

**YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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**YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**Board Meeting Minutes**

**March 17, 2026**

1670 48<sup>th</sup> St. West Suite #2, Billings MT 59106

2:00 pm

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chad Sedgwick - Chair, Leroy Gabel, Bryan Mothershead Stacey Robinson

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Brad Kraft - Vice-Chair; Jackie Haaland

**NON-BOARD PRESENT:** LaVerne Ivie - YCD; Chris White & Mike Waters - Yellowstone Co. Commissioners;  
Steve Williams - Yellowstone Co. Attorney; Crystal White - YCD/PF/NRCS;  
Anthony Sammantaro - Extension; Seanna Torske & Zoe Craft - NRCS;  
Joe Lockwood - Weed District; Demi Blythe - FWP; Carolyn Siever, YRPA  
Virtually: Veronica Wolf, DNRC; Stephanie Berry - Pheasants Forever

**\*\*The NRCS/YCD Local Work Group meeting was convened prior to the YCD regular board meeting. Notes from the meeting are included in the YCD meeting public notice email.**

**Chair Sedgwick called the meeting to order at 2:07 pm**

**Roll Call** - After the introductions, Sedgwick informed attendees: All issues will be addressed to the Chair; public comments are always welcome but wait until the issue is addressed on the agenda, ask to be recognized by the chair and then limit comments to 3 minutes; no action will be taken on any item not on the agenda.

**Agenda Changes:** Review of the most recent Fly Creek Water Quality report and the addition of Intermountain Infrastructure 310 application.

**Minutes:** Gabel made a motion to approve February 17, 2026, Minutes as written and reviewed, second by Robinson, motion passed.

**Board member absences:** Robinson made a motion to approve Jackie Haaland and Brad Kraft's absence from today's meeting for personal reasons, second by Mothershead, motion passed.

**310's**

• **Applications, Emergencies, Complaints & Violations:**

- **Joy Stevens, Alkali Creek Violation** - County Attorney Steve Williams reported that Ms. Steven's attorney will withdraw the appeal; they expect to return in April or May with engineering plans. Williams noted there was a disconnect about where the bank would be located during first testimony. New or existing engineers must be fully aware of all site conditions and issues. The Supervisors encouraged Williams to proceed as discussed today.
- **YE-06 thru YE-14-26 - Intermountain Infrastructure Group** application to horizontal directional drill nine (9) areas by boring 42" below the surface. Intermittent and seasonal water bodies include Sand Creek, Comanche Creek, North & South Forks of Five Mile Creek, North & South Forks of Alkali Creek, and Alkali Creek. **Board discussion:** Most of the creeks identified only have water during a storm event or spring runoff and then for a very short period. **Board decision:** Gabel made a motion to declare YE-06 thru YE-14-26 non-projects with the emphasis to bore a minimum depth of 42", second b Mothershead, motion passed.

• **Other 310 Issues & Projects**

- **Yellowstone River CD Council** - Gabel reported that YCD provided a list of legislator names for possible inclusion in the boat tour this summer.

• **Old Business**

- **YCD/PF contract** - YCD was informed by DNRC that the contract currently held between the two entities is in violation of procurement laws. Contracts over \$10,000 require limited solicitation with three quotes. Board

discussion and decision: Now that this has been brought to the board's attention, they must act accordingly and cancel the contract. Pheasants Forever representative Stephanie Berry said PF is aware of the situation and supportive of the correction; this action does not impact White's paycheck nor does it impact the work she is currently conducting on YCD's behalf. After discussing and dismissing several options, Robinson made a motion to cancel the YCD/PF contract effective March 31, 2026, second by Gabel, motion passed.

- **New Business**
  - **Chair Sedgwick** appointed a committee consisting of board members and Administrator for the specific purpose of developing a work plan for future staffing options. The committee will report at the next board meeting.
- **Treasurer's Report**
  - **T-Report:** Gabel made a motion to accept February Treasurer's report as submitted and reviewed, second by Robinson, motion passed.
  - **Dues & Donations requests:** none
  - **Travel & Meetings:**
    - Environmental Quality Council meeting March 24-25, 2026 in Helena. Gabel made a motion to approve travel for Sedgwick to attend the first day, second by Robinson, motion passed.
    - WIWG meeting March 24<sup>th</sup> in Lewistown. White plans on attending and will provide a brief report.

