



MACD and SWCDM Reports Spring 2018

If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.

– Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672, early Colonial America writer and poet)

MACD Highlights

MACD Strategic Planning: MACD underwent Strategic Planning February 22-23 with 10 Board members, all committee chairs, and executive staff participating in this important process. Blake Christensen from MSU's Local Government Center facilitated the planning. Major outcomes of the planning included development of a *Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals* for MACD and a preliminary outline of needed strategies and actions to implement the Plan. The MACD Board of Directors approved the *Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals* on the March 12th board meeting call, and these were emailed to districts for feedback. The board discussed received feedback on the April 9th board call, and will be continuing to discuss priority strategies and actions and timelines for implementation at the Spring Board Meeting June 12-13 in Helena and in conjunction with the hiring of a new Executive Director (see below).

Executive Director Transition: Elena Evans announced her resignation as Executive Director the week following the board's Strategic Planning process in late February. Since that time, the board, staff, and partners have been working hard to fill the Executive Director position in a timely manner while also maintaining the momentum that came out of strategic planning process. While these events were not planned to coincide, it does provide an excellent opportunity for the board to work with the new Executive Director on prioritizing actions and developing an implementation schedule for the Strategic Plan.

An ad hoc Hiring Committee was formed in March to help with the recruitment and selection of candidates for the Executive Director position. The Hiring Committee will make a hiring recommendation to the MACD Board of Directors, likely in late May/early June. The full MACD Board of Directors will have an opportunity to meet final candidates on June 11th at the Spring Board Meeting in Helena, and will then select the final candidate for the position. The anticipated start date for the new Executive Director is late June/early July. Please direct any questions regarding the hiring process to MACD President Mark Suta, Hiring Committee Chair, or Ann McCauley, Interim ED/Hiring Committee Coordinator.

Convention 2018 Planning: Save the Date! MACD's 2018 Annual Convention is set for November 13-16th in Billings at the Billings Hotel and Convention Center. Area 1 Districts are hosting with a theme of "A Stitch in Time." Monthly convention planning committee calls are underway, and it's setting up to be a great Convention. More information about Convention will be coming this summer.

Update to MACD's Website: MACD staff seized the opportunity of announcing the Executive Director position to spruce up our website at www.macdnet.org. We are still working on content for certain pages and had a couple hiccups during the site conversion, but overall we feel this website better reflects who we and districts are and what we do. We hope you agree. Please take a few minutes to check out the new website and let us know your thoughts – please send any comments to Ann at ann@macdnet.org. A couple MACDnet.org features to check out:

- [Resolutions Library](#) – Kate developed a really nice 'Resolutions Library) that lists all MACD resolutions back to 2003. Not all years have the full resolutions listed, but it is a nice archive of recent resolutions to date.
- Events and Outreach – See the Conservation Calendar for listings of all things conservation going on around the state. Also, as the dates get closer, we'll be posting info and registration for Area Meetings and Convention on the website. Info on [2018 Poster Contest here](#) – Note: Posters are due to MACD Office by June 1.

Upcoming Events

- **NACD Northern Plains Meeting – June 4th-6th in Charlo.** More info here: <http://northernplains.macdnet.org/>
- **MACD's Spring Board Meeting – June 12th -13th in Helena at the Capitol.** (June 11th is for MACD Board of Directors only). And, of course, this event includes our Annual BBQ catered by Bad Betty's BBQ on Tuesday, June 12th starting at 5 pm at the MACD Office (rain location TBD). Mark your calendars for this fun event to unwind with fellow partners in conservation.

SWCDM Highlights

SWCDM ByLaws Update: A By-Laws Committee was formed last summer to work on updating both MACD and SWCDM's bylaws documents. With the adoption of MACD's bylaws by the membership at the 2017 Convention in Bozeman, the committee has been working on SWCDM's bylaws update over the winter and spring. A draft of SWCDM's revised By Laws is planned for board review at the Spring Board Meeting in Helena.

SWCDM Audit: A Request for Proposals for audit services was sent out to a number of local firms in late February to conduct a full audit of SWCDM's financial and operating procedures. The proposal was awarded to Douglas Wilson and Company out of Great Falls, and they will be conducting the audit in May with a preliminary draft available for board review at the Spring Board Meeting in Helena. We also plan to have a representative from Douglas Wilson brief the

board in person on any recommendations or findings of the audit. This audit is a big undertaking for our small office, and I would like to thank Melissa Downing and Jessica Makus in the Helena Office and Shirley Parrott, Treasurer of the Bridger Plant Materials Center Board of Managers, for their diligence and attention to detail throughout the year on all of our reporting, finances, and record keeping activities that will ensure we have a smooth and successful audit.

Programs Highlights and Upcoming Events:

- *Wrap-up of Watershed Restoration Planning Project:* Launched in 2015, this project worked with multiple organizations and programs, including five conservation districts and the Big Sky Watershed Corps and Watershed Resource Specialist programs, to develop five Watershed Restoration Plan documents for watershed basins in western Montana. With the completion of this project, all major watersheds in the western part of the state now have an approved Plan in place.
- *SGI Range and Biology Conservationists:* Three of our four SGI conservationists attended NRCS's Conservation Boot Camp in Lincoln, NE this March/April. This training provided them with the full background of the nine planning steps NRCS uses in their programmatic implementation. The whole crew of four will be heading to Boise this May for the annual SGI/Sage Grouse Workshop. This is a great opportunity for staff to learn from and network with others working in the sage grouse arena around the west. Then, it will be full days of field work as each of have full summers of field inventory and contracting planned.
- *Irrigation Water Management sign-ups:* Sign-ups and renewals for irrigators participating in an NRCS irrigation water management program for 2018 will begin in February.
- *Ranching for Rivers Call for Applications:* *Ranching for Rivers* cost-share program to help landowners develop riparian pastures through fencing, off-site watering, water gaps, etc. will have another Call for Applications this spring.
- *Riparian Grazing Management Workshops:* Jessica is working with partners at DNRC and the Missouri River Conservation Districts Council to bring a series of one-day workshops about riparian grazing in Thompson Falls, Helena, and Deer Lodge June 26th-28th. Registration is \$15 in advance, \$20 day of. It should be a great day of learning – registration and more info [here](#) or by contacting Jessica at jessica@macdnet.org.
- *2017 Annual Report:* We are planning on having copies of our 2017 Annual Report available in both hardcopy and digital format in time for the Spring Board Meeting in mid-June. This report will highlight the many activities SWCDM staff and partners are doing to support and serve conservation districts and our shared goal of advancing commonsense conservation in Montana.