

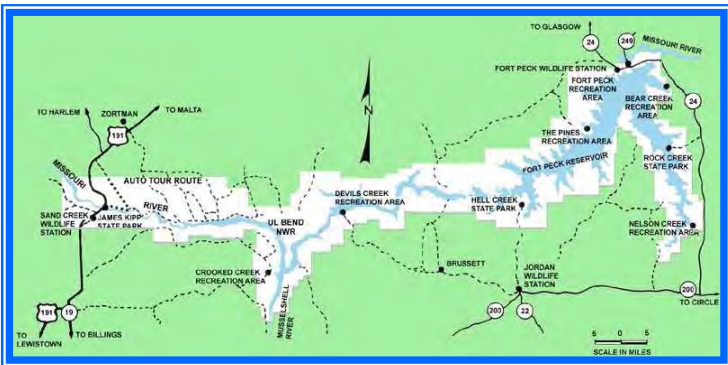


THE MONTANA CONSERVATIONIST

Montana Conservationists Take on Washington D.C.

In late April a contingent of Montana conservationists traveled to Washington, District of Columbia, to meet with our Congressional Delegates and newly appointed senior officials of the Obama Administration. Over the course of three long days we were able to spend time with Senators Baucus and Tester, as well as Representative Rehberg. In addition, we met with officials from:

1. Natural Resource Conservation Service
2. Farm Services Agency
3. US Fish and Wildlife Service
4. Bureau of Land Management
5. Department of the Interior Secretary's Office
6. The Environmental Protection Agency
7. National Association of Conservation Districts
8. Office of Management and Budget



9. US Army Corps of Engineers
10. USDA Forest Service
11. Bureau of Reclamation

The contingent consisted of:

1. Jane Holzer, Executive Director of the Montana Salinity Control Association
2. Vicki Marquis, Coordinator of the Missouri River Conservation Districts Council
3. Gayla Wortman, Supervisor from the Cascade County Conservation District and Coordinator for the Whitmore Ravine Cooperative Conservation Committee
4. Don Youngbauer, Chairman of the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council
5. Dana Darlington, Chairman of the Missouri River Conservation Districts Council
6. Ray Beck, Administrator of the Conservation and Resource Development Division of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
7. Jeff Tiberi, Executive Director of the Montana Association of Conservation Districts



GENERAL COMMENTARY

This was a great opportunity to place the state of Montana and our conservation issues into the fore-minds of many new players at the federal level. Our great state has many supporters and generates much interest. There is magic in some of the words that we used. Don Youngbauer kindly provided moss agates from the Yellowstone River for each person we met with. Yes, there were looks of disbelief and confusion as Don passed through the numerous security checkpoints at

(Continued on page 12)

In This Issue	
Conservationists in DC	Page 1
Items of Interest to CDs	Page 2
News From Our Partners	Page 6
State & Local News	Page 10
Calendar	Page 13

Items of Interest to CDs

Missoula FFA Wins 2009 Envirothon:

Biodiversity in a Changing World was the theme for this year's Envirothon held April 20 and 21 in Lewistown. There were 33 teams that competed this year. The top 3 teams included:

- 1st Missoula FFA
- 2nd Missoula Hellgate
- 3rd Cascade County 4H

Cascade County 4H had the best Test Score.

Missoula FFA will represent Montana at the **Canon Envirothon** competition, August 2 through 8, 2009 at the University of North Carolina in Asheville.



~ ~ ~ ~ CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MISSOULA FFA'S ~ ~ ~ ~

2009 Montana Youth Range Camp hosted by the Lewis & Clark Conservation District! July 27-31, 2009 at Cane Ridge West near Lincoln, Montana.

For questions please contact Heidi Olbert at holbert@mt.gov (406) 444-6619 or Chris Evans at lccd@mt.net (406) 449-5000 ext. 112.

Visit <http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/cardd/camps/rangecamp/default.asp> to download an application of poster



Applications are due July 2nd

Campers will be introduced to 25 of Montana's important range plants and learn about the interaction of soils, water, plants, wildlife, and livestock on the range. The camp provides an excellent opportunity for youth of varying backgrounds to become more aware of the value and potential of Montana's rangeland. This well organized, balanced, and educational program brings together range professionals and interested students to learn in the great outdoors. Evening programs and activities allow campers an opportunity to meet new friends and develop lasting friendships.

