried to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

\* CREP Proposal: Meeting held w/MSU, NRDP, FSA, & WRC on potential conifer encroachment research. A field tour of potential NRDP funded work will be conducted in July. Draft planning process documents developed & submitted to FSA for review. Site visit with landowner on Blacktail Creek now being organized. Waiting for FSA to scheduled training session for NRDP partners & presentation of new rental rates. Site visit on Brock Creek conducted with draft potential rental rate document developed but not yet presented to landowner.

\* Milltown Water Right/Drought Plan: There will be a meeting in Deer Lodge July 27th to talk about a working group to look at the bigger picture.

Project Updates:

Terrestrial Priority Areas:

\* Garnet: Gough Creek (Hollenback property) -Working on finalizing the NRDP Landowner Agreement document. 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. Ted and I met with John to review the draft copy of the agreement before finalizing the proposed project list. Worked on updating cost estimates for the proposed projects. (Costs of materials and labor has increased significantly). I met with Jordan Rice, DNRC Range Technician and we did the field trip to the DNRC section in Gough Creek. We reviewed/discussed the few potential projects on the DNRC section. Wanted to look at upland water sources (for livestock) but Jordan had ATV issues and had to leave early so I continued on with that myself. Trying to coordinate with him on another field day to look at the potential spring develop projects and

start working on the NRDP landowner agreement. Contacted Dean Dutton to try and meet with him but so far have been unsuccessful with that.

\* Deer Lodge North & South: Participated in a Zoom meeting (at WRC office) between NRDP, FSA, NRCS personnel (and WRC) concerning the CREP program. Communicated (phone and emails) with G. Mullen concerning the Lampert/Beck projects. Met with Ted at the WRC office to discuss projects and updates. Contacted and communicated with Rockhound Contracting concerning their schedule of starting on the Lampert and Beck stock water projects. Projected start date on the Beck project is July 1, 2021 (it needs to be completed by July 30, 2021 as per the NRCS EQIP contract. Made initial contact with Aspen Grove Ranch (talked with Terry Jo Anderson) about their interest in participation on terrestrial projects. She and Troy would be interested but they will need to discuss with Sherm Anderson to see if he still wants to move forward with that.

\* Habitat Enhancement: Assisted Ted with developing of the bid documents for a Vegetative Management contract with NRDP. The contract would include conifer encroachment removal from quaking aspen stands and Antelope bitterbrush/native grasslands in the Brock Creek and Gough Creek drainages. The work will be completed on the DNRC section in Brock Creek and on the Hollenback Ranch property in the Gough Creek drainage. Contacted O'Keefe Drilling concerning a projected start date on drilling the well for the DNRC/Sanders stock water system project in Granite County. They said August (no specific date) is when they plan to get that installed. Have been trying to contact Iron Horse Fencing (awarded contract to install the electric fencing and wildlife friendly laydown fence on the DNRC sections in Granite Co. and up Brock Creek and on the Lampert Ranch (wildlife friendly laydown fencing), but so far have not received a response back from them.

Aquatic:

\* Cottonwood Creek –NRDP and their engineer on closing in on final details of Applegate fish screen and Aspen Grove Phase 2 design documents/bid documents—a very few details are left. 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 August 3rd.

Flow:

\* Racetrack/Dempsey: No update.

Wildlife Conflict:

\* Deer Lodge Landfill Compost Project: Work on feasibility study still underway. Meeting held June 30th with other organizations on the continued implementation of the NRCS Conservation Innovation grant.

Partners reports were given.

Next meeting: August 3, 2021

Submitted by Susie Johnson, July 15, 2021