

YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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**YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Board Meeting Minutes**

May 26, 2026

1670 48th St. West Suite #2, Billings MT 59106

1:00 pm

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chad Sedgwick - Chair, Brad Kraft - Vice-Chair, Leroy Gabel, Jackie Haaland, Bryan Mothershead

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Stacey Robinson

NON-BOARD PRESENT: LaVerne Ivie - YCD; Mike Waters & Chris White- Yellowstone Co. Commissioners;
Steve Williams - Yellowstone Co. Attorney;
Crystal White - PF/NRCS; Demi Blythe - FWP; Dan Rostad - YRCDC
Carolyn Siever, YRPA; Ronni Tallerico, Yellowstone Co. Floodplain
Virtually: Seanna Torske, NRCS; Veronica Wolf, DNRC

Chair Sedgwick called the meeting to order at 1:00 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: None

Minutes: Mothershead made a motion to approve April 21, 2026, Minutes as written and reviewed, second by Haaland, motion passed.

Board member absences: Kraft made a motion to approve Stacey Robinson's absence from today's meeting for personal reasons, second by Gabel, motion passed.

310's .

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

- **YE-17-26 - Andrew Hyams - tributary to Duck Creek** - application to install a bridge was returned requesting further information, maps and drawings.
- **YE-18-26 - Tri-County Telephone Association - Blue Creek** - Installation of HDPE conduits via directional drilling (boring) under all water bodies/creek beds. The bore length for the area is 428' which extends far beyond the creek itself. The width will be approximately 6" and will be a minimum of 10' beneath the creek bed. **Board discussion and decision:** Gabel made a motion to declare a non-project because it does not impact the immediate bed or bank of Blue Creek, second by Mothershead, motion passed.
- **YE-19-26 - Yellowstone River Parks Association - Yellowstone River** - Sievers presented details for the repair of the existing boat ramp structure at the Blue Creek Fishing Access Site. The project involves replacing rock material that has been washed downstream since the ramp's original construction in 2019. The resulting scour hole at the end of the ramp creates a significant safety hazard for recreationists. The proposed repair area is approximately 14 feet wide by 12 feet long and will require no new bank disturbance. **Inspection Date and Team:** March 19, 2026; Gabel, Haaland, Ivie, YRPA representatives, and Blackburn. **Board Decision:** Gabel moved to approve the project as submitted. Kraft seconded the motion, motion passed.

- **YE-20-26 - Joseph McCuen - 'Cove Creek'** - The project site consists of sagebrush, grass, and scattered trees. The property slopes toward a drainage, sometimes referred to as "Cove Creek"; however, the drainage only conveys water during weather events. A 6-inch PVC gravity main will be installed underground from the existing manhole (MH) on the south side of the property to the proposed home site. Installation of the pipe will be completed using an open-cut trench method. **Board Decision:** Kraft made a motion to declare the proposal a non-project because the project has no impact on the immediate bed or bank of a perennial flowing stream. Mothershead seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- **Other 310 Issues & Projects**
 - **310 Model Rule changes:** The board set July 7, 2026 for the Public Hearing to adopt changes to the 310 Law. The hearing will be noticed in the Yellowstone County News following YCD's public hearing rules.
 - **Yellowstone River CD Council** - Dan Rostad
 - Channel migration zone updates: provided a copy of the Yellowstone River Bankline's and Channel Plugs comparing interpreted bank full conditions of 2001 v 2023 noting that the river has not changed much in the past 22 years.
 - YR tour will be held July 16th and YCD personnel are encouraged to attend
 - TMDL's - numeric standards have been replaced with narrative standards and EPA approval is pending. He discussed challenges with nutrient levels and arsenic contamination.
- **Old Business**
 - **Personnel Committee** - will meet with a prospective part time employee this summer.
- **New Business**
 - **YR Water Reservation Fees structure discussion** - The Board discussed YCD's fee structure and noted that it does not adequately account for the annual reporting workload, particularly when the Administrator must make multiple contacts with water users to obtain required reports. The Board discussed implementing an annual reporting fee in the range of \$100-\$500 using a sliding-scale model. Under the proposed concept, reports submitted on time would incur a minimal fee or no fee, while additional fees would be assessed for each week a report is submitted late. **Board Decision:** Gabel made a motion to table any changes to the fee structure for late reports until the next YCD Board meeting to allow time for additional information to be gathered. Haaland seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- **Treasurer's Report**
 - **T-Report:** Gabel made a motion to accept April's Treasurer's report as submitted and reviewed, second by Mothershead, motion passed.
 - **Dues & Donations requests:**
 - **Arbor Day venue donation** - Gabel made a motion to donate \$200 in appreciation for the use of the indoor greenhouse during the Arbor Day event, second by Haaland, motion passed.
 - **Travel & Meetings:** June 4 - Chamber of Commerce Ag tour (no one can attend); June 16 - Fly Creek water sampling close-out meeting (Gabel, Sedgwick, Ivie); June 20 - Pollinator Fair (Haaland, Ivie, Kraft, Mothershead); June 22 - Realtor's luncheon (Kraft, Ivie); June 23 - Co. Commissioners budget hearing (Sedgwick, Kraft, Ivie)

