

Madison River Foundation

Minutes for Board of Directors Meeting

Date: 10/06/2014

Location: First Madison Valley Bank - Ennis

Board Members in Attendance:

J. Dilschneider

J. Montag

J. Goetz (via Telephone)

S. Shows

B. Richards

B. Barker

N. DiMeola

R. Clark

Board Members absent:

M. Petroni

Others Present:

R. Lessner – Interim ED

Liz Jacques – Future ED (via Telephone)

Guests:

Sunni Heikes Knapton -- MCD

Wayne Berkas -- USGS

Sunni Knapton introduced Wayne Berkas of USGS, who presented an overview of the network of stream gages around the western US and Montana, specifically the Varney Bridge gage that measures “streamflow” (volume of water measured in cfs) and “stage,” (height or depth of the water above an established elevation), as well as temperature. The Varney Bridge gage is funded jointly by the Madison River Foundation and USGS.

Wayne explained that the Varney gage station consists of a pressure transducer that provides real-time stage information that is translated into streamflow measurements that are uplinked to a satellite via solar power. The streamflow figures are arrived at by establishing a correlation curve between stage and actual streamflow (volume) measurements taken using a Doppler instrument. Once the curve and functional relationship is identified, the streamflow is derived from the real-time measurements of water height, or stage.

The Varney gage is operational from March through October at an annual cost of approximately \$10,500. Through the Cooperative Water Program (CRP), MRF funds 50% of these costs, or \$5,300, with USGS picking up the other 50%. Temperature measurements require separate funding, with MRF paying \$800 and USGS paying \$810. Sunni explained that in order to comply with federal regulations, Madison County Conservation District must be on the contract with USGS even though the matching funds come from MRF. Jeff Montag asked whether Wayne could track “hits” to the Varney gage on the USGS website? Wayne said at the moment, Google Analytics does not allow him to do so, but he is working on being able to provide that

information in 2015. Wayne said he believes USGS will be able to continue its funding at the same levels for the next two years, but until the money is actually appropriated we never know for sure.

Jeff Laszlo spoke to us about the Odell Project, and about Granger fencing in cooperation with MRF. Having started in 2005, Jeff just completed Phase 10, west of the creek, closer to the river, involving redevelopment of another 3,500 feet of stream channel. Jeff said the flows are modest (5 cfs), but he is amazed at the impact it has had. Granger has just finished another round of swan releases; he says the program is going very well and expects 25-30 swans to stay all winter. He anticipates that future projects on Odell may involve the Longhorn Ranch, if they are interested. There will be a meeting of Jeff's team on October 15 to talk about future phases and ideas. The dedicated funds flowing to Odell from Patagonia through MRF have been very helpful in pre-planning. Jeff Montag mentions the current balance for these dedicated funds is around \$50,000. Jim Dawson, high bidder at the gala for this year's day on Odell with Craig Matthews, was out there during the time of our meeting. Jeff wants to build on the success of the Blackfoot Challenge.

As far as the MRF riparian fencing project, he said this was the best year yet with great grass, moisture, and no vandalism. He thanks the MRF volunteers!

Sunni Knapton took the floor again to discuss the **Montana State Water Plan**. The Upper Missouri Basin, including the Madison watershed, accounts for 50% of the state's irrigation usage, and 50% of the state's water-based recreation. The state is now asking for comments on the proposed Plan. Should MRF comment? Barker read the Plan's recommendations and said they are general, very high-level in nature. So much is dependent on rainfall and population growth, it is difficult to be specific regarding future conditions. Beyond recognizing the critical importance of the quantity and quality of water for our region, the Board agreed that a comment would not be necessary at this time. The kind of "projects" MRF is involved with, such as Granger fencing, the Whitefish study, etc. are very much in line with goals of the Plan.

Joe Dilschneider took the floor and asked for any comments on the Minutes from July 21 and July 24, 2014. Clark pointed out a mistake in the July minutes, where David Bricker is referred to as "Ex Officio." Bricker's actual title is "Director Emeritus." Approval of the July Minutes, as amended, was made by Montag, Richards seconds, motion carried. Approval of the August Minutes was made by Montag, Shows seconds, motion carried.

Jeff Montag then offered the Treasurer's report. At the end of September, the Foundation had \$164,000 in cash – with \$80,000 in commitments including \$50,000 earmarked for the Odell project as previously mentioned. This leaves us with unrestricted funds of approximately \$84,000 as compared with \$76,000 one year ago (as of the end of October, about a month later), so we are in pretty good shape. The balance of the year's expenses will be funded through membership renewals, to be discussed under the ED's report.

