



Stillwater Conservation District

Protecting Montana's Natural Resources in Stillwater County

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STILLWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES

July 14, 2026 | 5:00 PM

Location: USDA Service Center Conference Room, 334 N. 9th Street, Columbus, MT

Meeting called to order by: **Bob Van Oosten**, Chairman, at **5:23 PM**.

Supervisors Present: **Bob Van Oosten** (Chairman), **Noel Keogh** (Vice Chairman), **Butch Behrent** (Treasurer), **Steve Story** (Secretary), **Lynda Grande** (Supervisor), **Darryl Thompson** (Associate Member).

Others Present: Sharon Flemetis (District Administrator), Judi Powers, Lincoln Powers, Denise Revett, Amy Bailey (Admin, Carbon Conservation District), Pam Schwend (Supervisor, Carbon Conservation District)

Approved Absent: **2 vacant seats.**

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

No conflicts of interest were disclosed by any board member.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Judi Powers addressed the board. Ms. Powers, together with her husband Lincoln Powers, owns properties subject to violations #25-006CV and #25-014CV currently before the board. She submitted a document titled "Reasonable Decision Timeline" for the board's review, which had been provided to the District Administrator the prior evening and distributed to board members. Ms. Powers thanked the board for its service and described the Powers family's efforts over the past year to resolve both violations responsibly, including retaining professional engineers, engaging with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Stillwater County Floodplain Administration, and other agencies, and attending multiple coordination meetings. She requested the board consider the complete factual record of their efforts, asked for a future agenda appearance to provide a full project update, and requested an extension to allow their engineer to complete the required 310 permit applications for both violations.

REPORTS

Bob Van Oosten: Attended the Stillwater County Planning Board meeting on July 1, 2026. The session focused on incorporating legislative changes from the 2025 session into local regulations. The most significant issue involves a new state water law requiring developers of subdivisions to demonstrate adequate water availability, particularly regarding exempt wells.

Butch Behrent: Noted the Stillwater Valley Watershed Council Annual Celebration will be held at The Ridge on August 7, 2026; tickets are \$40. The SVWC is also organizing a float reconnaissance on the Stillwater River this month, visiting locations affected by the 2022 flood with informational stops along the river. As of the morning of July 14, seats were still available.

Noel Keogh: No report.

Lynda Grande: No report.

Steve Story: No report.

Darryl Thompson: No report.

Sharon Flemetis: Report incorporated into Financial Reports below.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Motion to approve the Minutes of the previous meeting June 9, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Motion: **Butch Behrent** Seconded: **Lynda Grande**

Discussion: **None**

Vote: **Unanimous — Carried**

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial Report- Motion: **Butch Behrent** moved to accept the financial report. **Seconded:** **Steve Story** **Discussion:** District Administrator presented the financial reports. A preliminary profit and loss statement for fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, was presented. The report is not yet finalized; journal entries from the auditor are pending and will be incorporated before fiscal year close (due by December 2026). Two balance sheets were provided: one through the fiscal year-end date

and one current as of the meeting date. One check is pending board signature, payable to Yellowstone News Group for advertisement of the permissive medical levy public hearing. **Vote: Unanimous — Carried**

Monthly Warrants: The bank register reflecting all withdrawals and deposits since the June 9, 2026 board meeting was presented. All listed warrants have been paid.

Motion: Steve Story moved to approve payment of the monthly warrants. Seconded: Lynda Grande Discussion: None Vote: Unanimous — Carried

Cash Flow Management Motion: Steve Story moved to return the District Administrator to full-time hours, 40 hours per week, Monday through Friday. Seconded: Lynda Grande Discussion: The board discussed returning the District Administrator to full-time hours. The current office schedule is 34 hours per week; the proposed change is 40 hours per week, Monday through Friday. Having the office open again in the mornings will help NRCS staff and the public. **Vote: Unanimous — Carried**

NEW BUSINESS

USFS Agreement #23-GN-11011100-040 -Motion: Noel Keogh moved to authorize Chairman Bob Van Oosten to sign and submit the termination letter to the U.S. Forest Service for Agreement #23-GN-11011100-040, withdrawing the Stillwater Conservation District from the Armstrong Creek project. Seconded: Butch Behrent Discussion: The board discussed terminating the Stillwater Conservation District's role as project sponsor under USFS Agreement #23-GN-11011100-040 for the Armstrong Creek forestry project. A draft termination letter was reviewed and approved by SCD attorney Shane Coleman (Coleman, Monson & Small PLLC), who confirmed the approach was appropriate and recommended the board proceed. **Vote: Unanimous — Carried**

