

Conservation Districts Advisory Council (CDAC) AGENDA

— June 28, 2023

Calvert Hotel Meeting Room, Lewistown, MT

Zoom option available upon request

NOTE: DNRC is hosting a funding forum at the Big Spring Brewery June 27th @ 6 pm. CDAC members are encouraged to go.

Wednesday, June 28, 8-12 pm

8:00 a.m.	Meeting Commences Welcome (Chair Wortman)
8:05 – 9:00 a.m.	Funding Forum Recap Discussion about funding questions and opportunities
9:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Area Representative Report Out Discussion about members outreach to other districts
10:00 – 12:00 a.m.	CDB Program Updates Project closeout briefings Summary of Grant Guideline Changes – Hailey Graf Budget review – Mark Bostrom Other
12:00 p.m.	Wrap-up and Adjourn

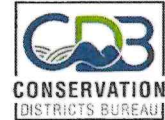
This meeting is open to the public. The most current meeting information including meeting minutes can be accessed at: <https://dnrc.mt.gov/Conservation/About-Us/cd-bureau-overviewpage>.

The agenda is subject to change and times are approximate. Actual times may vary by up to one hour.

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in this public meeting. For questions about KasydiLucas2@mt.gov as soon as possible before the meeting date.

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS BUREAU (CDB)

CONSERVATION DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL (CDAC) COUNCIL MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



PURPOSE

CDAC's purpose is to support the mission of conservation districts and the Conservation District Bureau (CDB) by being the chief conduit for communication, engagement, and advocacy between conservation districts and the CDB.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

CDAC is a geographically diverse council, composed of seven district supervisors from around Montana. Members serve without salary but are entitled to a \$50/day stipend and reimbursed for travel and per diem expenses at current rates for Federal government employees.

DUTIES

CDAC members have four main duties:

- **Facilitate communications.** Act as a conduit for two-way communications between the CDB and districts.
- **Advocacy.** Engage locally and statewide in promoting and advocating the importance and value of conservation districts to the public, partners, and stakeholders.
- **Supervisor engagement and recruitment.** Actively participate in recruiting, training, and engaging district supervisors.
- **Advise and assist the CDB on district operations and conservation-related issues, including impending conservation matters.** Provide input, advice, and assistance as requested by the CDB in the implementation of programs and activities as outlined in its strategic and operational plans.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

CDAC members are able to commit to the following areas of engagement:

- **Attend all meetings.** Attend all regularly scheduled CDAC meetings and special meetings.
- **Make time for CDAC and come prepared.** Come prepared to all meetings and be ready to review documents, engage in discussions, and make suggestions on action items.
- **Stay knowledgeable on issues.** Maintain up-to-date knowledge about issues affecting your geographic area, including special interest groups, trends, opportunities, and other factors that will impact conservation.
- **Be open-minded and respectful.** Approach all CDAC discussions with an open mind, and be prepared to make the best decision for the CDB for the benefit of conservation districts as a whole.
- **Disclose any conflicts of interest.** Disclose any actions that may result in personal benefit and willingly recuse oneself from any votes associated with those actions.
- **Be a positive ambassador in the community.** Positively promote the mission, programs, activities, and image of CDB in your communities and conservation districts.
- **Confidentiality.** Keep confidential information confidential.

TERMS

CDAC terms are aligned with reauthorization of the council every two years in July of even years. The director of DNRC in consultation with the Governor's Office has the authority to reauthorize or sunset the council.

MEMBER SELECTION

DNRC's Director in consultation with the Governor's Office selects council members through an application process led by the Conservation District Bureau.

- When CDAC is reauthorized by the DNRC director, CDB leadership will query CDAC members of their desire to continue on the Council.
- CDAC members will identify potential new members and submit their names to the CDB for review and follow-up.

RESIGNATION AND REMOVAL

Resignation from the Council must be in writing and received by the CDB for delivery to the DNRC Director.

A Council member may be removed for excessive absences or other reasons by the Conservation District Bureau Chief or a majority of Council members.

VACANCIES

When a vacancy occurs on the Council, through either resignation or removal, before the term expires, the Conservation District Bureau Chief recommends a replacement to the DNRC Director to fill the vacancy.

STIPEND AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

Each Council member will receive a stipend of \$50 for each day in which the member is actually and necessarily engaged in the performance of council duties and will be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with 2-18-501 through 2-18-503, incurred while in the performance of council duties.

EXPANDED INPUT AND RESOURCES

The Conservation District Bureau Chief has the authority to invite individuals to act as informational resources and participate in CDAC meetings and discussions. Ad hoc members may include representatives of federal entities, local government organizations, tribal governments, Montana universities, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, or other individuals with an interest in the wellbeing of Montana conservation efforts.

COMMITTEES AND WORK GROUPS

COMMITTEES AND/OR WORK GROUPS

The Conservation District Bureau Chief has the authority to create committees or work groups to assist in the implementation of Council member responsibilities and CDB's strategic plan.

Committees and work groups may contain both Council members and other individuals whose knowledge, experience, and/or expertise will support the purpose of the CDB or the Council.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The CDAC has an Executive Committee consisting of the CDAC Chair, Vice Chair, and other Council members as the CDB designates. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to facilitate communications between the CDB Chief, Council members, and districts, as well as act as a resource for CDB leadership.

Executive Council meetings are scheduled by CDB leadership, as needed.

MEETINGS AND PROCEDURES

REGULAR MEETINGS

The CDAC shall meet four times a year, either in-person or virtually. Meetings will be scheduled by the CDB.

Notice of each regular meeting shall be given to each Council member at least five days before the meeting. Notices of regular meetings shall also be published on the CDB website.

