

W2ASACT MEETING NOTES
 Meeting on May 5, 2020, 10 am to 12 pm
 Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, [Audio Conference Call only](#)

Members and participants present via Conference Phone:

Alex Huffield	KLJ Eng	Lenora Rogstad	MAP
Anna Miller	DNRC - CARDD	Lindsay Volpe	DNRC - CARDD
Autumn Coleman	DNRC - CARDD	Lisa Moisey	Bear Paw Dev
Becky Bay	KLJ Eng	Lynette Jones	Great West Eng
Brent Moore	Interstate Eng	Maria Jackson	Great West Eng
Christy Cline	MRWS	Mark Smith	DEQ - ENG - DW
David C Larson	DNRC - RDB	Michelle Pond	MAP
Denise Cook	DNRC - CARDD	Rick Duncan	DNRC - CARDD
Erin Zindt	MAP	Rika Lashley	Morrison Maierle
John Camden	MRWS	Roger Skogen	MRWS
Jorri Dyer	DNRC - CARDD	Samantha Chagnon	Bear Paw Dev
Josh Jabalera	MAP	Savannah Morgan	DOC - BOI - Intercap
Karen Bucklin Sanchez	USDA RD	Sonja Hoeglund	DNRC - CARDD
Kari Smith	DEQ-Water Qual	Steve Short	MAP
Laura Dunlap	Morrison Maierle		

APE – Advanced Pump & Equipment
 DEQ - DRF – Drinking Water State Revolving Loan program
 DEQ – Montana Department of Environmental Quality
 DEQ - WRF – Wastewater State Revolving Loan program
 DNRC - SRF - Wastewater State Revolving Loan program
 DNRC – WRF - Drinking Water State Revolving Loan program
 FDB – Financial Development Bureau
 KLJ – Kadrmas Lee & Jackson Engineering
 MAP – Midwest Assistance Program
 MBOI – Montana Board of Investments
 MRWS – Montana Rural Water Systems
 RATES – Rural and Tribal Environmental Solutions
 RDB – Resource Development Bureau
 TSEP – Treasure State Endowment Program

At DNRC:

Anna Miller and Denise Cook, DNRC - CARDD

Call to Order, Sign-in Sheet, Agenda Changes

Anna Miller, Chair, called the scheduled meeting of the Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team (W2ASACT) to order at 10:00 am, on Tuesday, May 5th, 2020. The draft minutes from the February 4th meeting, which were posted on the WASACT website, were discussed and approved and adopted by those present. Anna conducted a “roll call” of those connected by phone. We had 29 present via phone.

No guest speaker. Discussion began on grant cycles, rural water and things relating to the COVID 19 Pandemic and funding concerns.

Lindsay Volpe DNRC Renewable Resource Grant Program Manager

The Renewable Resource Grants are normally due on May 15 of even numbered years. This year the deadline has been moved to June 1st. One of the reasons is that boards cannot meet to get board approval. Also this year, applicants can submit information relating to their application after the application has been submitted, including board minutes and submittal letters.

Lindsay said that applications can be submitted by mail, or by dropping off at DNRC. When dropping off applications at DNRC applicants can call ahead or when they arrive. Lindsay said that her bureau is moving ahead on the application process. There were 18 RPGs this spring and the list is on our website.

Anna reminded all that the doors are open at DNRC. You can also call ahead to 444-6668 to drop off applications.

Lindsay added that the RRGL application fee is \$250 and application must be submitted on funding.mt.gov by June 1st. Applicants need to submit an electronic and hard copy of their application.

Autumn Coleman asked those submitting RDG application to please call ahead before dropping them off at DNRC. There is a webinar today on the application process.

Anna Miller DNRC Financial Advisor

Anna said that the cost of gas has gone down, and interest rates have gone down also. Many things are on hold. We will do what we can to fund projects. HB 6 money comes in over a 2-year period. We are waiting on the new revenue estimate. Stay in touch and be patient with us. Montana did get federal funds for COVID-19. And there is money in the paycheck protection plan. Plus, there is the Corona Virus Aid, Relief, And Economic Security (CARES) Act (#4) money. Montana is not in bad shape. Tax money is not coming so some communities are hurting.

CARES Act (#5), which is focused on State and Federal funding, similar to the ARRA funding, which funded infrastructure broadband, build jobs and helped the economy. We will keep you posted as we learn more. The funding can be used for Rural Development and state programs. Anna was asked for a list of shovel-ready projects.

Rick Duncan DNRC Regional Water System Program Manager –

Fort Peck Dry Prairie – On the Reservation, East of Poplar River, branches are going in. The R-Y Road project pipeline is complete.

Rick mentioned Greg Kruzich who is the project engineer with the Bureau of Reclamation. The water main to Scobey project should be completed this fall. There is also work being done on the Flaxville-Whitetail line. Westby line construction just got under way and completion is expected by spring/summer of 2021.

Rocky Boys. North Central – First phase of the regional water treatment plant is under construction and completion is expected by June 2022. The Shelby wellfield project had 3 wells drilled in late 2019. The Shelby North pipeline will make water available to Oilmont and Nine Mile water district by the end of 2020.