Camp **registration fee is \$125** which includes meals, lodging and supplies. Awards are given for outstanding individual and team achievement. Scholarships are available to cover the cost of registration and travel expenses. Telephone your local conservation district for more information.

The Governor's Rangeland Resources Executive Committee is proud to sponsor this event and assist in Montana's youth education.



Miles City Hosts 2009 Montana Range Days: Montana Range Days, the largest rangeland educational event in the region, will be held in Miles City June 15 through 17. More than 300 youth and adults are expected to join rangeland experts for three days to discuss rangeland management and the ecology of Montana's most abundant natural resource.



Montana Range Days begins at 1:00 p.m. at the Eastern Montana Fairgrounds with a guided practice at the range study site and the Pine Hills tour. Camping space, restrooms and showers will be available at the fairgrounds. Registration is open at a discounted rate until June 1. For more information, contact Jan Pratt at 406-853-3388 or visit the www.cartercd.org.

Montana Range Days provides hands-on workshops on plant anatomy, plant identification, range site evaluation, monitoring, stocking rate calculation and range management planning. Following the workshops, competitions are open to youth and adults in four age classes. In addition to prizes for the competitions, three \$1000 scholarships are offered for students planning to attend any Montana college to earn a degree in rangeland-related fields (*please see scholarship information at the end of the article*). The Office of Public Instruction is also offering continuing education credits for all kindergarten through 12th grade teachers attending.

Tours will be offered for adults each day of the event. The first tour will be to the Pine Hills east of Miles City, to discuss general rangeland ecology and the less obvious factors that affect range management. Participants will tour the facilities at the Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Laboratory and visit research sites with scientists examining fire, drought, range animal nutrition, and invasive weeds. The final tour discusses sage grouse habitat with experts on the birds' food sources, mating grounds and nesting requirements.

Montana Range Days Scholarship (\$1,000.00)

To assist young Montanan's education of rangeland, Montana Range Days, Inc. has established the Montana Range Days Scholarship. To be eligible, the applicant must be majoring in Range Science or a related field. The Scholarship winner will be awarded \$1,000.00 upon successful completion of one semester of college.

Harold and Lillian Jensen Scholarship (\$1,000.00)

Harold and Lillian Jensen, long time ranchers from Baker, have established a scholarship of \$1,000.00 annually, to assist a young person who has an interest in Range Science. Harold is a past Chairman of the Montana Range Days, Inc. Steering Committee, and was the local chairman for the 1985 and 1986 Range Days events hosted in Baker by the Fallon County Range Committee. Harold is a member of the Montana Range Days Hall of Fame. The Jensen's are requiring the recipient to be present for the presentation of this scholarship at Range Days in June! The Scholarship has to be used at a Montana university or college.

Bob Sitz memorial Scholarship (\$1,000.00)

Bob Sitz was a rancher committed to improving range management. He believed in the youth of Montana and sought to ensure a bright future for Montana's rangeland through education. Bob was a strong supporter of Montana Range Days. In memory of Bob, the Sitz family has established a scholarship of \$1,000.00 annually and to be announced at Montana Range Days. The winner will receive this scholarship upon successful completion of one semester at a Montana university or college.

Other Newsletters of Interest: Find out what floodplain related legislative bills passed, meet the new State Floodplain Engineer, learn the latest on guidance for Elevation Certificates, and much more in the latest edition of *Highground*, DNRC's floodplain management newsletter. DNRC's Water Resources Division also publishes the following newsletters:

Dam Safety
Outlet



The newsletters are published in various frequencies and are all available on DNRC's website at: http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/forms_publications/newsletters.asp

More Items of Interest to CDs

2009 Judith Basin County Range School Scheduled for June 2 in Geyser:

How to manage cattle and grazing lands in today's uncertain economy is the perfect reason to attend a day-long workshop entitled, *Making It Work in Tough Times*. Featured speakers include Gregg Doud, Chief Economist for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA); David Pratt, CEO of Ranch Management Consultants, Inc.; and Montana's own Jon Siddoway, NRCS State Range Conservationist.

Making It Work in Tough Times is brought to you in part by the Montana Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative. This event will be held at the **Brett and Penny Noland Ranch, located 5 miles south of Geyser. Registration is \$10 and includes lunch for the day and is due by May 15, 2009,** at the Judith Basin Conservation District. For more information please contact Teresa Wilhelms with Judith Basin Conservation District at 406-566-2311, x107.