Council members will receive meeting agendas, minutes, and other materials approximately one week before the meeting for preparation.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings may be called by the Conservation Bureau Chief or the CDAC Chair. Two days' prior notice shall be required for all special meetings.

QUORUM

As an advisory council, no quorum requirements exist. CDAC may proceed with a meeting regardless of the number of members in attendance.

DOCUMENTING MEETING PROCEEDINGS

Proceedings of Council meetings will be documented by CDB staff and distributed to Council members for review approximately two weeks after a meeting occurs.

CDAC members shall forward any corrections or changes to CDB, and these revisions will be incorporated into the meeting notes/documentation.

As an advisory council, Council approval of meeting documentation is not required, however, meeting notes will be reviewed and approved at the next CDAC meeting.

CDB Grant Program Updates

Background:

CDB is currently in the process of updating our grant programs and the associated grant guidelines. We are making these changes to reflect past comments from CDAC, lessons learned from previous grant cycles, goals identified in the CDB strategic plan, as well as increased accountability standards due to the new funding. Our next grant cycle will open on September 1, so all updates will need to be made in plenty of time to disseminate updates to CDs prior to that call for applications.

Accountability:

CDB recognizes that we need to increase accountability measures in our grant programs. Increasing accountability measures will help ensure that funding goes to the best projects and results in the greatest amount of on-the-ground conservation. For this reason, we will be standardizing status report deadlines across our grant programs. Status reports will be due quarterly on April 15, July 15, October 15, and January 15, annually. We will also be eliminating the ten percent administrative fee option. Instead, all administrative expenses will be reimbursed at the actual rate. This will require administrator to track hours and expenses but will ensure that they are not using it as a mechanism for profiting from grants when an outside contractor or engineer is conducting the grant administration. Basically, it will help ensure CD buy-in on the project and reduce the number of pass-through projects that CDs sponsor. Finally, we will be requiring that all projects be identified as a priority in the CDs strategic plan. The one exception will be a grant request for developing a CD strategic plan.

Grant Changes:

In the future, the new legislative funds will contribute towards CD operations and administration. For this reason, we are changing the project & capacity grants to focus on conservation efforts rather than daily operational support. We also hope that our grant programs can serve as a steppingstone to larger grant programs, both state and federal. Like the RRGL program, we will split the program into two components – CD planning grants and CD project grants.

Planning grants will result in a written document such as a strategic plan, watershed restoration plan, new program guidelines, preliminary engineering reports, or a completed application for a larger project grant. These grants will provide the resources CDs need to develop comprehensive and strategic plans, rather than reactionary or poorly thought-out projects. These will generally be one-year contracts with smaller award amounts that cover expenses such as professional strategic planning support, professional grant writing services, or engineering or consultant services.

Project grants will result in completed projects and direct, measurable benefits to natural resources. Examples might include stream restoration, soil health improvements, improved water quality, or reduced wildfire or flood risk. These grants will likely have longer contract terms and larger award amounts.

Conclusion/Action Item:

Please review the draft grant guidelines, paying particular attention to the sections addressed above, and provide your comments or suggestions to Hailey by July 7th.

CDAC MEETING JUNE 28 2023

PROJECTS CLOSED 2ND QUARTER FOR AREA 3, 4 AND 6
CDS

Glacier County CD

Arbor Day Student Education Event \$1,624.94

- Arbor Day with 4 & 5 graders May 17, 2023, with 100 kids attending.
- Stations: FSA – pollinators; NRCS – Soil health; MSU - plant trees, Pheasants Forever – seeds and snack seeds, Lisa Sheble (citizen) – take home posters on bats, Glacier CCD – planted 3 prairie expedition American Elm trees and passed out conservation grade trees to students

Lewis and Clark CD

Living on the Bank 1 \$4,987.00

- Updates to website and added content/modules
- Living on the Bank website <https://livingonthebank.com/>

Pondera County CD

Hands on Composting Workshop \$1,341.00

- Composting workshop put on by the Pondera CCD and Patti Armbrister. Twenty-five individuals attended and created a Johnson Su Bioreactor Composter.

Teton CD

2023 Creeks and Critters Outdoor Classroom \$628.00

Three Teton County schools sent a total of sixty-two students to learn about natural resources and conservation. Eight stations: watersheds, healthy soils, wild animals/habitats/pelt identification, fish in local waterways, pollinators, bear safety, predator/prey habitats, and how to measure trophy elk antlers!

Western Area Completed Grants this Quarter:

- Integrating Pollinator Education into Firewise Garden: planted native pollinator plots in University of Montana Firewise Demonstration Garden and created interpretive/educational signs about ecology and importance of pollinators.
 - Missoula CD
 - Pollinator Grant
 - \$6,492
- Leave No Weeds: Provided funding for school buses for the annual school field trip for 3rd graders to learn about noxious weeds and participated in weed-pull event on Mt. Sentinel.
 - Missoula CD
 - Mini Education Grant
 - \$500
- Improving Park CD's Administrative Capacity: provided funding for administrative support for CD to clean up bookkeeping, develop strategic plan, and hire new District Administrator.
 - Park CD
 - District Capacity Grant
 - \$10,000
- Ruby Valley Pollinator Initiative and Education Plots: Planted several community pollinator gardens and hosted several educational programs for local schools and youth groups.
 - Ruby Valley CD
 - Pollinator Grant
 - \$8,339.10
- Plant and Animal Relationships in Montana's Forests: Provided funds for supplies and materials for annual school field trip. Students rotated around a variety of stations hosted by the CD and other local resource experts.
 - Gallatin CD
 - Mini Education grant
 - \$950