Standing Committee Reports

- **Arbor Day April 24, 2026** - All agreed the tree giveaway was a huge success.
- **Fly Creek Close-out Meeting** - The landowner meeting was scheduled for May 20th, but the main presenter cannot attend on that date. The group will reschedule for a day in June.
- **Pollinator Fair status** - Haaland, White & Ivie - The pollinator fair is on track for June 20th at Pioneer Park. The planning group will review and adjust the supplies budget due to increased expected attendance. Coordinate with tree climbing organization on cross-marketing and food trucks.
- **YR Water Reservation applications:**

- Double L Ranch - Another Form 606 will be filled out June 29th with the DNRC Billings office
- Wade Keller and Brandon Keller - Public Hearing is scheduled for July 7, 2026
- Mill Creek Farm - will require a change in the point of diversion so we are looking at several planning meetings.
- **Westend Reservoirs** - no report

Partner/Agency Reports

- **YCD Administrator Report** - sent to Supervisors prior to the meeting.
- **Partner Biologist Report** - White contributed throughout the meeting.
- **Army Corps of Engineers** - unable to attend meeting
- **Beartooth RC&D** - Mothershead attended the last meeting and reported: Beartooth RC&D recently announced a new partnership with GIS Web Tech to provide a leading-edge geographic systems (GIS) research and property search technology. GURU is the new on-line site selection solution that will soon be available on BRCD website. It will provide extensive online search capabilities as well as data analysis for the Beartooth region's real estate listings.
- **DNRC** - CDB report emailed to supervisors and Wolf provided input throughout the meeting when asked.
- **Fish, Wildlife & Parks** - Demi Blythe - FWP Region 5 is entering June 2026 with worsening drought conditions. No hoot owl restrictions currently and unlikely over the next two weeks; Shocked the town section (Blue Creek to just above Western Sugar intake) - lots of nongame species, game species include smallmouth bass, sauger, brown trout.
- **NRCS - Seanna Torske** - MT received more money for CPS applications, and the offices are currently working on getting the application on file contracted. The new NRCS Chief hails from Texas.
- **Yellowstone County**
 - **Yellowstone County Commissioner** - Commissioners Chris White and Mike Waters were present for the entire meeting and contributed comment when appropriate.
 - **Yellowstone Co. Extension** - Sammartano is coordinating Extension's role in the Pollinator Fair event.
 - **Yellowstone Co. Floodplain** - Ronni Tallerico - nothing new to report
 - **Yellowstone Co. Weed Department** - Joe Lockwood - unable to attend meeting
 - **Yellowstone River Parks Association** - Carolyn Siever discussed the weed district conducting an experimental treatment for White Bryony at Dover Park. YRPA and Two Moon Park - oversee mastication project for Russian Olive and Buckthorn removal this fall and use as example for woody invasive treatment.
- **Unscheduled Matters:** none
- **Public comments** - none
- **Next YCD Board Meeting** - July 7, at 1:00 pm
- Kraft motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:15 pm, second by Gabel.

Chad Sedgwick, Chair

LaVerne Ivie, YCD Administrator