

# **Montana Association of Conservation Districts Employee Organization (MACD EO) Area Representative Meeting – Zoom**

Wednesday January 19, 2022 – 11am

**Approved 3/16/2022**

## **ATTENDEES**

Area I	None present
Area II	Julie Goss (Richland County Conservation District)
Area III	Emma Link (Cascade Conservation District)
Area IV	Sharon Flemetis (Stillwater Conservation District) Wendy Jones (Lower Musselshell Conservation District)
Area V	Heidi Fleury (Lake County Conservation District) Julie Ralston (Bitterroot Conservation District)
Area VI	Becky Clements (Gallatin Conservation District) Chris Evans (Lewis and Clark Conservation District)
Other Attendees	Kay Webb (Little Beaver Conservation District)

The EO Area Representatives are trying to meet more often. Kay Webb is on the call as she may fill the vacant Area II Area Representative position. That said, she is unaware of what the position entails. There was an Area Representative Job Description that was handed out at the 2021 MACD Convention EO Business Meeting. This describes the duties well. Heidi Fleury (EO President) has the updated Area Representative Job Description; this will be sent out to all Area Representatives, and Kay Webb.

## **History of Area Representative Position and New Opportunities for Area Representatives**

Traditionally Area Representatives role has been one of support to people in their area. Before email was widely used, it was also a means to distribute information. Overall, it is building that network, so people know who to call and who to talk to when issues come up at the district level. Something that Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Districts Bureau (DNRC CDB) is working on is a sustainable way to onboard new CD employees, Chris Evans (EO Vice President) reached out to see if they had anything specific as far as documents to share or resources. Collaboratively DNRC CBD and the EO are hoping to visit new CD employees within a short window of them being hired as well as create a sustainable system moving forward to accomplish this. Also, the EO is hoping to supplement costs for Area Representatives to accomplish this through the form of reimbursing mileage and possibly time. The overarching goal with all of this is to combat employee turnover.

## **EO President Report, Heidi Fleury**

There are several new employees in Area V, Heidi has been reaching out to these new employees in hopes of scheduling that in-person visit as described above. She is also hoping to have a meet and greet session in the upcoming months for all employees in Area V.

Emma Link in Area III explained that they try to meet quarterly, and have a regular date set up, the second month of each quarter and last of Thursday of that month, that is a date that avoids everyone's monthly board meetings.

Wendy Jones in Area IV explained that they also try to meet quarterly but don't have a regular date set up. Her goal is to hold an employee luncheon each quarter. She uses doodle to find the best date that works for everyone. Current topics for discussion at luncheons include trainings and projects Area IV wants to work on collaboratively.

Area VI will be meeting Monday January 24<sup>th</sup>. The point of that meeting will be to talk about Convention and specifically the EO Event that coincides with it. Chris Evans will share the meeting information with all the Area Representatives in case they want to join in the conversation.

Heidi Fleury would like to see Area Representatives reach out to the new CD employee in their area within the week of them starting to initiate that onboarding process.

#### **New CD Employee Onboarding Process**

Chris Evans was contacted by DNRC and MACD about the process of contact within the first couple weeks of a new CD employee starting, specifically, how three separate welcome emails from DNRC, MACD, and the EO may be overwhelming and how we could band together in one collective email for a greater impact. This would also be more efficient.

We believe that the first point of contact should be with the EO through an Area Representative reaching out. We discussed MACD and DNRC providing their "canned language" to include in the initial contact.

Chris Evans suggested that Area Representatives divide up the counties within their area, since there are two Area Representatives in each area (in most cases), individual Reps will know when a new employee starts in one of their designated counties. It is then their responsibility to reach out.

Julie Goss mentioned how can we identify when people start? This has been a struggle for her.

Wendy Jones stated this needs to be done in an organized manner, we need a train the trainer session, so that we are all expressing the same message going forward. There needs to be a consistent concise message that all Area Representatives are using when reaching out to new employees.

Kay Webb stated that accessibility to technology is not consistent throughout all districts. This can be a barrier when attempting to reach out to new employees. Julie Goss suggested including the cost of an individual CD internet network and/or computer in individual CD DNRC Admin Grants so that CD's can get off the USDA network and servers.

Chris Evans brought up that printing the EO Handbook and EO Field Guide is very important to combat technology issues. We need to make these accessible to EVERYONE. Chris Evans thinks it should be printed and hand delivered or mailed upon the first week of employment of a new employee. Follow up with a face-to-face visit.

#### **CD Development Grant Needs**

- Computer for EO
- QuickBooks for the Treasurer
- Other Software
- Printing expenses for Employee Handbook and Field Guide – 58 copies of each.
- Mileage for Area Representatives to visit new employees

- Meeting for all Area Representatives to discuss onboarding – In hopes that this could coincide with the MACD Spring Board Meeting in June.
- The next grant cycle will close April 8<sup>th</sup>. Emma Link will start the process of preparing that grant.

### **Name Change and 501c3 Process**

Sharon Flemetis (EO Treasurer) has not had a chance to get to Stockman Bank yet to start the process. She is asking for guidance for how to navigate where we are at in the process. Specifically, checks are still coming in and are expected to come in with our old name MACD EO, how do we move forward with the name change and new bank account when we haven't reconciled the old account yet? For example, we are still waiting to payout scholarships for MACD Convention 2021. There is confusion and miscommunication on the amount being awarded to each recipient.

Emma Link stated that the Area Representatives approved scholarships for recipients for up to \$450.00. At the time we approved the scholarship amount we had six scholarship recipients. Shortly before MACD Convention 2021 took place, three recipients dropped out due to COVID and personal illness. An Area Representative phone call took place where we discussed reevaluating the scholarship amount and changed the amount to up to \$900.00 per recipient, although it was not documented in writing.

***Chris Evans moved to pay all three scholarship recipients up to \$900.00 for MACD Convention 2021 expenses. Emma Link seconded. Motion carried unanimously.***

Heidi Fleury and Sharon Flemetis will work on the name change and 501c3 process and keep the Area Representatives in the loop regarding this process.

Julie Ralston asked if the new EO Bank account will remain permanent or change with the Treasurer. There will be changes when changing officers (signatory changes).