Judith Basin County
RANGE SCHOOL
JUNE 2, 2009
Brett & Penny Noland Ranch
5 miles South of Geyser
Registration Fee: \$10.00
Pre-Register by May 15, 2009
For information call 566-2311 ext 107

Next MRDC RAC Meeting Scheduled for May 27 & 28 in Lewistown:

Join the Missouri River Conservation District Council for the next RAC meeting at the BLM field office conference room in Lewistown.

A topic that may be of particular interest to some is the discussion scheduled after lunch the first day on the Bison Conservation Initiative. It will be facilitated by a representative from the US Department of the Interior.

There will be a dinner/social the evening of May 27th at *Harry's on the Hill* - cost is \$15 per person. It would be appreciated if those that plan to attend the dinner would please RSVP to Kaylene Patten at 460-538-1957 or via email at Kaylene.Patten@blm.gov as an exact headcount is required. There will be an open bar followed by a roast beef and turkey buffet. Questions may be directed to Patten as noted above.

DRAFT AGENDA for the RAC Meeting	
Wednesday, May 27th	
10:00 - 10:30	Public Comment Period
10:30 - 10:45	Welcome/ Chairperson synopsis/Meeting Notes
10:45 - 11:30	Oil & Gas Issues in Central Montana Area
	Lunch
12:30 - 1:00	Gene Terland, Montana State Director Briefing
1:00 - 2:00	Bison Conservation Initiative (DOI Representative)
2:00 - 2:30	Question and Answer Session on Bison Conservation
2:30 - 3:15	Field Managers & C&G Field Station Updates
	Break
3:30 - 4:00	Stewardship RMEF
4:00 - 4:30	Educational Partnership
4:30 - 5:00	National Public Lands Day
5:00 p.m.	Adjourn
6:30 p.m.	Social/Dinner at <i>Harry's on the Hill</i>
Thursday, May 28th	
8:00 - 8:30	Public Comment Period
8:30 - 9:15	American Recovery Reinvestment Act in Central Montana
9:15 - 9:30	Monument Newsletter
	Break
9:45 - 10:45	Fee Proposals from Forest Service
10:45 - 11:45	Stakeholder presentation Hunter/Angler
	Lunch
12:45 - 1:45	"Visionary Conversation" between RAC members
	Break
1:45 - 3:00	Continue "Visionary Conversation"
3:00 - 3:30	Next Meeting Agenda/Travel Vouchers
3:30 p.m.	Adjourn



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EARTH DAY IS NOT JUST ONCE A YEAR!!

As reported in the last edition of *The Montana Conservationist*, Earth Day is something we can celebrate every day rather than just as a focused event one week or one day out of the year.

Here are a few more tips that we can all try to do to help our Mother Earth year round!

1. Have your car's air filters cleaned and tires inflated. BECAUSE: A yearly tune-up can improve your car's efficiency by 15 % and keep more than one ton of carbon dioxide out of the air.
2. Replace traditional showerheads with high-efficiency 2.5-gallon-minute models. BECAUSE: Your shower will consume 30% fewer gallons of water every time you wash.
3. Wash laundry in cold water, or use warm-wash cold-rinse cycles. BECAUSE: Most detergents work equally well regardless of water temperature. Using cold washes in every US household would save the equivalent of 100,000 barrels of oil a day.
4. Switch your computer display to go to sleep mode after 5 minutes of inactivity. BECAUSE: Sleep mode consumes 90% less energy than an animated screen saver – which requires as much energy as normal use.
5. Consolidate your errands into fewer trips. BECAUSE: Economizing your tasks into just one or two runs each week can conserve as much as 55 gallons of gas over the course of a year.
6. Use a toaster oven for simple baking tasks. BECAUSE: The countertop appliances consume half as much energy as electric ovens (and keeps the kitchen cooler.)
7. Plug in your devices into power strips and turn off the strips when you aren't using them. BECAUSE: Some plugged-in appliances and strips use electricity even when they're turned off. But one 6-outlet strip, when shut down, uses 87 percent less energy than devices left in 6 individual outlets.
8. Place a recycling bin next to the wastebasket in your home office to make conserving paper as easy as discarding it. BECAUSE: Producing one ton of paper from recycled pulp saves 7,000 gallons of water and 17 trees.
9. Read your water meter and wait an hour without using faucets or toilets. Then check it again after the hour. If the number rises during that time call a plumber. BECAUSE: A dripping tap wastes 5 gallons of water a day. Fixing a leak can save at least \$50 a year.
10. Purify your air. Place potted plants (like Boston ferns, peace lilies or English ivy) on windowsills and tables. BECAUSE: 15 plants can absorb most of the average home's airborne toxins within 24 hours.
11. Use your dishwasher's air-dry cycle or switch the machine off after the final rinse and crack open the door. BECAUSE: Skipping the heated-dry cycle can cut your per-wash energy use by 50%.
12. Stow a reusable bag in your car for errands. BECAUSE: If every American stuck with totes, we'd waste 380 billion fewer plastic bags this year.