Festival results are still being fine-tuned (e.g. long-sleeved shirts). Our net is \$4,300 for merchandise sales – up from one year ago. **Festival net income estimated for 2014 was about \$12,100** (on gross income of \$25,300). This year's net income is down from \$15,800 in 2013, but way up from \$7,300 in 2012. Considering the storm and power outage that hit in the middle of this year's event nearly washing us out, net results are pretty satisfactory! The ERA Arrow underwriting of the lunch was a big help. Joe asks about responding to the Bowens, who have already requested to continue with this underwriting for 2015. It was agreed to invite the Bowens to continue. Sherri Shows asks about the net income for the Friday luncheon, since we ordered

the same amount of product, sold out in both years, but 2014 bottom line was about \$800 lower than last year. Brian Barker said Dianne Bricker was confused about the size of the patties...were they 1/3 pound or 1/4 pound? Same number of burgers as last year? Sherri will check back with Dianne.

Regarding the boat raffle, we did not sell out all the tickets this year. Normally, a high number are sold at the last minute, but when the storm hit closing down the Festival for an hour, we lost potential ticket sales. Nevertheless, the boat raffle did well (\$8,400 in 2014 vs. \$10,900 in 2013). The bucket raffle this year brought in nearly \$7,000, up nicely from \$6,300 in 2013.

Executive Director's Report

Wild Trout Symposium Richard Lessner began by commending the Foundation's sponsorship of the Wild Trout Symposium. As part of our exposure at this event, MRF was recognized from the podium and our logo was shown prominently on symposium materials. Brian Barker was able to attend 1.5 days of the event. Lessner is on the Steering Committee for 2017, when it is suggested MRF may again be a sponsor.

Membership renewal is in preparation right now and mailings will go out at the end of the month. Prizes offered for renewals at various levels include a license plate holder, stadium blanket, and Bern Sundell flybox. The mailing list has about 850 accounts. [Hans left the Board with impression we have 1,100 members. We do not.] In the current year, there are approximately 200 who have not renewed, leaving us with 650 paid memberships. Richard will follow up with a reminder to the 4 Stewards who have not yet paid their pledges for 2014: many people wait until the end of the year to satisfy obligations of this kind. Good news that we have 3 or 4 new Stewards who will be recognized in the next newsletter!

Projects The sixth year (of a ten year commitment) on the Granger Ranch fencing project is complete as of this writing. The day following this meeting, volunteers will take down the fencing that was purchased by the Foundation and help store it for the winter. Paperwork has been submitted to the Montana Trout Foundation for a \$4,000 grant and Richard expects a check shortly. Other landowners, such as along the lower Odell, are interested in this program, which has proven to be highly successful.

Richard has met with FWP seeking other projects for MRF. There is discussion of cutthroat trout restoration along Wigwam Creek. Bruce Richards will meet with the Shining Mountains HOA to facilitate the exploration of this idea. Richard mentions signage along Lake Creek near Smith Dam, and the possibility of a MRF sign at the VC/Madison Overlook as a small but meaningful project.

Gala 2015 Richard has reserved the tents, chairs, etc. for next year, Saturday June 20, 2015. We do not yet have a commitment from the caterer. Sherri will check with Zach. Location? Montag suggests the Old Kirby Place. Richard will write the manager. A number of sponsorship opportunities and ventures were mentioned:

Patagonia Trip Conversation continues about the donation of a trip for auction, to be sponsored by Patagonia.

Withers Winery Richard says this is a high-end winery. They are interested in a relationship with MRF, sending us money for Withers wine purchased on our website.

One-Ton Pig to play at next year's Festival? Richard is following up.

Ed Totten wants MRF to sponsor a painting to be auctioned, and then share in proceeds from print sales.

In a side conversation, Liz Jacques volunteers to attend the 3-day Great Rockies Sports show in March and represent MRF.

Strategic Planning Meeting November 5

The retreat will be held at what were formerly Moonlight offices. Sherri will fix lunch. The Board members will submit ideas for discussion; the Executive Committee will collate them and prepare an agenda at its next meeting on October 22.

Clark suggested we each contact 2 Stewards and ask about for comments about their experience with MRF. It was decided there is not enough time to complete this exercise before November 5, so it has been postponed until 2015. Liz agrees that several levels of survey (multiple choice, open ended questions, etc.) can be useful. She will come on board as of January, 2015. Richard and Pam agree to stay on until then, with their compensation deferred until 2015. Montag so moves, Sherri seconds, and the motion passes.

Old Business

Dilschneider provides a status report on the Wild Trout Film, the story of Dick Vincent. Budget is \$400,000. Montag expressed concern about providing monetary support until all funding is in place. Joe said there are several methods of providing security for pledges, but the project is still in its formative stages. He will keep the Board posted.

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