

UPPER YELLOWSTONE WATERSHED BASIN

PARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

PGeneral Membership Meeting

March 2, 2006 at 7:00 PM

St. Johns Church, Emigrant

-MINUTES-

Those Present (32):

Alan Redfield	Jim Robinson, DNRC
Alex Phillips, MT Wilderness Society	Mark Rose
Alvin Pierce	Martin Davis
Bob Weber	Marty Malone, UYWB Vice Chair
Charley Orchard, Land EKG	Nicole McClain, UYWB Coordinator
Chauntelle Rock, FS	Pat Byorth, FWP
Daryl Smith	Peter Kolb, MSU Extension Forester
David Molebash, UYWB Chairman	Phil Anderson
Druska Kinkie	Rachel Frost
Duane Neal	Richard Kinkie
Eleanor Bossert	Roger Nelson
Gayleen Malone	Sabrina Hanan
Janene Molebash	Scott Opitz, FWP
Jason Frost	Sean Murphy
Jerry O'Hair	Tom Arrandale
Jim Johnson, Confluence	Warren Kellogg, NRCS

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. VISITORS.

- ◆ Alex Phillips, Montana Wilderness Society
- ◆ Chauntelle Rock, FS
- ◆ Charlie Orchard, Land EKG
- ◆ Jim Robinson, DNRC
- ◆ Pat Byorth, FWP
- ◆ Peter Kolb, MSU Extension Forester
- ◆ Scott Opitz, FWP
- ◆ Warren Kellogg, NRCS

3. APPROVAL OF January 2006 MINUTES

4. UPDATES

• Coordinator's Report:

- ◆ Field units for UYWB & Weeds (see mock-up)
- ◆ DRAFT weed brochure. Marty Malone suggested we use a brochure he recently had printed and put our labels on them to save money.
- ◆ MACD – LEP funding. Nicole recently drafted a letter of support for Montana Association of Conservation Districts regarding the Local Empowerment Program to send to the Montana Congressional Delegation.
- ◆ MWCC Quarterly Meeting, 1/24/06 in Helena - update. Nicole and Amy attended the quarterly meeting and gave a presentation about the Park Conservation District and watershed groups.
- ◆ Noxious Weed Trust Fund grant hearing on March 16 @ 4:30 PM in Lewistown. The application we filed back in December on behalf of watershed members will be reviewed on March 16, 2006 and members are needed to testify before the review board. Please contact the Coordinator if you are interested in volunteering for this opportunity.

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- ◆ Mountain Sky Guest Ranch fund. Nicole and Amy put together a grant proposal for operational funding for the Park Conservation District's watershed groups; the deadline is March 4, 2006.
- ◆ UYWB funding review & update. Show below is a funding update provided by Amy regarding the UYWB current funding.

Funding Source:	Amount:	Purpose:
DNRC-CARDD Watershed Planning & Assistance Grant	\$10,000.00 (expended)	Operating Expenses
MACD – Local Empowerment Grant	\$25,000.00 (expended)	Operating Expenses, No-Till & Seal-It projects
MACD – Local Empowerment Grant	\$9,444.25 spent \$5,555.75 remaining	Operating Expenses
DNRCC-CARDD Watershed Planning & Assistance Grant	\$10,000 (-0- spent)	Operating Expenses
DEQ 319 Grant	\$48,888 (Stop-Work Order)	Paradise TMDL Planning Area project
DNRC-CARDD- HB223 Grant	\$5,215.00 (-0- spent)	Soil Moisture Data Loggers – UYWB Irrigation Efficiency Project