Don't forget to visit the Earth Day Network website at

<http://www.earthday.net/> to find out what kind of on-going efforts are happening in your community, your state, your nation and around the world. And, again, it's not too early to start preparing for the 40th Anniversary Celebration of Earth Day – April 2010!



News From Our Partners



What Is The "Montana Fishing Log Program" and How Does It Help FWP?

By Diane Tipton, FWP Statewide Information Officer

Since 1951, some anglers have kept diaries of their angling experiences for FWP. In the beginning it was only about 350 dedicated anglers that volunteered to record their experiences. Now there are nearly 850 anglers that participate in the Fishing Log Program. Fishing-log keepers record their fishing activities in a small bound booklet issued by FWP that fits easily in a coat or pants pocket. Anglers note the date, locations fished, species, average size and number of fish caught, and other miscellaneous information such as the weather, water quality and more. Each fishing log participant has a number that identifies his or her contributions. These fishing trip statistics are available on the FWP Web site at fwp.mt.gov on the Montana Fisheries Information System on the Fishing home page. (<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishing/management/fishinglog.html>).

Fisheries biologists use the fishing log information for a variety of purposes. Compiling the information from these many individuals was tedious at best in the days of IBM keypunch equipment. But the angler's information was invaluable. FWP used information from fishing logs in 1955 to make the initial classifications when the Water Pollution Act called for each lake and stream in the state to receive a water quality classification. The logs were the only data available on some streams. Information gathered from anglers' logs also played a part in identifying when whirling disease first appeared in the state. A Pennsylvania angler's log helped fisheries managers deduce that whirling disease may have shown up in the Madison River as early as 1987.

To enroll in the Fishing Log Program, go to the FWP Web site at fwp.mt.gov. On the **Fishing Guide page** select **Fishing Log Program**. Or, submit your name, address and phone number to: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Fisheries Division, PO Box 200701, 1420 East 6th Ave., Helena, MT 59620-0701, or by email: fwpfsh@mt.gov or phone 406-444-2449.

Here are some fun facts from some of those fishing logs:

- The 10 fish-log participants who recorded the most fish caught during the summer of 2007 averaged 859 fish each.
- The 10 fish-log participants who recorded the most fish caught during the winter of 2007 averaged 522 fish each.
- The Missouri River was the water body most frequently fished by fish-log participants throughout the **summer**, followed in order by Canyon Ferry Reservoir, Fort Peck Reservoir, Holter Reservoir, Bighorn River, Flathead Lake, Yellowstone River, Big Hole River, Rock Creek and Tiber Reservoir.
- The Missouri River was most frequently fished by log participants throughout the **winter**, followed in order by the Bighorn River, Pishkun Reservoir, Nelson Reservoir, Canyon Ferry Reservoir.

FWP Announces 2009 Fishing Regulation Changes: Montana's general fishing season officially opens the **third Saturday in May, and that is May 16 this year**. That's just around the corner and has anglers who are eager to cast that first line digging out their tackle boxes, throwing out dried up bait and scouting for new lures at sporting goods stores. Add to the list a copy of the 2009 Fishing Regulations.

