

2022 January BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, January 26, 1:00 PM (MDT)

TD&H Engineering conference room, 1800 River Drive North in Great Falls

And via Zoom

ATTENDEES:

Erling Juel
Tanner Tompkins
John Chase
*Steve Leathe
*Perk Perkins

*Dave Martin
*Linda Berger
*Jessica Ramirez
Tracy Wendt
Wade Deboo, TD&H Engineering
* indicates attendance via Zoom

- Vote on election memo submitted by Governance Committee (attached) to add Lee Signalness to the SRWG board of directors
 - Noted an update to Lee's bio that was included in the memo: Lee no longer serves on the Fort Shaw Irrigation District board or as manager. Lee planned to attend this meeting, but cows started calving and he had to tend to them.
 - John moved to approve the Governance Committee recommendation and elect Lee to the SRWG board of directors; Tanner seconded; All voted in favor.
 - Noted that Dean Pearson is interested in leaving the SRWG board once we find someone else to represent Teton Conservation District on the board; does not have to be a Teton CD supervisor.
 - More discussion about potential board members will follow in the Governance Committee update.
- Determined a quorum is present and was present at the time of the election vote
- Approval of October 20, 2021 board meeting summary
 - John moved to approve the meeting summary; Linda seconded; all voted in favor.
- Jessica Ramirez is SRWG's Big Sky Watershed Corp member for 2022, January through November. Her time and cost (stipend) will be split between SRWG and Lewis & Clark Conservation District, and she will be working from the LCCD office. While working for SRWG, her primary focus will be on water quality monitoring, outreach, and potentially organizing a rain barrel workshop like we had in 2020. Other tasks and projects as assigned.

Jessica's bio: "My name is Jessica Ramirez and I am a Big Sky Watershed Corp Member. I graduated from Our Lady of the Lake University (2014) with my Bachelor of Science in Biology and the College of Charleston (2018) with my Master of Science in Marine Biology. My thesis was researching salt marsh restoration after oil spills and was performed at the NOAA Ecotoxicology lab in Charleston, SC. This past summer I worked as a water and soil field technician on the EPA National Wetland Condition Assessment in Colorado. I enjoy traveling with my partner and dog. In my free time, I like to play disc golf, soccer, hike, and read. I look forward to serving with Montana Conservation Corps, Lewis and Clark Conservation District, and Sun River Watershed Group."

Jessica has spent time in Montana at her family's ranch in Tom Miner Basin.

- Executive Director Update
 - Year-end fundraising: SRWG raised \$3500 in December, which was matched for a total of \$7000. This is short of our \$10k goal, but considering some of the issues that delayed our year-end fundraising campaign, we did really well. Last year we raised about \$4k at year end over 2 months. The year-end campaign had 22 individual donors, 7 of which were new donors since 2018; the average donation was \$165, with a minimum of \$10 and max of \$1000 (not counting matching donors). SRWG's next fundraising campaign will be in May: Give Great Falls.
 - Grant updates
 - Watershed Management Grant (DNRC) extended through March to allow more time to complete the Watershed Restoration Plan. This is a capacity grant and deliverables include completion of the WRP, approved by DEQ and other "soft" deliverables.
 - DEQ 319 grant from 2019 was extended through June so allow more time for revegetation around the bridge construction site
 - WMG 2021 (DNRC) was not awarded but we were encouraged to reapply this spring; this was for \$29k in capacity funding for two years.
 - Reclamation WaterSMART funding for Muddy Creek Construction: applied for \$1.7M in December, expecting decision this summer. Between now and then, will be working on getting the 25% match together, applying for several grants. Taking Pheasants Forever and Ducks Unlimited out to see the project area tomorrow; hoping for partnership opportunities.
 - Working with Teton Conservation District on RRGL planning grant for head gate improvement study at Broken O's Floweree canal. This is a project that SRWG's Water Management Working Group has been pushing for since before I started working for SRWG; it would have huge impacts and improvements to water management and summer flows on the Sun River. A goal for this is to have the study completed in time to apply for RRGL construction funds this spring.
 - WaterSMART planning grant call for proposals was just announced. This could provide up to \$100k in capacity funding over two years. Tracy requests board authorization to apply for this funding to cover capacity building costs including: 1) board development, 2) staff development; these tasks would include creating appropriate documents, long-term fundraising, work-planning, board team-building (retreat) and similar tasks. Applications are due in March and require a board resolution. Linda moved to approve the resolution (attached to this summary); Tanner seconded the motion. Board approved unanimously.
 - The avulsion at Adobe Creek has been an on-going issue: The Sun River "captured" Adobe Creek; Adobe Creek flooded this spring; this winter, ice jams at the avulsion site have been causing flooding. SRWG and Cascade Conservation District have held community meetings and met with many concerned groups, which led to this month, Cascade County Commissioners voted to fund emergency repairs at the avulsion site to stop flooding. Work is happening this week. This is just an emergency repair and it's uncertain how long it will hold up. Cascade CD has funding to hire an engineer to assess the full scope of the problem and develop a plan for long-term, full-scale repairs. This report/plan will be used to pursue construction funds. Cascade CD funding includes project management fee for SRWG. Not likely to have this done in time for the next RRGL cycle, but there are a lot of other different grants available.
 - SRWG was awarded an Irrigation Development Grant from DNRC in July, but it still is not executed. Tracy spoke to the grant administrator last week and she

assured us that the grant is circulating within DNRC for approval and should be executed soon. SRWG can pursue reimbursement back to the award date as long as we have 1:1 match.