Central Montana – We are waiting on Senate legislation to Federally authorize the regional project. We don't know if they have applied to Economic Development Admin. Anna said she had not heard.

Dry Redwater – They are working as a regional wastewater authority and a regional water authority. The Authority's latest project area, the Sidney Circle subdivision, received water in 2019 and will be connected to a wastewater treatment plant in Sidney this year.

David Larson, DNRC Civil Engineer, Public Grants and Loans Manager

Requests have been slow perhaps due to the mild winter. Greenfield has an issue operating a gate. Delfia Melstone is having issues with a diversion. Bridger Pines had a breached pipe as well as a cracked pipe beneath some utilities.

Jorri Dyer, DNRC Renewable Resource Program Specialist

Jorri reported that the first cycle has been completed and 5 applicants were awarded project funds. She is hoping to have another grant cycle.

John Camden with Montana Rural Water Systems

John said MRW's new hire, Roger Skogan is from Valier and was a wastewater technician. MRW staff members are working remotely. John Dillard retired and Amy Stimech is the new bureau chief. Julie Allen set up webinars on Fridays. DEQ and MRW developed "List Serve" wastewater agency network.

John reported that FEMA will give face masks to MRW. The MRW conference has been postponed until July 14-16, 2020. If Governor Bullock does not advance the state to Phase III by July, the conference will be postponed to March 2021.

MRW shared their list if anyone needs them. Roger is in learning mode. Christy Cline had no updates.

John said MRW is fortunate as no operators have contracted the virus. There is a learning curve and we have realized the need for the systems to have backup operators. In solid waste, if operators get sick, who would take over? He said this will be brought up for discussion. Three items make up a community: water, wastewater and sanitation.

Karen Bucklin Sanchez with USDA Rural Development

She has not connected with Steve Troendle. He is working on applications. She is working from home. On the USDA website, we are open. The loan specialist cannot travel right now. She is reviewing applications and working with engineers and communities.

The quarterly interest rates are 1.375%, intermediate: 1.875% and the market rate is 2.275%. RD has also had emergency grants for water projects where quantity or quality has decreased. Those grants are up to \$1,000,000.

Mark Smith, Engineering Manager with DEQ Water Quality

Mark is working from home. He is getting preliminary project work done. He is working on a draft IUP for next fiscal year, for both programs and should be done by the end of May. There will be a June public comment period. We want to invite Amy Stimech with PDW, who replaces John Dillard, to the meeting.

Mark reminded all of the number limit for gatherings.

Phase I: 10 ppl

Phase II: 50 ppl

Phase III: Larger (50+)

Program Updates

Erin Zindt with Midwest Assistance Program

Erin is working on regular programs. There will be smaller programs for longer periods. MAP awarded DEQ SRF contract – more available for short term projects. The contract was started Friday (May 1). They will be providing assistance, emergency resource plan, SOP's. We have "Go To" webinars.

Savannah Morgan with MT Department of Commerce, Board of Investments

This month we are moving back to the office. BOI is up to a full staff.

Becky Bay with KLJ Engineering

KLJ did not submit a planning grant. They only have one RRGL. Many projects have been delayed.

Rika Lashley with Morrison Maierle

Rika asked about planning grants or emergency grant for ERP for communities. Anna replied that we cannot set aside money, but communities can apply for Planning Grants. DNRC may be tapped out. Commerce may have funds. Lindsay added that they are out of planning grant funds. Erin added that Technical Assistance Providers can help with response plans. Karen said yes, RD may be able to help, depending on MH Income. She will follow-up with Rika. Erin said yes, we are able to help. Anna will check if we are out of the \$100,000 to help with emergency grants. Christy added that the income must be at or above \$3,300.

Sonja Hoeglund, DNRC Renewable Resource Program Specialist

Sonja said we still have \$39,000 in the private grant program for private dam inspections, canal and metering.

Committee UpdatesWorkshop

Erin Zindt said the committee has not met and will reconnect.

Uniform Application and Standard Documents

David Larson said the new application in pdf form is out and ready for use.

AIS section 0900 includes edits that Karen had. David has not heard back from Mike at SRF.

WASACT Website

Lindsay Volpe said she is posting relevant items and updating with trainings, etc.. She can also link to WASACT to help people find it.

Anna said that communities are having trouble with meetings. John added that smaller communities are not set up for conference calls. MRW is working on "Go To Meetings". Erin said some are getting questions on how folks can do meeting. Meeting info could be shared in a Zoom meeting. Someone added that we could work with engineering companies to hold public meetings.

Congressional Update –

Anna said the next CARES bill will be for State and Federal assistance.

End of Updates

Next WASACT meeting will be tentatively August 11. Details will be sent out later. Anna added that June 12 TSEP applications are due. Call ahead to drop off those applications.

John said by June 15th, we will decide on the July MRW conference. Erin added that we will get this info out to all. We will follow-up on applications received and MRW update.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00.

Minutes taken by Denise Cook and reviewed by Anna Miller. Region Water update reviewed by Rick Duncan.