



**Tuesday, January 20 | 11:15 AM to 4:30 PM**

**LOCATION:** Fairmont Hot Springs | 1500 Fairmont Rd, Anaconda, MT 59711

For virtual attendees: [Zoom Registration](#)

<b>11:15 AM</b>	<b>Lunch (provided)</b>
<b>12:00 PM</b>	<b>Call to Order &amp; Roll Call</b> Overview of agenda
<b>12:15 PM</b>	<b>Tribal Welcome</b>
<b>12:20 PM</b>	<b>Commission Business, Finances, &amp; Updates</b> <b>Action:</b> Vote on September 2025 Meeting Minutes <b>Action:</b> Vote on By Laws Update <b>Action:</b> Vote on Amendment to Commission Decision Points
<b>12:40 PM</b>	<b>Central Clark Fork Watershed Restoration Plan</b> Gretchen Watkins, Clark Fork Coalition
<b>1:10 PM</b>	<b>Committee Annual Review &amp; Updates</b> <b>Action:</b> Vote on Committee Leadership
<b>2:00 PM</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>2:15 PM</b>	<b>Commission Member Spotlight</b> Mike Koopal, Whitefish Lake Institute
<b>2:35 PM</b>	<b>WMCC In Review</b> <i>A facilitated session to evaluate effectiveness and direction</i>
<b>4:00 PM</b>	<b>Public Comment</b>
<b>4:15 PM</b>	<b>Adjourn</b>
<b>5:00 PM</b>	<b>Social Hour</b>



**Wednesday, January 21 | 9:15 AM to 1:00 PM**

**9:15 AM**

**Call to Order & Roll Call**

Overview of agenda

**9:20 AM**

**International Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed Study Board**

Tom Bansak, Flathead Lake Biological Station & U.S. Co-Chair IEKWSB

**9:30 AM**

**WMCC Program Updates**

**Action:** Vote on Approval to Proceed with Showcase Green Stormwater Infrastructure Grant Award

**10:30 AM**

**Break**

**10:50 AM**

**Montana Aquatic Invasive Species Update**

Tom Woolf, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

**11:20 AM**

**Qualifying Toxins to Inform Fish Consumption & Identifying Sources of Pollutants in the Upper Columbia River Basin of Montana**

Trevor Selch, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

*Other speakers TBA*

**12:10 PM**

**DEQ's Narrative Nutrient Water Quality Standards**

Lindsey Krywaruchka, Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Andy Ulven, Montana Department of Environmental Quality

**12:30 PM**

**Public Comment**

**12:45 PM**

**Wrap-up & Adjourn**

*Join us for lunch (provided)*

## Western Montana Conservation Commission (WMCC) Meeting Minutes

Fairmont Hot Springs – Anaconda, MT

Virtual option on Zoom

*Minutes prepared by Stephanie Murphy*

### Acronyms

- AIS Aquatic Invasive Species
- BPA Bonneville Power Administration
- BSWC Big Sky Watershed Corps
- CBSM Community-Based Social Marketing
- CD Conservation District
- CFC Clark Fork Coalition
- CSKT Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
- DEQ MT Department of Environmental Quality
- EPA US Environmental Protection Agency
- FLBS Flathead Lake Biological Station
- FWP MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- GSI Green Stormwater Infrastructure
- IJC International Joint Commission
- MACD Montana Association of Conservation Districts
- NRDP Natural Resource Damage Program
- QAPP Quality Assurance Project Plan
- TMDL Total Maximum Daily Loads
- WET Water & Environmental Technologies
- WLI Whitefish Lake Institute
- WMCC Western Montana Conservation Commission

### DAY ONE:

TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026 | 11:15 AM – 4:30 PM

## WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

### Call to Order

Mike Koopal, Chair & WLI

1. Overview of agenda.
2. Overview of voting commission member terms: Mike Koopal welcomed new members, Bill Yankee and Sen. Mark Noland.
3. Overview of meeting structure and rules.