- Communications: Following up from the October board meeting and Tracy's year-end evaluation, the board has been receiving monthly updates about SRWG operations; Erling and John requested more frequent, personal follow up so Tracy has been doing that; committees have been meeting and most of the board was comfortable with that being the major venue for engagement with staff in between board meetings. Board reported they are satisfied with the current level of communication with staff.
 - Upcoming events – as stated in October, SRWG is light on projects in early 2022, so in addition to pursuing projects, focus is on outreach and relationship building. Pint nights (Suds for the Sun) are great low-cost ways to get community exposure and raise a little money:
 - Feb 19 Winter RiverFest, The Newberry
 - Mar 24 Suds for the Sun, MT Pints
 - April 6 Suds for the Sun, Black Eagle
 - July 9 Weed Whacker Rodeo
 - July 28 BBQ at the Ballpark
 - August 1 Suds for the Sun, Mighty Mo
 - August 20 Bashin' Trash
 - SRWG policies and human resources documents: Tracy has begun creating these documents to prepare for when we have BSWC members or when we add staff. Will want board review and approval, but will be tabling these tasks until we know if we get more capacity funding (WMG or WaterSMART), as it would be better to use those grants to cover this work than SRWG overhead funds. The exception is the financial policy, which Tracy will work on with Perk sooner than later.
- Committee Updates
 - Financial Committee: overall, finished 2021 better than 2020. See 2020 vs 2021 year-end P&L attached to this summary.
 - 2021 Budget v. Actual – this shows a year-end actual short-fall of \$1,555. This happens because SRWG spends funds in 2021 that don't get reimbursed by grants until early 2022.
 - Grants are tracked individually through spreadsheets and grant reporting as part of SRWG day-to-day operations and project management. These documents are available upon request. Tracy worked with our accountant to set up accounts a little differently this year so quarterly reports will show expenditures and income tracked by grant better than in the past.
 - 2022 budget spreadsheet was included in the board packet for reference, though no funds are tracked yet – it will be updated at the end of the quarter. \$4k under "Special Events" for 2022Q1 is goal proceeds from Winter RiverFest.
 - SRWG needs to work on identifying new partners and funding contributors for long-term funding stability. Tracy has an outreach list that also tracks donations and identifies "target donors". She will share this with the board and asks the board to add their suggestions.
 - Next steps for committee – long-term fundraising, identify new target donors, fundraising policy
 - Projects Committee: Steve agreed to co-chair this committee with Dave. Committee is trying to meet 1 or 2 times between board meetings.
 - Tanner has started creating a base map of the watershed. He will work with Tracy and project committee to eventually add projects past, in-progress, and

Analogs). This year will be training on techniques, site selection, and permitting. Next year will be building the project.

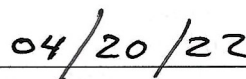
- Next Steps for committee: continue to discuss and prioritize projects and work on maps.
- Executive Committee
 - At the October meeting, SRWG discussed whether or not to replace Laura with a new “at large” director on the executive committee. This position was created when we had no secretary-treasurer and needed a third Excom member to break tie votes and add depth to Excom. Now that SRWG has a secretary treasurer, chair, and vice-chair, we determined not to fill the at-large position for the time being.
- Governance Committee
 - Need to replace Dean with a new board director representing Teton Conservation District. Does not have to be a TCD supervisor. We have been speaking to Larry Johnston, but he is on-hold until he has a little better idea of his other commitments for 2022.
 - Need to think about “outside” candidates – people who can bring diverse skills and backgrounds to the Board. One suggestion is Shane Etzwiler from the Great Falls Chamber of Commerce, as he lives in the watershed and would bring great business and networking skills to the board. Other suggestions are to find folks from Augusta and west of Augusta – Sun River Ranch? Sun Canyon Lodge? Others? SRWG does have a working list of potential candidates and desired board skills.
 - To engage people from all around the watershed and try to diversify the spatial representation on the board, Tracy proposed rotating board meeting locations to include Fairfield and Augusta, to make it easier for folks from those communities to attend. Also, do more outreach to let folks know about board meetings happening in their communities. See end of this summary for future board meeting dates and proposed locations. The board was in favor of this idea.
 - Next steps for committee – work with Tracy to identify potential board members; determine whether or not to hold special election before 2023
- Future board meetings (locations proposed; TBD)
 - April 20, 2022, 1 pm (WMWG meeting prior) - Fairfield
 - July 20, 2022, 1 pm - Augusta
 - October 19, 2022 (WMWG meeting prior) – Fort Shaw or Sun River
 - Proposed: January 18, 2023 – Great Falls

Other / Public Comment – none

January 26, 2022 meeting summary accepted by:



SRWG Board Representative



Date