YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Board Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2026
1670 48th St. West Suite #2, Billings MT 59106
1:15 pm

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chad Sedgwick – Chair, Brad Kraft – Vice-Chair, Jackie Haaland, Bryan Mothershead, Stacey Robinson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Leroy Gabel

NON-BOARD PRESENT: LaVerne Ivie - YCD; Chris White– Yellowstone Co. Commissioner; Steve Williams – Yellowstone County Attorney; Seanna Torske, Zoe Craft – NRCS; Demi Blythe – FWP; Ronni Tallerico, Yell. Co. Floodplain; Michelle Yeager - DNRC; Joe Lockwood - Yellowstone Co. Weed District; Myrna Lastusky – Beartooth RC&D; Gavin Woltjer – Billings Parks, Rec & Public Lands
Virtually: Mary Hendrix, DNRC; Carolyn Siever, YRPA
310 representatives: Robbie Neihart
Public: Cindy & Richard Burton

Chair Sedgwick called the meeting to order at 1:15 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 the Minutes from July 7, 2026, Public Hearing to adopt the new wording for YCD's 310 Model Rules as drafted by DNRC, second by Haaland, motion passed.
- Robinson made a motion to approve the Minutes from the Public Hearing for Brandon Keller's Yellowstone River Water Reservation authorization, second by Mothershead, motion passed.
- Kraft made a motion to approve July 7, 2026, Minutes as written and reviewed, second by Robinson, motion passed.

Board member absences: Mothershead made a motion to approve Leroy Gabel's absence from today's meeting, second by Haaland, motion passed.

310's .

- **Applications, Emergencies, Complaints & Violations:**
  - **YE-21-26 – Kyle Clardy, Blue Creek** – No word from Clardy whether he removed the beaver dam or not. Haaland travels that road frequently and will drive by to confirm current situation.
  - **YE—04-27 – Billings Bench Water Association, Yellowstone River** – modification to previously approved headgate installation permit that called for a dirt coffer dam in the river. The new plan is for sheet metal piling instead of the dirt berm. Board decision: Robinson made a motion to approve modification from the dirt berm to sheet metal piling, second by Mothershead, motion passed.
  - **YE-02-26 – Andrew Hyams, tributary to Duck Creek –**
  - **YE-03-27 – Gordon Anderson, upland drainage ravine of 5 Mile Creek -**
  - **Huntley Project Irrigation District upper YR intake discussion** – Sedgwick reported that the HPID manager had asked him to inspect the current gravel buildup in front of the HPID upstream intake/headgate. Future

work may include removal of the gravel bar; however, this work is not anticipated to occur this fall. Sedgwick wanted to make the Board aware of the developing issue and potential need for future action.

- **Complaint: YE-01-27-C – Donna & Patrick Patterson** – FWP submitted a complaint regarding what they observed to be unpermitted activity in the Yellowstone River. After reviewing the complaint and accompanying photographs, the YCD Board determined that the complaint was valid and scheduled an inspection for September 23.

- **Other 310 Issues & Projects**
  - **Yellowstone River CD Council** – next meeting will be held in Billings, Oct. 16th in the FWP conference room.
  - **310 Law Civil Penalty discussion** – A group of Montana Conservation Districts has developed a draft proposal to modernize the civil fine provisions of the 310 Law. Supervisors and Attorney Williams reviewed the draft and identified the following areas that need further clarification. These comments will be forwarded to Gallatin Conservation District:
    - Establish a firm deadline, such as 90 days, for compliance or completion of the required process.
    - Establish a specific dollar amount or range for the civil fine.
    - Provide additional details regarding how penalties will be calculated.
    - Address enforcement measures to ensure there is a mechanism for follow-through after a fine has been levied.
- **Old Business**
  - **FY27 APO** – Supervisors had no further edits to the draft presented in July. Mothershead made a motion to adopt the final version as YCD's FY27 APO, seconded by Kraft. Motion passed.

- **New Business**
  - **Appointment to Laurel City Planning Board** – Kraft was asked and agreed to represent YCD on the Laurel Planning Board. Robinson made a motion to appoint Kraft as YCD's representative on the planning board, seconded by Haaland. Motion passed.
  - **Purchase of noxious weed roll-up banner** – Mothershead made a motion to approve $133.50 to purchase the banner, second by Robinson, motion passed.
- **Treasurer's Report**
  - **T-Report**: Kraft made a motion to accept the July and August Treasurer's reports as submitted and reviewed, second by Mothershead, motion passed.
  - **DNRC 310 funds**: Robinson made a motion for YCD to request 310 reimbursement funds from DNRC, second by Mothershead, motion passed.
  - **Dues & Donations requests:**
    - **RMC Yellowstone River Cleanup 2026 project** – Carolyn Siever provided a report on this year's cleanup activities. Mothershead made a motion to donate $500 towards this years cleanup efforts, second by Haaland, motion passed.
  - **Travel & Meetings:** MACD Area 4 meeting, Oct. 6th in Joliet. Supervisors were provided the information and Mothershead and Haaland indicated they be able to attend.

Standing Committee Reports

- **YR Water Reservation applications:**
  - Double L Ranch – still does not have clear title to all the land included in their water reservation application.
  - Wade Keller – authorization approved today during the Public Hearing
  - Mill Creek Farm – per Mary Hendrix – this application is pending evaluation after the Keller applications are completed.
- **Westend Reservoirs – Gavin Woltjer, Billings City Parks,Rec & Public Lands Director** presented updates on the reservoir project, explaining that while the initial $13 million proposal was too expensive, they are now

working on a scaled-down version with potential recreational amenities, and seeking support from various agencies and stakeholders. YCD reiterated support of the project as stated in the YCD/City of Billings MOU.