### Attendance

**WMCC (voting members underlined):** Mike Koopal, Onno Wieringa, Lech Naumovich, Rich Janssen, Duane Braaten, Sandy Beder-Miller, Randy Brodehl, Caroline McDonald, Noel Duram, Bill Yankee, Julie Spencer, Matt Peterson, Phil Matson, Rep. Neil Duram, Tom Woolf, Sara Edinberg, Peter Brumm, Kate Wilson, Casey Lewis, Michelle Barton, Stephanie Murphy, Heidi Fleur, Krista Lammers, Olivia Galluzzo, Mark Bostrom

**Virtual WMCC:** Ron Pifer, Galen Steffans, Michelle Cox, Jim Elser, Kristen Jordan

**Absent members:** Arthur Potts, Tracy Campbell, Sen. Janet Ellis, Rep. Tom France, Jim Ferch, Tom Martin, Lindsey Krywaruchka, Martin Charlo, Greg Hoffman, Melissa Schaar, Emilie Henry

**Partners & guests:** Gretchen Watkins, Autumn Coleman, Eric Trum, Liz Lodman, Samantha Tappenbeck, Daisy Coyne

**Virtual partners & guests:** Sheena Pate, Mariah Durglo, Will Meyer, Tiffany Lyden, Matt Elsaesser, Kelly Hendrix, Hannah Reidl, Maggie Winter-Sydnor, Meagan Gilmore, Troy Hill, Constanza von der Pahlen, Coby Gierke, Mark Ockey, Marie Nelson, Margarite Juarez Thomas, Janelle Groff, Russ Hartzell, Rachel Malison, Noah Matheny, Asta Bowen

**Quorum established**

### **Tribal Welcome**

Rich Janssen, CSKT

1. Rich Janssen welcomed meeting attendees to Fairmont Hot Springs, the healing waters for tribes. Janssen, a Qlispé member celebrating 56<sup>th</sup> year as a native Montana resident, noted working with WMCC has been wonderful experience.

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### **AGENDA**

#### **Commission Business, Finances, & Updates**

Mike Koopal, Chair & WLI

Casey Lewis, Executive Director

1. Mike Koopal called for comments on the September 2025 Meeting Minutes.
  - a. **Motion** was made by Onno Wieringa to approve the September 2025 Meeting Minutes; **seconded** by Sandy Beder-Miller
  - b. **Motion passed** unanimously by a vote of 13-0.
2. Casey Lewis introduced WMCC's new Program Coordinator, Michelle Barton, and WMCC's new Big Sky Watershed Corps (BSWC) member, Olivia Galluzzo.
  - a. Michelle and Olivia introduced their backgrounds and interests.
3. Casey Lewis presented the proposed By-Laws Amendment to clarify chair's voting process: the chair retains their vote as a voting member, but should only vote when their vote will change the outcome.
  - a. **Motion** by Onno Wieringa to approve the by-laws amendment as proposed in Part V, Section 3; **seconded** by Noel Duram
  - b. **Motion passed** unanimously by a vote of 13-0.
4. Casey Lewis presented the proposed amendment to the Commission Decision Points: 1) adding clarification on decision points for public comment and 2) align approval limits for grants awarded by WMCC with State Procurement Bureau regulation and DNRC guidelines.
  - a. Mike Koopal noted that this proposal has been reviewed and is recommended by the Executive Committee.
  - b. **Motion** by Onno Wieringa to approve amendment to commission decision points; **seconded** by Phil Matson
  - c. **Motion passed** unanimously by a vote of 13-0.

5. Casey Lewis provided an overview of WMCC’s operational budget, grant funding, and expenditures to date.

### Central Clark Fork Watershed Restoration Plan Update

Gretchen Watkins, CFC

1. Gretchen Watkins presented an overview of the Clark Fork Coalition’s work on developing the Central Clark Fork Watershed Restoration Plan. Gretchen provided context about the Clean Water Act and Montana DEQ’s role in cataloging impaired waters. Gretchen introduced key priorities of the watershed restoration plan and next steps to gather community feedback and assess restoration sites.
  - a. This project was funded, in part, by WMCC at \$7,500.

### Committee Updates & Annual Review

Mike Koopal, Chair & WLI

Phil Matson, FLBS

Caroline McDonald, Lake County CD

Lech Naumovich, Greater Than Image, LLC

Kate Wilson, BPA

Matt Peterson, NewFields

1. Mike Koopal provided updates from the Executive Committee including recent review of project support requests, competitive grants, and meeting agenda items.
2. Phil Matson, Chair of AIS Committee, presented the priorities of the Committee in the last year and the outcomes of the annual review.
  - a. **Motion** by Noel Durham to have Phil Matson and Tom Woolf Co-Chair the AIS Committee; **seconded** by Caroline McDonald.
  - b. **Motion passed** unanimously by a vote of 12-0 with Phil Matson recused from the vote.
3. Caroline McDonald, Co-Chair of the On-site Wastewater Treatment Committee (OSWTC), provided an overview of committee goals and projects, and shared the success of their 2025 in-person planning meeting.
  - a. **Motion** by Julie Spencer to have Caroline McDonald and Nanette Nelson continue as Co-Chairs for the OSWTC to keep co-chairs; **seconded** by Matt Peterson.
  - b. **Motion passed** unanimously by a vote of 12-0 with Caroline McDonald recused from the vote.
4. Lech Naumovich, Chair of the Monitoring & Coordination Committee, provided an overview of the committee’s activities in the last year and encouraged attendees to complete the Western Montana Aquatic Monitoring Landscape Survey.
  - a. Motion by Phil Matson to have Lech Naumovich continue as Chair for the Monitoring & Coordination Committee; **seconded** by Sandy Beder-Miller.
  - b. **Motion passed** unanimously by a vote of 12-0 with Lech Naumovich recused from the vote.
5. Kate Wilson, Chair of the Education, Outreach and Communications (EOC) Committee, highlighted some gaps in membership identified during the annual review process and provided an overview of the committee’s activities in the last year.
  - a. Motion by Caroline McDonald to have Kate Wilson continue as Chair for the EOC Committee; **seconded** by Phil Matson.