For those that don't yet have a copy, here is a quick preview of some of the notable changes:

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

- When fishing for bull trout under the special limited opportunity available in FWP Region 1, anglers must now select only one of two areas to fish—Lake Koo-canusa or Hungry Horse Reservoir, and the South Fork of the Flathead River. This is a regulated and experimental bull trout angling season. Swan Lake is still open to angling for bull trout without a special permit.
- To fish for bull trout anglers must have in their possession at the site a valid bull trout catch card for the specific water they intend to fish. The catch cards are free of charge and available at the FWP Region 1 office in Kalispell, or available online at fwp.mt.gov. Federal rules prohibit the attempted take of bull trout unless specifically authorized by a state or tribal regulation.
- On the Blackfoot River, new regulations to protect spawning bull trout require that artificial lures be used when fishing the mouths of tributaries to the Blackfoot River.
- On the Yellowstone River the only catch and release snagging for paddlefish is at the Intake Fishing Access Site. Harvest snagging of paddlefish on the Yellowstone River and the Missouri River below Fort Peck Dam is allowed only on **Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from May 15 to June 30—or until the season is closed by FWP.**



The 2009 fishing regulations book is available at FWP offices and license providers and in electronic format on the FWP Web site at fwp.mt.gov.

Make Every Drop Count!: This year marks the 35th Anniversary of the Safe Drinking Water Act that forms the core of our national efforts to provide quality drinking water and protect the health of our citizens. From May 3-9, we also celebrate National Drinking Water Week to highlight the value of water to each of us.

National Drinking Water Week recognizes the importance of water protection and conservation, as well as the value, importance, and fragility of our water resources. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality works with your local drinking water utilities to make sure that the water delivered to you and your family meets all federal and state standards and is clean and abundant. These efforts are vital to Montana's economy and to the public health of our citizens.

Visit The DEQ site at <http://www.deq.mt.gov/tempdocs/WaterWeek.asp> for more information about safe drinking water and how to help conserve it and keep it clean.



NACD Submits EQIP and WHIP Comments: NACD recently submitted comments to NRCS regarding the interim final rules for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). Changes to these programs were a result of alterations made in the 2008 Farm Bill. In comments drafted by the Legislative Committee, NACD stressed local input and priority-setting and additional outreach to geographically disadvantaged producers in both programs. NACD expressed concerns about some provisions in the EQIP regulations which would limit irrigation practices, restrict the use of the program on federal lands and that might be too onerous for forest landowners. A copy of these comment letters can be viewed online at: <http://www.nacdnet.org/policy/input/>.

Fourth National Conference on Grazing Lands Call for Papers: The 4th National Conference on Grazing Lands is scheduled for December 13-16 in Sparks, Nevada. The conference will be hosted by the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI), the Society for Range Management (SRM) and other sponsoring organizations.

Conference sponsors are accepting abstracts for oral and poster papers in the following areas: issues concerning the agricultural urban interface; successful "cutting edge" management technologies for grazing practices; economic and marketing implications of grazing; public policy implications of grazing; and the optimizing of grazing land health for environmental and social benefits.

All accepted papers and poster abstracts are eligible for publication in the conference proceedings. Deadline for abstract submission is May 1. Instructions for electronic abstract submission are available on the GLCI website at <http://www.glci.org/4NCGLindex.htm>.

EPA Releases Proposed Endangerment Finding on Greenhouse Gases: Last week the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a proposed endangerment finding that public welfare and health are at risk with the contribution of greenhouse gases in air pollution. The finding identifies six greenhouse gases that are very likely to impact human health under the Clean Air Act--carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride. Potential impacts of climate change include increased temperatures, more flooding, and harm to water resources, wildlife and agriculture.

The endangerment finding will set the stage for the EPA to start a process to place limits on the six pollutants and will likely increase emphasis on climate change legislation in Congress. The finding is subject to 60-day public comment period. More information on the endangerment finding can be found online at <http://epa.gov/climatechange/endangerment.html>.

NRCS Publishes State Technical Committee, Local Working Group Guidelines: The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently published in the Federal Register guidelines for State Technical Committees and Local Working Groups.

The guidelines specify standard operating procedures for State Technical Committees and Local Working Groups such as membership requirements, operating procedures, meeting criteria and standards for public participation. State Technical Committees and Local Working Groups are critical components of locally-led conservation. With recommendations from Local Work Groups, State Technical Committees provide information, analysis and recommendations to NRCS state conservationists on priority resource concerns, watersheds and standard conservation practices on Farm Bill conservation programs.

NACD's Legislative Committee will be developing comments to submit on behalf of the association, but individual state associations and conservation districts are also encouraged to comment. The guidelines are available for comment until **June 8, 2009** and are available for viewing in the Federal Register (<http://regulations.justia.com/view/140234/>).

