



# Montana Conservation District Employee Organization

## Spring Membership Meeting June 7, 2023 8:30 am DNRC Montana Room, 1539 11th Ave, Helena MT

### Members present included:

Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6
Robbie Savelkoul*z	Julie Goss*z	Dona Stafford*z	Wendy Jones*	Julie Ralston*z	Chris Evans*
Diane Black	Renee Nelson z	Jackson Bramlett*	Angie Stahl	Kay Webb	Jessica Fields
Dusty Olsen*z	Cindy Frank z	Emma Korntheuer	Kylie Martin		Becky Clements*
	Liz Riter*z	Diane Roberts	Sandy LaVoy z		Elizabeth Emeline
		Kaysie Steele z	Sharon Flemetis*		

\* Denotes Area Representative

z Denotes attending on Zoom

**Guests:** Veronica Grigaltchik-z-CDB Mary Hendrix-CDB, Sarah Tunge-Z North Dakota Employee Association, Northern Plains and National CD Employee Association

**Welcome and Discussion about the direction of the Employee Organization-** After introductions, Sarah Tunge, NCDEA Vice president explained how the North Dakota Employee Association changed to a 501c3 about 10 years ago. Since that time, they have secured several state and federal grants. They developed an online tracking tool that each district has access to and it helps with grant reporting and planning. They put on a 3-day meeting/training of their own every year. In the future they plan to develop Conservation Planner courses and Professional Development. The Employee Association board handles the various tasks of the non-profit organization. They are reimbursed for the time they spend on tasks for their organization. She mentioned some of the concerns with starting a 501c3: the time involved in the process, it can

take months, fees, tax reports, state filings. We need to develop a clear and organized plan of work for the transition, assigning specific tasks. The treasurer for their group not an area director and is reappointed each year and the ND group has retained the same treasurer since they started. This has helped immensely with the success of the group. She felt they had a stronger relationship with their partners as a 501c3. She felt is worth the work to see the organization grow. A good succession plan, job descriptions for directors, bylaws, and each task has 2 people familiar with the work involved in case someone leaves in the middle of a term.

**Non-Profit-**Chris Evans moved to proceed with obtaining nonprofit status for the Montana Conservation District Employee Organization. Elizabeth Emeline seconded and the motion carried.

**Proposed changes to bylaws and other structure-** With the move to nonprofit status new bylaws will be needed for the reorganization. Chris Evans has made the initial move with Terry Profota's help to start reviewing what those bylaws might look like and will loop in members of the group as we move forward, in order to have a draft ready for our meeting during Convention in November. In addition, there is grant funding in place to help pay for the transition and paperwork. Chris asked Sarah Tunge to forward copies of their bylaws to assist in writing our own.

**Fall Meeting Minutes review and approval-** Kay Webb motioned to approve the 2022 Fall minutes with amendments. Angie Stahl second and the motion carried.

**Financial Reports for FY 2022-**Treasurer Sharon Flemetis presented the financial reports. Discussion on the EO event at convention took place comparing how we have done our event in the past, and how we might proceed. There were suggestions on finding sponsorships, a theme for the event and the need to be cognitive that this is a fund-raising event were discussed. Wendy Jones motioned to approve the financial report, Kylie Martin second, motion carried with Kay Webb as the only nay vote.

Sharon Flemetis asked the group to approve putting the executive committee members on the bank accounts. Motion by Kay Webb, second by Wendy Jones to do that; motion carried

**Correspondence-** Chris Evans and Kay Webb requested assistance to help offset the registration fees for the National Association of Conservation Districts Summer meeting in Bismarck ND in July. Registration fees are \$375 per person. Motion by Wendy Jones, second by Kylie Martin to approve reimbursement of travel costs not to exceed \$3000; motion carried. If other funding can be found, so much the better.

**Statewide Employee Training-Goss/Olson-** SET Training will be held in Fort Peck on August 27-29. We will begin Sunday evening with an opportunity to attend the Fort Peck Theater's play "Misery". Supper will be a charcuterie potluck, with each area providing a board for the evening. Lodging will be at the Fort Peck Hotel; Event will take place at the Fort Peck interpretive Center. We will have speakers on CD Authority, social media, Using YouTube, Tricks to filming Video with your cell phone, using Google Docs, Monday afternoon will be around table of the various educational stations available for outdoor classroom events.

**Convention plans-Area 4 Employees-**Convention is planned for Billings, November 14-16. Some training sessions are planned along with teambuilding exercises. Suggestions for the Annual EO fundraising event on Wednesday night included- having the event off site, looking for sponsorships or donations of items to be auctioned off at a Live Auction as part of the event, and seeking potential sponsors to offset the cost. No theme was decided upon.

**Liability insurance-** The EO conducted a short survey on the increased cost of liability insurance- 9 districts responded. Kay Webb reported on the survey results. It was decided to resend the survey in hopes of getting more responses.

**Name badges-**Chris Evans asked for help on the name badge service the EO has been providing. Each new employee receives their first name badge from the EO for, free additional badges for supervisors and others are purchased by the individual districts through the EO. It was decided to let each district purchase their own badges directly from the company we have used in the past or whatever company they chose to use. Chris Evans will put something together on the Employee Website about this.

**Area Employee Meeting Agendas-** Area employee meetings and agendas as well as partner participation is up to each individual area. Area Employee meeting planners should be clear with their partners on attendance. If they want to set aside a portion of their meeting for partners and let them know that they are welcome to attend during that time, that should be fine.

**Reminder of expiring terms-no limit-** Chris Evans shared the matrix of the expiring terms and discussion was held on who elects or appoints the area representative. Each area appoints or elects their representatives and at the present time we have no limit on the number of terms you can hold the position. When we adopt new bylaws term limits will be addressed. There are terms limits for officer position, except for Treasurer currently.

**Grants from DNRC-Issues-** Questions were raised about the change to grants with a 10% administration fee no longer being recognized as a way to collect admin fee. A time and dollar amount is required for documentation with the grant report. Some districts were questioning the changes to the grant contract without notification until the grant report was submitted. The 3-6 months it takes for vendor invoices to be paid was also discussed. It was suggested to track all hours worked on grants so you can justify the time spent on administering a project. Information is still being gathered on this issue and will be addressed later.

**Area Reports (highlights of activity in individual areas)-**Each area had an opportunity to talk about what is going on in their area. Most have had area employee meetings.

**218/Social Security Administration issue-**Nancy Moorehouse had reminded Chris Evans of the 218 issue. Back when CDs were formed, the rules were that if they paid into a separate retirement, they couldn't also pay into (or employees benefit from) Social Security. This changed for a lot of Districts in the 1970's. If the CD administrators are unsure of their status, they should reach out to the Social Security Administration and ask. Chris Evans was able to obtain the letter and agreement that allows Lewis & Clark to pay into both; it was signed in 1976.

**Benefits for CDs-**A question recently arose from another CD about whether DNRC is really going to make it mandatory for CDs to pay benefits in order for the Districts to get funding from DNRC with the recent bill increasing funding? - A question was asked if DNRC would be instating mandatory tasks that districts must do before they could get the increased DNRC funding? Mary Hendrix did not know of anything at this time.

The group then called into the MACD board meeting to learn more about the legislative action creating a trust fund for Conservation Districts.

Respectfully submitted. \_\_\_\_\_Julie Goss MCDEO Secretary