- b. **Motion passed** unanimously by a vote of 13-0.
6. Matt Peterson, Co-Chair of the Stormwater Advisory Council, provided an update on the Stormwater Advisory Council's progress with the WaterNow Alliance and presented next steps for the Council.

## Break

### Commission Member Spotlight

Mike Koopal, Chair & WLI

1. Mike Koopal presented an overview of his life and career from Iowa to Montana. He shared information about his family, education, career path, and starting the Whitefish Lake Institute.

### WMCC In Review

Casey Lewis, Executive Director

1. Casey Lewis introduced this facilitated review session with a reminder about WMCC's Sunset Date. The facilitated review was intended to gather feedback, evaluate effectiveness, and provide future direction for WMCC.

### Public Comment

Mike Koopal, Chair & WLI

1. Mike Koopal called for public comment.
2. Seeing no comments, Mike Koopal closed public comment.

### Adjourn

Mike Koopal, Chair & WLI

1. **Motion** was made by Onno Wieringa to adjourn; **seconded** by Phil Matson.
2. **Motion** passed unanimously by a vote of 13-0; meeting adjourned.

## DAY TWO:

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2026 | 9:15 AM – 1:00 PM

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## WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

### Call to Order

Mike Koopal, Chair & WLI

1. Mike Koopal called the meeting to order.
2. Mike Koopal presented an overview of the agenda, meeting structure and voting member terms.
3. Introduction of new members: Bill Yankee and Sen. Mark Noland

## Attendance

**WMCC (voting members underlined):** Mike Koopal, Onno Weiringa, Lech Naumovich, Rich Janssen, Duane Braaten, Sandy Beder-Miller, Randy Brodehl, Caroline McDonald, Noel Duram, Bill Yankee, Julie Spencer, Matt Peterson, Phil Matson, Sen. Mark Noland, Rep. Neil Duram, Lindsey Krywaruchka, Tom Woolf, Sara Edinberg, Peter Brumm

**Virtual WMCC:** Ron Pifer, Tracy Campbell, Cory Sandow, Jim Elser, Galen Steffens

**Absent members:** Arthur Potts, Sen. Janet Ellis, Rep. Tom France, Jim Ferch, Tom Martin, Martin Charlo, Michelle Cox, Kate Wilson, Melissa Schaar, Emilie Henry, Kristen Jordan

**Partners & guests:** Trevor Selch, Autumn Coleman, Eric Trum, Samantha Tappenbeck, Daisy Coyne

**Virtual partners & guests:** Tom Bansak, Mariah Durglo, Will Meyer, Tiffany Lyden, Kelly Hendrix, Hannah Reidl, Maggie Winter-Sydnor, Meagan Gilmore, Troy Hill, Constanza von der Pahlen, Coby Gierke, Margarite Juarez Thomas, Janelle Groff, Russ Hartzell, Rachel Malison, Marilyn Roberts, Tom Bansak, Sara Ricklefs, Asta Bowen, Mayre Flowers, Andy Ulven, Stephanie Ayotte, Torie Haraldson, Matt Elsaesser, Michelle Pond, Erik Englebert, Tatiana Davila

**Members of the Press:** Hailey Smalley (virtual)

**Quorum established**

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## AGENDA

### International Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed Study Board

Tom Bansak, FLBS

1. Tom Bansak, appointed expert on the IJC Study Board and US Co-Chair, provided an update on the study board activities including an Interim Report submitted in September 2025 and working toward submitting the Final Report in September 2026. Tom shared public engagement opportunities through 2026.

