

**Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust**  
**Minutes from Joint State Federal Board Meeting**  
**October 24, 2023**

**Attendees:**

Jeff Baumberger Chair, (BOR) [jbaumberger@usbr.gov](mailto:jbaumberger@usbr.gov)  
David Allen, (USFWS) [david\\_allen@fws.gov](mailto:david_allen@fws.gov)  
Rick Northrup (MFWP) [rnorthrup@mt.gov](mailto:rnorthrup@mt.gov)  
Katie Stevens (BLM) [kasteven@blm.gov](mailto:kasteven@blm.gov)  
Jay Erickson (CAB Chair) [jaye606@gmail.com](mailto:jaye606@gmail.com)  
Mitch King Montana's Outdoor Legacy Foundation (ED) [mitch@mtoutdoorlegacy.org](mailto:mitch@mtoutdoorlegacy.org)  
Jeff Hagener Montana's Outdoor Legacy Foundation [jdhagener@icloud.com](mailto:jdhagener@icloud.com)  
Angie Grove MT State Parks Foundation  
Deb Lane, Recorder [deb@mtoutdoorlegacy.org](mailto:deb@mtoutdoorlegacy.org)

Jeff convened the meeting at 9:07 am.

**Minutes:**

The 06/23/2023 minutes were reviewed. No changes. Motion to approve by David; Second by Rick; Vote 4-0 to approve

**Financials:**

The Trust balance is approximately \$28.3 million as of the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. Included in this figure is the value of two Assets for Conservation properties (Williams and Ferguson).

**Assets for Conservation update:** The Forest Service is targeting the end of 2023 or first part of 2024 for acquiring the Williams property. There is an Ag Lease agreement now in place on the Ferguson property – no grazing is allowed.

**Project Returned:**

Prickly Pear Land Trust has let the Trust know that the Reynolds Ranch project will not be completed. The project was approved for \$1.5 million with \$667,000 coming from the regular Trust disbursement funds and an additional disbursement approval of \$833,000 for 2023. The additional disbursement will be credited back to the Trust fund. The remaining \$667,000 will be available as carryover funds for allocation to other projects.

**CAB Interim project recommendation:**

Hart Ranch is 30 acres at the Missouri River headwaters. It was appraised for \$930,000. The fisheries is exceptional. It is inside the target area. The current landowner still lives on the property and may request the ability to stay until they secure a new place to live. Montana State Parks Foundation has put in the application for the interim project. CAB recommended \$930,000 for the purchase and the Trust would hold ownership until the landowner finds a new place to live. After further discussion a motion

was made by Dave to approve the project with the amendment that either a non-profit or FWP would take ownership not the Trust. Second by Jeff. Vote 4 – 0 to approve with the amendment.

**CAB fisheries position:**

Pat Byorth and David Brooks have submitted applications for the CAB fisheries position. CAB is not unanimous on either applicant. No applications were received with the 1<sup>st</sup> RFP; one was received with the 2<sup>nd</sup> RFP; a 3<sup>rd</sup> RFP attempt was made to a broader audience and one more application was received. The CAB recommends both and neither applicant is a unanimous choice. Motion by Jeff to move both names forward; Second by Katie; Vote 4 – 0 for approval

**Trust Attorney:**

A couple of names have been received. Deb will call them to discuss position expectations and interest in working with the Trust. Interviews will be set up with interested individuals.

**USFWS:**

USFWS has started a program – Missouri River Headwater Conservation Area to address Conservation Easements in Southeastern Montana. There are not enough Land Trusts/easements buyers for the number of interested sellers. USFWS approved moving forward with a draft plan for 6 million acres and public comment on the proposal.

**Website:**

Deb will meet with Tempest Tech in January to begin work on a new website for the Trust. Tentative costs would be \$4,000 to \$6,000 dependent upon full scope of work performed. Small logo should remain on the new website.

**BLM JB replacement:**

Katie is recommending Tom Darrington as her replacement on the Joint Federal-State Board of the Trust. He is an access coordinator and she believes he would be a better fit for the Board position. She will provide an official letter from BLM for this change.

**Public Comment:**

None

**Next meeting date:**

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

**Adjourned:** 11:26 am