

**Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust
Minutes from Joint State Federal Board Meeting
January 22, 2024**

Attendees:

Tom Darrington Chair, (BLM) tdarrington@blm.gov
Jeff Baumberger (BOR) jbaumberger@usbr.gov
David Allen, (USFWS) david_allen@fws.gov
Emily Platt (FS) Emily.platt@usda.gov
Jay Erickson (CAB Chair) jaye606@gmail.com
Mitch King Montana's Outdoor Legacy Foundation (ED) mitch@mtoutdoorlegacy.org
Jeff Hagener Montana's Outdoor Legacy Foundation jdhagener@icloud.com
Mike Talia (MOLF)
Aimee Grmolijez (MOLF)
Chase Rose (Bannack Group)
Mike Kubas DAD
Deb Lane, Recorder deb@mtoutdoorlegacy.org

Jeff convened the meeting at 9:05 am.

Board Chair Transition:

The board welcomed Tom Darrington (BLM) as the new Chair of the Joint Federal-State Board.

Minutes:

The 10/23/23 minutes were reviewed. No changes. Motion to approve by Jeff; Second by Emily; Vote 4-0 to approve

Financials:

The Trust balance is approximately \$30.9 million as of the end of 2023. Included in this figure is the value of three Assets for Conservation properties (Williams, Ferguson, and Lackman).

2023 review: The economy is doing well. The 4% distribution continues to allow the Trust to make funds available for projects while maintaining the corpus and growth needed to sustain the Trust in perpetuity. Discussion will continue regarding whether the Trust growth actually allows for larger distributions on an annual basis or should the Trust make available additional annual funds only as needed for specific projects.

2024 project funding recommendation: The Trust Manager is recommending a 4% project funding distribution for 2024 of \$1,085,400. Motion by David to approve; Second by Jeff; Vote 4-0 to approve.

Assets for Conservation:

The Trust currently has 3 properties purchased as Assets for Conservation. The Williams property will be sold to the FS in early 2024; the Ferguson (Wildcat Bend) property; and newly purchased Lackman property.

Hart Ranch update:

This project is an interim project with Montana State Parks Foundation. Originally 30 acres the title review identified 26 acres as the actual project size. The other 4 acres already were owned by FWP. A second appraisal was required and completed. The project will close in February 2024 with final distribution as a donation to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

CAB fisheries position:

BOR, Jeff Baumberger will take the lead to process the nominees (Pat Byorth and David Brooks) through the steps to obtain the Secretary of Interior recommendation for the Fisheries position.

Fundraising for the Trust:

Mitch and Chase Rose (Bannack Group) outlined a new planned giving program (and brochure) for the Trust to review. This included estate planning, endowments and additional opportunities for gift giving to the Trust. MOLF would hold funds in escrow/restricted accounts until the gift parameters are met. At that time the funds would be transferred to the Trust.

Trust Attorney:

Attorney Christian Dietrich has been interviewed and comes highly recommended by his peers and others who have worked with him. David made a motion to authorize Jeff to sign an engagement letter and proceed with retaining Christian as the Trust attorney. Seconded by Emily. Vote to approve 4 – 0.

Website:

Deb will meet with Tempest Tech to start the website redesign process. In addition to refreshing the design (keep the current small logo) and keeping it simple to navigate it has been suggested to include a link to hunting maps which can be used through phone apps to help the public specifically identify the project locations.

Public Comment:

Comments included questions regarding the amount of distribution (4% annually) the Trust allocates for projects and whether that could be increased annually since the value of the Trust continues to grow. It was also noted the Trust Manager is open to funding requests in addition to the annual distribution by the CAB/JP for projects that the boards believe would be a good investment for the Trust.

Next meeting date:

January 23, 2024; It will be a face-to-face meeting in Helena at USFWS Ste 1 and will begin at 9 am.

Adjourned: 11:52 am