- **Chairman's Report:**

- ◆ Conservation Trail Ride. This idea goes back to the proposal from Marty regarding an educational program for non-resident land owners in an effort to try and educate them on Ag, land management, etc., and connect them with local Ag people to help facilitate possible grazing contracts, etc. Dave has decided to take this on this fall and make a good event for the watershed group. Contact Dave if you would like to be on this committee.
- ◆ ATTRA workshop for Irrigation Efficiency Project (AM400 - Soil Moisture Data Logger) on Tuesday, March 7 from 10:30 – 2:30 at St. John's church. Please note: free units are still available. If you have interest, please come to the workshop, or contact Dave or Nicole for more information.
- ◆ Input from the group re: future meeting topics (Forest Service update – Travel Plan final draft, HB22, Water Rights Adjudication – will look for speaker to present at a future meeting (contact Scott Compton, Regional Manager for DNRC in this area). Q: Has everyone received their bill? Have until March 15th to comment, every water source will be billed, there should be a ceiling of \$750.00. Priority for upcoming meeting! FWP – Mill Creek/water leasing – would like to revive the Mill Creek water lease, Barbara Hull of the Montana Water Trust came to meeting tonight. Back in the 90s FWP leased water in Mill Creek to keep water in the creek for spawning, worked good in normal water years, not good in drought years, lease expired 2 (?) years ago. Would like to revisit this topic, have learned a lot from the past especially in regard to communications, biologically (timing for cutthroat) need a certain amount of water for a certain amount of time so they can be more flexible, pursuing their options would like the assistance of the watershed group, could really use some water in this area. Will provide outline, agenda
- ◆ Montana Watercourse – Know Your Watershed workshop. Dave and Nicole met with Debbie Zart to talk about a workshop. Looked at incorporating with UYWB Weed Fair.
- ◆ Irrigation projects & possible UYWB sponsorship thru HB223 grant. Any requests come to meeting first, and then to the Irrigation Committee, then the Irrigation Committee will review the request, and make a recommendation to the rest of the group.
- ◆ UYWB leadership elections for 2006/2007 next month.

- **Vice Chairman's Report:**

- ◆ Results of December interest poll. RC&D coming up with irrigation education programs, 10 projects will be evaluated by an engineer (water mgmt specialist) with opportunity for EQIP grant for funds to update sprinklers (aging pivot, etc.). Park County Wind Tour on Wednesday March 8th leaving Livingston at 8:00 AM to Martinsdale Colony (set up machine shop to rebuild used generators) to look at Wind Energy project, and to Harlow. 2 busses leaving Livingston only cost \$7.00 for lunch. Please contact Marty if you are interested in attending

COMMITTEE UPDATES

- **Endangered Species/Wildlife Committee**

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- ◆ Update by Alan Redfield. Need to get someone to come from Governor's office to discuss changes to Bison Quarantine Management Plan. Pat - YCT found not warranted to be listed as an endangered species.
- **Irrigation Committee**
 - ◆ Update by Jerry O'Hair. Workshop next Tuesday.
- **Range Committee**
 - ◆ Update by Alvin Pierce. Nothing to update.
- **Stream Stabilization Committee**
 - ◆ Update by Roger Nelson. Nothing to update.
- **Weed Committee Update**
 - ◆ Update by Eleanor Bossert (Weed Fair 2006). KYW

AGENCY UPDATES

- **Gallatin National Forest, Chauntelle Rock**
 - ◆ Food Storage Order. Gardiner Ranger District restoration project at Cinnabar, salvaging aspen with beetle kill, etc. Around that property, need input from the group. Call Ken Britton with any comments. GNF trying to implement food storage order, most outfitters already on board with this, trying to get this information out to the public. Making sure that food or any sort of attractant is stored in vehicle, hard-sided containers, etc. Have handouts with Q&A for the group. For more information please go to their Gallatin web page at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin>. From there click on resources, then on wildlife/birds, where you will find the Expanded Food Storage Order Briefing Paper and the Expanded Food Storage Order Question and Answer documents.