The practice of conservation must spring from a conviction of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right only when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the community and the community includes the soil, waters, fauna, and flora, as well as people.

-Aldo Leopold

U.S. Ag Secretary Names Jay Jensen as Deputy Under Secretary: Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced the appointment of Jay Jensen as USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment (NRE). The NRE mission area includes the U.S. Forest Service (FS) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Jensen will have responsibility for the FS portion of the NRE mission area, which manages 193 million acres of public forestlands in the National Forest System and provides assistance to more than 10 million private forest landowners in this country.

Jensen has previously served as Executive Director of the Council of Western State Foresters/Western Forestry Leadership Coalition, Senior Forestry Advisor for the Western Governors Association, lead forestry advisor for the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture and lead policy analyst for the National Association of State Foresters.

NACD has worked with Jensen for many years on forestry issues and extended congratulations on his appointment.

USDA Sets Soybean Request for Referendum: The U.S. Department of Agriculture will offer soybean producers the opportunity to request a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order, as authorized under the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act. The Request for Referendum will be conducted at USDA's Farm Service Agency offices. **To be eligible to participate, producers must certify and provide documentation that shows they produced soybeans and paid an assessment on the soybeans during the period of January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2008.**

Beginning May 4, 2009, and continuing through May 29, 2009, producers may obtain a form by mail, fax, or in person from the Farm Service Agency county offices or via the internet at www.ams.usda.gov/ismarketingprograms.

Individual producers and other producer entities may request a referendum at the county FSA office where their administrative farm records are maintained. For the producer not participating in FSA programs, the opportunity to request a referendum will be provided at the county FSA office where the producer owns or rents land. **Completed forms and supporting documentation must be returned to the appropriate county FSA office by fax or in person no later than close of business May 29, 2009; or if returned by mail, must be postmarked by midnight May 29, 2009, and received in the county FSA office by close of business on June 5, 2009.**

USDA will conduct a referendum if at least 10 percent of the nation's 589,182 soybean producers support a referendum. Not more than one-fifth of the producers who support having a referendum can be from any one state.

For more information, contact a local FSA office, the Marketing Programs Branch (202-720-1115) or via the internet at www.ams.usda.gov/ismarketingprograms.

SWCS Announces Date for 2009 Annual Conference: Join SWCS July 11-15 in Dearborn, Michigan for the 64th annual international conference of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. This year's theme is **Delivering Conservation Today and Tomorrow**. The conference includes workshops, concurrent sessions, symposia, posters, plenary sessions, and technical tours designed to raise the awareness of conference participants to recent developments in the science and art of natural resource conservation and environmental management. The 2009 conference will take place at the Dearborn Hyatt – just west of Detroit and minutes from the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport. Visit the SWCS website at the following link for online information and conference registration: <http://www.swcs.org/>.



State & Local News

Rancher Wins \$17,000 In Weed Spraying Lawsuit: Carl "Kip" Mortenson had to prove his cattle were chemical free for three years to have his beef certified as organic. This also meant that their feed had to be free of chemicals. In 2005 Mortenson started the certification process, arranging with the County Weed Board to hand-pull weeds on his 10,000-acre ranch near Choateau. The county sprayed weeds along a county road that cuts through the ranch in 2006 after a neighbor spotted weeds. The county said Mortenson failed to meet his obligation to keep weeds in check. According to records, the county sprayed again in 2007, while Mortenson and the county were engaged in a legal battle over the 2006 spraying. During the summer of 2008 a judge ordered the county to stop spraying weeds along the 3.5 mile road right-of-way. Mortenson ended up moving his cattle to a 1,300-acre section of land away from the county road and fed them hay to keep his organic certification on track.

After a three-day trial before District Judge Nels Swandal of Park County, the jury found the county grossly negligent and awarded \$17,410 to Mortenson.

From an article in the 04/24/09 edition of *The Billings Gazette*

We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

-Aldo Leopold

An Editorial on the Effect of 'Low-Carbon Diets' on the Environment by William Henning, Emeritus Professor of Animal and Food Science, Penn State University, University Park, Pa.