### WMCC Program Updates

Krista Lammers, Grant Admin. Specialist  
Shane Ellingson, WET

Christina Eggensperger, WET  
Holly Bjerke, Lincoln Elementary School

1. Krista Lammers introduced a proposed Showcase GSI project under WMCC's Stormwater and Septic Leachate Toxics Reduction Grant Program: the Anaconda: Lincoln Elementary Project.
2. Shane Ellingson presented an overview of the proposed project including current stormwater challenges and the proposed conceptual design to mitigate stormwater runoff and minimize flooding while providing green space and educational opportunities.
3. Christina Eggensperger aligned the goals of WMCC with the proposed project.
4. Holly Bjerke outlined the educational opportunities and community member support for the project.

- a. **Motion** was made by Noel Duram to approve grant award as proposed; **seconded** by Onno Wieringa.
- b. **After discussion, a substitute motion** was made by Randy Brodehl to approve the funding of the proposed project and require grantees to include additions to the project as discussed; **seconded** by Onno Wieringa.
- c. **Motion** passed unanimously with a vote of 14-0.

## Break

### Montana Aquatic Invasive Species Updates

Tom Woolf, MT FWP

1. Tom Woolf provided an overview of the 2025 inspections, outreach and detections of aquatic invasive species in Montana. Tom provided information on the Boater Information Gathering (BIG) Project, updates to AIS marketing materials from FWP Communications & Education Division, and detections in other western states, such as the golden mussels in California. Tom highlighted the importance of regional AIS coordination across the west and in Montana.

### Qualifying Toxins to Inform Fish Consumption & Identifying Sources of Pollutants in the Upper Columbia River Basin of Montana

Trevor Selch, MT FWP

1. Trevor Selch provided information about this EPA-funded collaborative project with MT Trout Unlimited, MT FWP, MT DEQ, Clark Fork Coalition, NRDP, CKST, and Missoula County to quantify toxins and identify sources of pollutants in the Upper Columbia River Basin. Trevor outlined the toxic compound results from passive sampling across the Clark Fork, and issues with fish tissue analysis that are currently being remedied.

### WMCC Program Updates *continued*

Stephanie Murphy, Communications Coordinator  
Heidi Fleury, Grant Program Specialist

Krista Lammers, Grant Admin. Specialist  
Olivia Galluzzo, BSWC

1. Stephanie Murphy shared that the showcase GSI awards press release was picked up in multiple news stories.
2. Heidi Fleury provided an overview of WMCC's Stormwater & Septic Leachate Toxics Reduction Grant Program including the launch of competitive grant contracts and projects starting this spring, as well as the remaining available funds. Heidi provided information about the QAPPs that are approved by the EPA and QAPPs that are still being developed.
3. Krista Lammers reported on the direct contracted services and awards including the Flathead Septage Facility, partnership with MACD, the CBSM research and marketing RFP, and the Stormwater Advisory Council.

4. Olivia Galluzzo introduced the program plans for her 2026 BSWC term including supporting the Montana Waters: Clearly Connected campaign, engagement with grantees, AIS industry outreach, and other education and outreach efforts.
5. Stephanie Murphy presented information about WMCC's partnerships, collaborative efforts and project support since the September 2025 meeting, upcoming events, required efforts for 508 compliance, and status of AIS grant applications.

### **DEQ's Narrative Nutrient Water Quality Standards**

Lindsey Krywaruchka, MT DEQ

Andy Ulven, MT DEQ

1. Lindsey Krywaruchka provided background information about legislation for Montana's Nutrient Standards with the passage of HB 664.
2. Andy Ulven provided a brief history of surface water nutrient standards in Montana and explained where numeric nutrient criteria had applied and did not apply. Andy further outlined the process of determining numeric criteria and thresholds under narrative standards, public notice and comment periods, permitting, and revising TMDLs with EPA approval.

### **Public Comment**

Mike Koopal, Chair & WLI

1. Mike Koopal called for public comment.
  - a. Onno Wieringa emphasized the role of Commission Members to learn and share with the people of Montana. Onno encouraged connecting with legislators about the good work of WMCC. Onno expressed excitement for the Anaconda Lincoln Elementary School GSI project and the work WMCC has done to get projects and funding on-the-ground.
  - b. Phil Matson highlighted Montana FWP's robust AIS program and their Best of the West award. Phil appreciated the data collected from the BIG project, and the collaborative efforts of Flathead Conservation District, which will be great to share during the next legislative session.
2. Seeing no further comments, Mike Koopal closed public comment.

### **Adjourn**

Mike Koopal, Chair & WLI

1. Next WMCC Meeting will be on May 20-21, 2026 in Hamilton, MT.
2. **Motion** to adjourn Onno Wieringa; **seconded** by Rich Janssen
3. **Motion passed** unanimously by a vote of 14-0; meeting adjourned.