

**NATURAL STREAMBED AND LAND PRESERVATION ACT-**  
**ARBITRATION AGREEMENT**

The Natural Streambed and Land Preservation act arbitration process is governed by the Uniform Arbitration Act, MCA §27-5-111 through §27-5-324, except as expressly provided as provided herein. According to MCA §75-15-112, any team member may request arbitration. The team includes the applicant, a representative of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and a representative of the conservation district.

**1. Parties.** The applicant and the conservation district are always a party to the arbitration process. If the applicant requests arbitration, parties will include the applicant and the conservation district. If the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks requests arbitration, parties will include the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the applicant, and the conservation district. If the conservation district representative requests arbitration, the parties will include the conservation district, the conservation district's representative, and the applicant. The team member requesting arbitration is the contesting party.

**2. Administering Agency.** The conservation district or the county attorney will act as the administering agency for the arbitration process. The conservation district shall provide clerical services to collect fees associated with the costs of the arbitration panel.

**3. Selection of the Arbitration Panel.** Within 30 days of the request for arbitration, the contesting party and the conservation district will submit to the administering agency the names and qualifications of three consenting persons who reside in the judicial district in which the dispute is taking place. The consenting persons must reside in the judicial district in which the dispute takes place. The parties may agree on a list of no less than four consenting persons to act as the arbitrators to be submitted to the senior judge. That list shall contain all of the names and qualifications of the consenting persons without designating the party submitting the names to the conservation district. The senior judge will select three persons from the list who, from a review of the qualifications, appear to be the most impartial to serve as arbitrators. If the contesting party fails to submit names within 30 days, the request for arbitration is deemed withdrawn. If the other parties fail to submit names and qualifications, the arbitrators must be selected from the lists provided by the administering agency by the senior district judge. The arbitration panel shall only sit for the period of time necessary to settle the dispute before it and will review the proposed project pursuant to this arbitration agreement and in accordance with the statutory criteria set forth in MCA §75-7-102. The panel may appoint a chair. The powers of the arbitration panel shall be exercised by majority agreement of the panel. If during the course of the hearing an arbitrator ceases to act, the remaining panel members may continue with the hearing and make a determination on the dispute.

**4. Costs of the Arbitration.** Costs of the arbitration panel, computed as for jurors' fees under MCA§3-15-201, shall be borne by the contesting party. Clerical costs of the panel shall be paid by the non prevailing party as determined by the panel. For all other expenses, including counsel fees, each party shall bear its own costs.

**5. Prehearing.** The panel may call a prehearing conference to set the arbitration schedule, and to request specific written information from the parties.

**6. Date, Time, and Place of Hearing.** The panel will select the time and place for the hearing. The hearing must be held in the judicial district in which the dispute takes place. The panel may consider requests for specific locations for the hearing. The panel may conduct on-site inspections. The panel may require the parties to submit copies of exhibits and a summary of its case, including a list of witnesses, to the panel and all other parties, prior to the hearing.

**7. Notice of Hearing.** Not less than ten days before the hearing, the administering agency shall give notice to each party. The notice must be by personal delivery or by certified mail. The notice shall include a description of the subjects and issues involved and the time and place of the hearing.

**8. Representation.** All parties have the right to be represented by an attorney. The arbitration panel may request the district court issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, records, documents, and other evidence and may administer oaths. The provisions of law providing for service of subpoenas are applicable. The arbitration pane may permit a deposition to be taken of a witness who cannot be subpoenaed or is unable to attend the hearing. At the conclusion of the nearing, the pane may take the matter under advisement. A majority of the panel will render a final decision.

**9. Procedure at the Hearing.** Each party may give opening statements, describing, generally, their position on the supervisors' decision. The contesting party will then present its witnesses and evidence. If there is more than one contesting party, then the chair shall determine the order of presentation by the contesting parties. The other parties will follow, in turn as directed by the chair, with their witness and evidence. A witness is subject to cross-examination by the parties to the proceeding. A panel member may ask questions of any witness or party to the dispute. Each party may conclude with closing remarks or statements summarizing their positions and evidence. The hearing must be tape-recorded. If the judicial review is necessary, the tapes or relevant portions of the tapes may be transcribed. The parties may arrange for a transcription of the hearing at their own costs.

**10. Award.** The award is the final decision of the arbitration panel. The award must be in writing and signed by the arbitrators. The arbitration panel's award must be issued within 60 days after the hearing. The arbitration panel shall deliver a copy of the decision to each of the parties and the district judge either personally or by certified mail. The district court shall confirm the panel's award, unless a party

applies and shows grounds for vacation, modifying, or correcting the award.

**11. Judicial Review.** If the panel's decision is contested, the court will review the panel's decision in accordance with MCA §27-5-312 and 313, Uniform Arbitration Act.

**12. Other.** Please specify.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Requesting Party

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Conservation District