Why the shift in scrutiny from our use of fossil fuels to the carbon footprint of our food? USA TODAY's article *Eating can be energy-efficient, too* repeated the fashionable claim that switching to a "low-carbon diet" would make a meaningful reduction in a person's carbon footprint. (http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/environment/2009-04-21-carbon-diet_N.htm)

Yet the Environmental Protection Agency reports that all U.S. agriculture, including livestock and crops, accounts for only 6% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. I find the article seriously in conflict with this report. (<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/downloads06/06Agriculture.pdf>)

The experts cited in USA TODAY's article claim to understand the impact of animal agriculture on carbon emissions, yet they ignore how tightly intertwined our animal and crop production systems are.

For example, how will we replace livestock manure used to fertilize our crops without resorting to fossil fuel-derived fertilizers? What happens to feeds that are unsuitable for humans and the use of byproduct feeds? And, knowing that 85% of U.S. grazing land isn't suitable for crop production, do we know if we can support ourselves on the cropland that remains? What gases are produced in the decomposition of the unused plants and in crops such as rice?

Advocating the seemingly easy and convenient solution of low-carbon diets to solve the environment dilemma might be tempting, but have we assessed the nutritional impact for reducing our major sources of balanced proteins in children?

Environmentally conscious consumers should continue to enjoy lean meat with confidence, knowing they are doing the right thing for their bodies and for the environment.

Posted in the 04/30/09 edition of USA Today

U.S. Department of the Interior Making an Investment in Montana's Water Conservation: Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar was in Helena recently to announce that Montana's fish and wildlife will receive \$3 million in Recovery Act projects.

The projects include:

- \$630,000 to the National Bison Range to replace the Failed Mission Creek West Bridge
- \$550,000 to the Hailstone National Wildlife Refuge to remediate the Hailstone Reservoir from salinity contamination
- \$249,000 for the Ennis Fish Hatchery to install a photo voltaic system expected to generate up to 75 percent of the station's energy use
- \$540,000 to the Creston Fish Hatchery to rehabilitate hatchery building and property, replacing asbestos siding, installing new energy efficient window, replacing the roof among other maintenance
- \$200,000 to Red Rock National Wildlife Refuge to replace the Sparrow Pond Trail Bridge and repair or replace the Elk Lake Road kiosk and the Refuge shop building.
- Other projects in Montana include \$120,000 for the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge; \$406,000 for the Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge; \$111,000 for the Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge; \$50,000 for the Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge; and \$22,000 for Bowdoin.

The funding is part of a major investment from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in more than 770 projects nationwide through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to build visitor centers, improve infrastructure and bolster conservation at national wildlife refuges and hatcheries. These projects represent needs identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through its capital planning process.

From an article by Alana Listoe, in the 04/27/09 edition of *the Independent Record*



Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar (middle) announces \$3 million for Montana's fish and wildlife in Recovery Act projects during a press conference Sunday morning at the Capitol with Sen. Jon Tester (left) and Gov. Brian Schweitzer.

(Independent Record ALANA LISTOE)

Roger Lange Puts Madison Valley's Famed Sun Ranch on the Block: The spectacular 18,500-acre Sun Ranch in Montana's Madison Valley, is now on the market for \$55 million. This property has been at the heart of an ambitious conservation development program created by owner Roger Lang.

The listing boasts the Sun Ranch as a "an awe-inspiring masterpiece of nature representing one of the last remaining balanced ecosystems in North America" that "sustains an abundant variety of wildlife including elk, moose, grizzly and black bear, mule and whitetail deer, mountain goats, big horn sheep, wolverines, mountain lions, and pronghorn antelope." The property is a primary migratory passage-way for elk and antelope entering and leaving Yellowstone National Park and the listing estimates that 4,000 elk winter on the ranch.



Lang had managed the property to allow development, wildlife and agriculture to co-mingle. He stressed that he is a true believer in "market-driven conservation" and would not have sold Sun Ranch now if the easements - which apply to all future owners - had not been in place. He said the Sun Ranch Institute, which does research in support of conservation development, would continue to operate as in the past.