Accountability Assessment Annual review - Motion: Lynda Grande moved to approve the Accountability Assessment Annual Review. Seconded: Steve Story Discussion: The District Administrator presented the annual accountability assessment for board review and approval. Discussion addressed several items: Board Supervisors may be reimbursed for travel to regular board meetings per a DNRC attorney opinion; documentation of that opinion is on file and attached to the assessment, though the accountability questionnaire does not yet reflect this position. Board Supervisors may not receive a stipend for attending regular meetings but may be reimbursed for 310 site inspection travel per District policy adopted in 2022. All board members are covered under the District's liability insurance policy. The District's strategic/long-range plan was approved at the June 2026 meeting. The SCD Code of Ethics document was submitted to the attorney for review. **Vote: Unanimous — Carried**

OLD BUSINESS

Old Business: No old business items outside of 310 matters and violations below.

310 APPLICATIONS AND COMPLAINTS

District Administrator presented the following 310 permit applications and complaints. All motions, seconds, and votes are noted in the table below.

Appl. #	Name	Stream	Project	Received	Motion	Seconded	Vote
26-011	McCallum	W. Rosebud Crk	Bank stabilization / flow deflection	6/2/26	Lynda Grande	Noel Keogh	Carried — Tabled at applicant's request
26-017E	Steffanich / Town of Absarokee Ditch	Rosebud Creek	Emergency work to access water for irrigation purposes	5/29/26	Lynda Grande	Noel Keogh	Carried — Approved with conditions of revegetating disturbed areas and perform weed control

Notes on 310 Actions:

26-011 — McCallum: Remains tabled from the June 2026 meeting. The applicant is undertaking re-engineering of the proposal for bank stabilization and flow deflection near the fishtail bridge area on West Rosebud Creek. The District Administrator located historical records and determined the original application for the site dates to 1996, and identified the relevant archived file for reference when the revised application is submitted.

26-017E — Steffanich / Town of Absarokee Ditch (Rosebud Creek): Emergency application for the second time for doing work at the diversion site. Site inspection has since been completed. The channel has been reopened; before-and-after photographs were reviewed by the board. The applicant is still required to revegetate disturbed areas and perform weed control per conditions established in the June approval. The applicant has expressed intent to move the ditch head gate in the future, which will require a new 310 permit application and DNRC water rights coordination. A maintenance permit will also be required for ongoing seasonal management of the channel.

COMPLAINTS / VIOLATIONS

#23-052V & #23-065V — Krone: No update

#25-006CV & #25-014CV — Lincoln Powers: Motion: Butch Behrent moved to grant a 30-day extension from July 14, 2026, for the submission of complete 310 permit applications for violations #25-006CV and #25-014CV. Seconded: Steve Story Discussion: The District Administrator reported that one 310 application had been received from the Powers but was returned the same day with a list of required items needed for completion. The board discussed the history of both violations, noting this would constitute the third deadline issued. A 30-day extension from July 14, 2026 was proposed for submission of complete 310 permit applications for both violations. The board clarified that the extension applies to both #25-006CV and #25-014CV and that fully complete applications are required. **Vote: Unanimous — Carried**

SAVE THE DATE

August 4, 2026 Board Meeting	Oct. 6, 2026 Board Meeting	Dec 1, 2026 Board Meeting
Sept 1, 2026 Board Meeting	Nov. 3, 2026 Board Meeting	

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Butch Behrent Seconded: Steve Story Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:28 PM.

This meeting is recorded for minute preparation and internal use only. Recordings are not retained under SCD policy. 310 Applications must be received by 12pm seven days prior to the meeting or otherwise approved to come in late and have been inspected to be reviewed. Agenda items must be submitted to the CD Office by Noon the Monday before the scheduled meeting. Agendas are available at the CD Office upon request and at stillwatercd.org once finalized. All meetings of the CD are open to the public. Once approved the minutes will be available at stillwatercd.org and the County Clerk and Records Office.

All Meetings with SCD will be recorded and the recording is a tool to help the SCDBS or SCDA with the creation of meeting minutes, only. Audio recordings of any meeting with the SCD will be retained until after the minutes of that particular meeting have been adopted by the SCD Board. This will allow space for future audio recording.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Sharon Flemetis

Minutes Approved on

8/4/26

Signed by Bob Van Oosten



