**Where:** Flatwillow Hall – Winnett, Montana

**Opening:** 10: 16 am

**Attendance:** 33

**Self-Introduction:** Bill Milton asked everyone to introduce themselves and a grounding question: What are the CMR CWG’s core values or your principle reason for attending and participating in these meetings?

* The most common reasons for attending and participating in CMR CWG meetings according to the responses are the **respectful discussions** that are held between wide **varieties of stakeholders** about a **diversity of topics**. Other values held were the desire to **support local communities** and resources, the creation of diverse **partnerships**, and the sharing of **information** that could benefit others.

**MRCDC Coordinator Update:**  Rachel reported that the planning committee has already met twice in 2019 and have committed to meeting again on June 26th. Rachel announced that Casey Gallagher will be stepping in as the new coordinator for the Missouri River Conservation Districts Council (MRCDC). Rachel will now start work at MSU with the Dan Scott Memorial Ranch Program and hopes to still participate in the working group, just in a different capacity.

**CMR CWG Committee Reports:**

* **Montana Saltcedar Team**: Approved for a project on the Missouri River in Fergus County. This will be a coordinated effort between the Army Corps of Engineers, CMR and the Fergus County Weed Department. Weed strike teams as well as Montana Conservation Corps Crews will be contracted to tackle Saltcedar. Currently MST is also working on a permit application to allow the movement of *Diorhabda* beetles (a Saltcedar biocontrol agent) across state lines to help establishment in Montana.
* **Winnett ACES:**  Diane Ahlgren reported on several recent successes. The group’s Land Subcommittee has obtained a grass lease currently being used by seven young producers. Funding has been secured for a necessary part time coordinator. The Conservation Committee has been working for on the ground cost share projects. The Winnett Community Center is moving along. The Wildlife Committee is working with a facilitator and Fish, Wildlife and Parks on elk numbers. The Historic Committee is working on some historic building preservation.
* **Prairie Communities in Action:**Julia reported about the grasslands group, a group of students interested in researching grassland health at MSU. They are looking at a field trip this fall in the region. An upper division geography course is looking for research projects.
* **Range Monitoring Group*:*** Bill reported on the RMG’s pilot project which looks at basic soil monitoring, rangeland monitoring, and upland bird monitoring. Currently there are 15 producers working on this pilot. Information is collected by each individual and then data is shared among the group to help make decisions.

**Jodi Bush, USFWS – Endangered Species Act-** Jodi Bush gave an excellent presentation on the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Endangered Species Act, and how they relate. Find her presentation on the CMR CWG Website or in the meeting summary email. Jodi also recommended enrollment in the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for Prairie Birds Program held by USFWS and The Nature Conservancy, a program for protecting producers from future ESA listings. Find the flier on the website and in the email.

Lunch was served at 12:00 pm

**Paul Santavy – CMR NWR – Laws and Policy -** Paul Santavy provided an informative overview of the history, laws, and policies that created and govern the Charles M. Russel National Wildlife Refuge. Paul had the opportunity to answer several questions from CMR CWG participants. You can find Paul’s presentation on the website and in the meeting summary email.

Discussion brought up an interest in how to provide effective public comments on things like Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements and others. Rachel provided a one page tip sheet for submitting comments to the NEPA Scoping Process and presentation slides on how to provide effective public comments. Find those in the email and on the website.

**Next Meeting date: July 18, 2019 Fort Peck, MT**