CALENDAR

June – August 2009

- June 2 & 3 ~ MACD Spring Board Meeting in Havre
- June 15 thru 17, Northern Plains Region Leaders Meeting, Bismarck, North Dakota, contact deb-boqar@nacdn.net, 303-988-1893
- June 11 thru 13 ~ Montana Stockgrowers Association 125th Anniversary Celebration, Miles City, for more information visit <http://www.mtbeef.org/>
- June 14 thru 16 ~ Western Governors Association Annual Meeting, Park City, Utah, for more information visit <http://www.westgov.org/>
- June 14 thru 17 ~ RC&D 2009 National Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico, for more information visit <http://www.rcdnet.org/nationalconference.php>
- June 15 – 17 ~ Montana Range Days, Miles City, for more information visit <http://cartercd.org/MRD%20page%201.htm>
- June 29 thru July 1 ~ AWRA Summer Specialty Conference, *Adaptive Management of Water Resources II*, Snowbird Ski & Summer Resort in Snowbird, UT
- July 1 ~ Begin thinking about resolutions from your CD
- July 11 thru 15 ~ SWCS Annual Conference, Dearborn, Michigan, for more information http://www.swcs.org/en/conferences/2009_annual_conference/
- July 12 thru 17 ~ Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp, Lubrecht Experimental Forest, Greenough, for more information visit <http://www.mnryc.org/>
- July 27 thru 31 ~ DNRC Range Camp at Cane Ridge West camp near Lincoln, for more information visit <http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/cardd/camps/rangecamp/default.asp> or contact Heidi Olbert (406-444-6619, holbert@mt.gov) or Chris Evans (406-449-5000 ext. 112, lccd@mt.net).
- August 1 ~ Resolutions due to Area Meeting Hosts
- August 2 thru 8 ~ National Envirothon Competition, Asheville North Carolina
- August 14 thru 16 ~ Montana Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Lewistown

(Continued from page 1)

each building with his collection. The hassle was well worth the inconvenience. Quite often there were visible signs of interest each time Don offered the agates and used the word "Yellowstone." The words "Missouri River" conjured up a similar effect on the city dwellers. Many spoke of their visits to Montana and the good memories they took home.

We also brought a supply of cloth grocery bags to distribute at each meeting. The bags are labeled with "Montana Conservation Districts." Although not as popular as Don's gifts, the bags made an impression on many that Districts were looking at a broad definition of conservation.

Most of the people we met with help make the decisions that guide the direction of natural resource conservation policies and programs in the USA. Our sparsely populated state has specific situations and needs that are not evident unless we make it so. For example, riparian conservation in the northern Great Plains has limitations of weather and moisture and soils that need to be accommodated in rules that govern programs created for any conservation programs established to address river issues. Similarly, Montana may be able to adapt certain practices used in grazing regimes from Oklahoma, but a cookie cutter approach will not apply.

One of the most interesting observations came from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Conservation Districts and Watershed Groups are seen by them as entrepreneurial, seeking out and choosing from a menu of federal, state, local, and private conservation programs to accomplish a wide variety of work. OMB noted that federal agencies have a tendency to focus on their particular program(s), and sometimes fail to recognize the mosaic of programs available to support conservation values. Without this understanding, program design and implementation requirements may not function at optimal level.

One of the themes that we pushed was the idea of local input, leadership, and inclusion. We followed the lead from the Governor's Office when he asked the USDA Forest Service to consider placing some of their trees under the care of the state. We asked that FSA consider placing CREP under the auspices of MACD. In addition, we asked if the feds would consider placing certain grazing allotments with local Conservation Districts. These ideas were not outright rejected by the



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Please send your thoughts as to how to improve *The Montana Conservationist* to jtiberi@macdnet.org

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staff we met with, and we will continue to pursue these ideas.

There was considerable interest from the Secretary of the Interior's Office to hold a session in Montana this year to address "Cooperating Agencies" – what that means, what each brings to the table, and how that works. Federal, state, and local agencies, as well as NGOs and individuals, are in this together, making cooperation perhaps the highest value in achieving success.

At the end of each meeting we invited participants to visit Montana this summer. The two river councils are discussing a joint field trip at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers. This may be an appropriate venue for the visit.

We left with the impression that the stars are lining up for natural resource conservation in Montana. Thanks to the years of work by our Congressional Delegation, the Governor's Office, the Conservation Districts, state and federal agency people, NGOs, and the work of many others in the Montana conservation community, good connections have been established. Many of the key players have direct connections to, interests in, and support for Montana. The participants on this trip think that Montana is well positioned to make measurable strides in natural resource conservation in the years ahead. The focus of that progress is an item for discussion that we hope all of you will contribute to.

A more detailed report on the specifics of the visit is being prepared.