Regarding the Cinnabar Restoration Project, "The Gardiner Ranger District is currently seeking public comments regarding the Cinnabar Restoration Project. The project involves removing encroaching trees from grassland/shrub and aspen communities (either mechanically or with fire), salvaging beetle-killed and beetle-infested Douglas fir to reduce fuel build-ups adjacent to private property in

Cinnabar Basin, thinning some stands of Douglas fir to reduce the risk of beetle attack all in an effort to restore fire-adapted communities where fire has been excluded for many years. About 1200 acres could be affected. For more information, call Ken Britton, Gardiner District Ranger, at 848-7375 ext. 22 or Barb Ping, Team Leader at 522-2558. Comments will be accepted through March 17th.

If needed, the Gardiner Ranger District should have a copy of this document if anyone is interested. Also if the group would like, Ken is willing to come and give a presentation about the project. Please let the Coordinator know if you are interested.

5. OPEN ITEMS

Duane Neal. Duane attended an outfitters meeting in January, they had a representative Montana Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigation give a presentation to the group about meth labs. Criminals are running meth labs out of fishing sites, forest services sites, abandoned buildings, etc. Meth labs are highly hazardous, if you find one report it and leave it alone. Meth can be made with about \$60 in materials which will make an ounce of meth. If you see a campfire with matches and the strikers torn off, it could be an indication that area was used as a make-shift meth lab. Serious problem, only takes one time to get started on it. 2 years ago FS busted a big meth lab operating out of tents, took weeks to clean up and hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Charlie Orchard. Recovering rancher, come up with a system for people to monitor their rangeland, improve their grazing, do a lot of schools throughout the west, not much in Montana, did receive a CIG grant through NRCS that has allowed them to put on classes in the Shields/Paradise. Charlie would like to give a presentation about monitoring, etc.

6. PROJECT IDEAS

- Input from the group on resource needs.

7. PRESENTATION

- ◆ Dr. Peter Kolb, Montana State University Extension Forestry Specialist. **"Active forest management and its role in conserving ecosystem function"**

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Background info: **Peter F. Kolb** is the Montana State University Extension Forestry Specialist and an Adjunct Forest Ecology Professor at the University of Montana. He earned his PhD from the University of Idaho in forest and range ecophysiology, his M.S. from Idaho in silviculture, and his B.S. in Forestry from Michigan State University. He has authored refereed papers on both plant physiology and landscape ecology. He has conducted research on the effects of heat and water stress on conifer seedling establishment, the role of forest pests, pathogens, and wildfire on forest dynamics on the Boise National Forest, the impacts of forest thinning on root diseases on the Clearwater National Forest. He currently has research projects on forest and range restoration practices on dry eastside forests, cultural practices to enhance woody debris decomposition, and plant community recovery following wildfires and salvage logging. He also works extensively with county extension agents and private forest landowners across the state on a variety of topics including windbreak and shelterbelt establishment and rejuvenation, backyard tree care and maintenance, and forest management planning and alternative forest harvesting practices for family owned forests.

In 2001, Peter led a tour for a couple hundred tree farmers from Chico to Yellowstone while watching helicopters with their buckets to put out Fridley fire. Richard & Druska Kinkie had a couple hundred acres burn up and contacted him for advice. These were the worst of times, but best of times because he got to meet the Kinkie's.

Peter has been working with fires, insects, and diseases and forest processes since 1984 when he received his masters and PhD. At that time, he worked in Idaho, and in 1987 took the job at MSU. However, he is housed at University of Montana working cooperatively with faculty there. Peter also has an interest in windbreaks and shelterbelts. He wanted to know what makes these systems work, and how manage them to make them work for us while maintaining the integrity of the forest.

Copies of Dr. Kolb's PowerPoint presentation outline and meeting synopsis is available upon request.

Question & Answer Period

Q: How much water do the big cottonwoods take a day? A: IT depends; the hotter and drier the air the more moisture is lost. Depends on the conditions, in hot dry air it can use 200 gallons of water a day. Type, south slope, etc., are all determining factors.