#### Standing Committee Reports

- **Arbor Day April 24, 2026** - 443 trees have been ordered for distribution; 10+ agency people committed to help; Extension will staff a table with tree planting demonstrations and will have educational materials about tree varieties and pollinator requirements; Huntley Project FFA kids will help again this year.
  - Signage: decision to purchase two (2) feather flags with YCD information for use at multiple events. Robinson made a motion to spend \$400 on flags, second by Mothershead, motion passed.
- **Fly Creek report** - Torske presented the final report from Carrie Scannella, NRCS hydrologist showing causes as marine shale, precipitation, and agricultural activities. The report recommends hauling water or drilling deeper wells but notes more study needed on well effectiveness. Three years of sampling is insufficient to establish clear trends, but DNRC cancelled the Big Horn CD grant. Landowners will receive final report after which Big Horn and Yellowstone CDs will schedule a meeting with landowners to determine next steps. Scannella will be invited to present findings.
- **Pollinator Activities** - Haaland and White
  - **Pollinator Fair** - June 20, 2026, location Pioneer Park in Billings with an 11:00 am start; YCD applied and was approved for a DNRC education grant; presenters are confirmed; food trucks, activities and vendor participation confirmed; the board instructed Ivie to proceed with top-tier marketing.
    - **Pollinator planting at Descro Park**, located in the Billings Heights - put on hold pending further information.
- Water Reservation applications update:
  - Double L Ranch - DNRC contracted engineer's water calculations differed from DNRC's Water Resources Division methodology. Meeting scheduled for tomorrow to resolve the differences.
  - Wade Keller and Brandon Keller - DNRC's contracted engineer has not been in contact with YCD to begin the process. Ivie will continue to try and reach them.
- **Westend Reservoirs** - Robinson reported the project is showing positive movement with city engagement; South Reservoir may become conservation area rather than water storage. The board viewed updated plans showing active recreation on North Reservoir; passive recreation/conservation/education on South Reservoir. City to present scenarios to council and commissioners before finalizing plans.

#### Partner/Agency Reports

- **YCD Administrator Report** - sent to Supervisors prior to the meeting.
- **Partner Biologist Report** - White provided a pollinator fair written report and participated throughout the meeting.
- **Army Corps of Engineers** - unable to attend meeting
- **Beartooth RC&D** - Mothershead plans on attending the next meeting and will submit a report afterwards.
- **DNRC** - CDB report emailed to supervisors and Wolf provided input throughout the meeting when asked.
- **Fish, Wildlife & Parks** - Demi Blythe will conduct a site visit at Duck Creek Bridge next Thursday regarding the pier demolition phase; will review and issue Dover Park permit within the next month; will finalize Kids Fishing Days dates for May; the state fisheries plan is being updated.
- **NRCS** - Zoe Craft presented three EQIP applications selected for funding pre-approval for YCD signature. She reported virtual fence projects gaining traction through Regenerative Pilot Program; weed control and habitat improvement projects moving forward.

- **Local Work Group** - Torske and Craft will prepare a summary of the LWG meeting with education opportunities and financial assistance options.

- **Yellowstone County**

- **Yellowstone County Commissioner** - Commissioners Chris White and Steve Waters were present for the entire meeting and contributed comment when appropriate. Provided update on cost per/household for the jail expansion with agricultural/commercial tax impacts pending from the DOR.
- **Yellowstone Co. Extension** - Sammartano reported multiple education events scheduled for April: Quest program for 5 days with milkweed propagation underway for monarch butterfly education and volunteer opportunities available for invasive species removal, specifically April 25<sup>th</sup> at Toman Park.
- **Yellowstone Co. Floodplain** - Ronni Tallerico unable to attend meeting
- **Yellowstone Co. Weed Department** - Joe Lockwood reported the Noxious Weed Trust Fund grant was approved; drone technology being explored for monitoring and treatment; chemical inventory sufficient for upcoming season; labor funding primary need for expanded treatment.
- **Yellowstone River Parks Association** - Carolyn Siever discussed the channel modification project at Dover Park with permit applications being submitted. The project will remove riprap and reconnect side channels. State owns the project so permit will be obtained from FWP, not YCD. Site tour available for interested board members.

- **Unscheduled Matters:**

- **Public comments** -
- **Next YCD Board Meeting** - April 21, 2026, at 1:00 pm.
- Mothershead motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:33 pm

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Chad Sedgwick, Chair

LaVerne Ivie, YCD Administrator