Partner/Agency Reports

- **YCD Administrator Report** – sent to Supervisors prior to the meeting.
- **Partner Biologist Report** – unable to attend meeting
- **Army Corps of Engineers** – unable to attend meeting
- **Beartooth RC&D** – Mothershead reported he, Kraft Robinson and Ivie attended the annual meeting. He introduced employee Myrna Lastusky and thanked her for attending today's meeting. She reported a new director has been hired.
- **DNRC** – no updates
- **Fish, Wildlife & Parks** – Demi Blythe
  - Yellowstone River Sampling: Crews have been out near Voyager's Rest completing the fall Sauger population monitoring
  - Stream Permitting: City of Billings 124 – BBWA Headgate Replacement – set to issue SPA 124 permit for this project by this week.
  - 310s: Demi attended the Duck Creek bridge 310, no major concerns; Would have liked to make the 5 Mile Creek 310 – culvert crossings are an increasing issue for prairie streams, even in ephemeral drainages
  - YRCDC: Regional staff expect to attend the upcoming October meeting for the YRCDC; Discussions about forming a watershed group for this region/portion of the Yellowstone River
  - Other: Working on setting up a meeting with partners to discuss the Huntley Diversion fish bypass – need to update structure and may have Natural Resource Damage Program funding to do so, but dependent on partner discussions

- **NRCS – Seanna Torske & Zoe Craft** –
  - NRCS Active Contracts – Our active EQIP contracts are working on getting practices installed. From pivots, to stockwater lines, virtual fence grazing, and soil health testing.
  - Deadline for CSP records for 2026 to be turned into NRCS: September 30th, 2026.
  - FY27 Program Applications- We are accepting applications for FY27 funding, the deadline for program applications is October 2nd, 2026.
  - July 10th, 2026 – Soil Painting with Billing Public Library -- MT Soil & Water Conservation Society sponsored soil painting kits for the event, they are made with soil collected across the state of Montana that you can mix with clear acrylic paint to be able to make art with soil. The library provided canvases, easels, and paintbrushes. Discussed soil and how different forming factors can change the color of soil. Showed a soil map of the US with colors mapped of the soil in the US and discussed how a Munsell soil color book is used in the field by soil scientists.
  - August 20th – Soil Your Undies Follow Up Event (Soil Texturing, Soil Microscope) -- Had 10 students bring back their harvested underwear for display at the library. Northern Resource Council couldn't attend, but Billings Parks Department came and shared information about their composting program. Nick Miller showcased different stages of compost, and we were able to look at those under the microscope. Families were able to learn more about soil, soil health, and get an opportunity to texture soil or use the microscope.
  - September 10th, 2026 – MT Forest Stewardship Billings Presentation -- Helped MSU Extension with their forest stewardship course held in Billings. Presented on range management and understory grazing in forests. Helped guide participants through developing their inventory plan. Each participant will complete their inventory and return this coming Friday (Sept 18th) to review and develop a management plan for their individual property.

- **Yellowstone County**

- **Yellowstone County Commission** – Commissioner White reiterated the importance of advancing the jail safety initiatives, as previously discussed at YCD meetings. He invited anyone interested in touring the jail to observe the current conditions to contact him, and he will make the necessary arrangements.
- **Yellowstone Co. Extension** – Sammartano emailed this report:
  - Lots of reports of Japanese beetles causing problems for home gardeners all around Billings this summer. We are working to help to continue to educate the public on how best to manage these seasonal pests.
  - Hosted a Seed Saving Workshop at the library on 9/12, had over 60 people in attendance.
  - Currently hosting a forestry workshop to assist landowners with timber on their property. The workshop will provide landowners with the tool to analyze and inventory their landscape so that way they can take appropriate management actions to meet their landscape goals.
  - Preparing to clear 20 acres or Russian Olive and Common Buckthorn from Two Moon Park within the next month. Heavy machinery will be used to grind up the woody invasive species. For those interested in taking a tour of the project site to watch the contractor work, please contact me at anthony.sammartano@montana.edu.
  - November 7th will be a large community volunteer day at Two Moon Park. We will be educating the public about the work being done and allowing volunteers to help in replanting the area. All are invited to attend.
  - Our Family and Consumer Science Agent, Erin Gregory, is hosting beginner and intermediate canning classes on September 26th, from 9am - 11:30am. The class is $10 and will fill up quickly. To register, please call Erin at 406-256-2828 or use this link to register:
- **Yellowstone Co. Floodplain** – Ronni Tallerico issued an Emergency Notification for Mary Street and 5 Mile Creek Bridge – they will submit a Joint Application. Also issued Andrew Hyam's Floodplain Permit.
- **Yellowstone Co. Weed Department** – Joe Lockwood
  - Salt Cedar cleanup will focus on areas around the Billings Motorcycle Club property and east Laurel. The hope is to proceed further than the Bundy Bridge.
  - Two Moon Park weed massification project: Sammartano will seed 18 acres with native plants.
  - County roads: 2 seasonals left and their main job is chasing Canada Thistle on roadways.
- **Yellowstone River Parks Association** – Carolyn Siever no additional report beyond the YR cleanup.

- **Unscheduled Matters**: none
- **Public comments** – none
- **Next YCD Board Meeting** – October 14, 2026 Mothershead motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:35 pm

Chad Sedgwick, Chair **LaVerne Ivie, YCD Administrator**