Q: Do cottonwood seeds require a lot of sediment; what does it take to plant a cottonwood seed? A. No exact answer, but produces a lot of small seeds so that it falls in a crack of things. Need high humidity environment. CW seeds are fragile, but can find a lot of safe sites (cracks, etc.) in the soil. Bury under fine layer of sand/grit, gravel bars, or mud on any surface. But because so small have a short lifespan. They make it in the first month or so or are history.

Q: Deterrents to recruitments of cottonwoods due to ice flows. A lot of in the upper area are black cottonwood, but down country are plains cottonwoods. A: CW sensitive to drought because of easily formed air pockets in the xylem (water conducting) tissue during drought.

Q: If you have an area where they are dying out, should you clear them out, or what? Tough question, with aspen cut them down they will sprout. CW could stimulate root suckering by cutting them down. Best time in winter when are dormant and have stored energy. CW not adapted to fire, but ice, flooding.

Q: A tree that looks partially dead what next? It will suffer along, but will never recover. Slow decline means running out of energy, then wont have enough energy to sprout again, if take the top off more energy for sprouting. There are many pests and pathogens that attack weakened cottonwood trees, making recovery of injured trees more difficult. That being said, a weakened and sick cottonwood tree can suffer along for many years before completely dieing. As a wood product it is a preferential species for barn flooring because the wood does not splinter.

Q: What about insect infestations, do they create the natural mosaic – are they good or bad? Good question. Certain level insect infestation will help create mosaic. Under normal circumstances, when

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through major climatic fluctuations, beetles become epidemic – can argue this is the way nature operates. Fires over the last 10,000 years way more intense than 1988 – but can humans live with this? It is a social choice, what do we want our landscape to look like? Can't stop fires or beetles, but can soften the blow (catastrophic type events) by doing various management options.

Q: If you have a Doug fir with beetle, how long take to spread? The first hatch (explorer or scout beetles), find a susceptible tree send out a signal, then the second main hatch will follow the signal to infest the stand. Rule of thumb, they will fly a mile. Can buy MCH caps – pheromone traps by Pherotech. Have time to harvest infested trees and reduce the local infestation as DF beetle brood requires a year to mature under the bark pull it out, almost a year. If you see a pitch streamer, get your step ladder with ax and peel off bark, then if you see galleries in there, then have time to pull them out.

Q: How do beetles attack? They go into the cambium.

Q: What kind of predators? In a normal cycle, predator prey population in synch. The more diversity you have, the less of consistent food source.

Q: Could you advise us on details such as appropriate pot size (we have a supply on one gallon nursery type pots), growing medium and the like? A: Cass Dumrose, Native Plant Network, propagation. Protocols are posted there for seedlings. Cottonwoods for cuttings want branches that are ½" in dia, new growth, 12" sections, put in wet peat moss, or wet boggy area, sink halfway into the soil. Do about now, about when they are ready to bud. Store in frig, don't freeze, put in Ziploc bags, don't let get moldy. Cut them store a while.

Q: What size branch? Last two to three feet, ½ close to the end. Rooting hormone does work, it stimulates root production.

8. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

9. ADJOURN

Thank you for coming!
Next Meeting: April 6th, 2006

NOTES:

Key to Commonly Used Acronyms:

DEQ – Department of Environmental Quality	MBMG – Montana Bureau of Mines & Geology
DNRC – Department of Natural Resources & Conservation	NRCS – Natural Resource Conservation Services
FWP – Fish Wildlife & Parks	Park CD – Park Conservation District
LEP – Local Empowerment Program (MACD)	TMDL – Total Maximum Daily Load (DEQ)
MACD – Montana Association of Conservation Districts	UYWB – Upper Yellowstone Watershed Basin
MWCC – Montana Watershed Coordination Council	WPA – Watershed Planning & Assistance Grant (DNRC)

Equipment List: (Available to members on loan)

- ◆ Trailer mounted weed sprayer (2)
- ◆ ElectroNet fencing – (9) 35" x 164'
- ◆ 10 Watt Solar Panel
- ◆ IntelliShock 42B battery energizer & 12v 44 amp battery