

THE MONTANA CONSERVATIONIST

Madison and Ruby Valley Conservation Dis- tricts announces their 1st annual photo con- test:

Do you have pictures of Montana's beautiful Madison and Ruby Valleys? If you do, this is your opportunity to have your photos displayed for the public, and have them used in future publications by your local Conservation District. The contest is open to all photographers, and you may submit as many photos in each of the four categories as you would like. The four categories are:

- ✓ landscapes
- ✓ conservation and agriculture
- ✓ water
- ✓ wildlife.



These photographs will be displayed on the Madison or Ruby Valley Conservation District Facebook pages for public voting. Winners from the four categories in each valley will receive a gift card to a local business and the overall winners from each valley will be awarded two tickets to the annual Madison & Ruby Valley Conservation Districts Banquet on April 26th. **Photo submissions are due April 4th, and Facebook voting will begin April 7th.** To enter submit your Madison Valley photos to [Ethan Kunard](#) your Ruby Valley photos to [Rebecca Ramsey](#). Please include the in your email your name, phone number, photo category, and location where the photo was taken.

In This Issue

Page 2	WET Water Cycle Education Water Words That Work Webinars for Household Well Owners
Page 3	Precipitation and Temperature Forecasts Save the Monarchs Idaho Inspections Stations Stop First Fouled Boat of The Season Fracking Chemicals - To Reveal or Not to Reveal
Page 4	Secretary Jewell's Visit To Montana EPA's "Fix a Leak Week" Board of Environmental Review on Nutrient Levels
Page 5	DNRC Celebrates Women's History Month U.S. Forest Service on Wilderness Conservation
Page 6	Proposed Private Land Exchange What was Jeannette Rankin Doing April 1917? State's Wolf Hunt Stats New Bionic Leaf = Fuel
Page 7	Latest in Eco-Friendly Washing Machines What's Happening in Our Galaxy?
Page 8	Winter 2013 Tough on Ducks The Energy Grid
Page 8	Calendar



Montana Water- shed Coordination Council (MWCC) is

available to assist watershed groups in eastern Montana that have limited capacity to fulfill conservation goals:

This assistance is thanks to a partnership with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). MWCC will provide underserved watershed groups with capacity building plans, tailored to each group's specific needs and they are looking for "takers." [Click here](#) for information about how to apply for assistance or visit [MWCC's website](#). Questions about this opportunity may be directed to [Kristin Sewak](#).

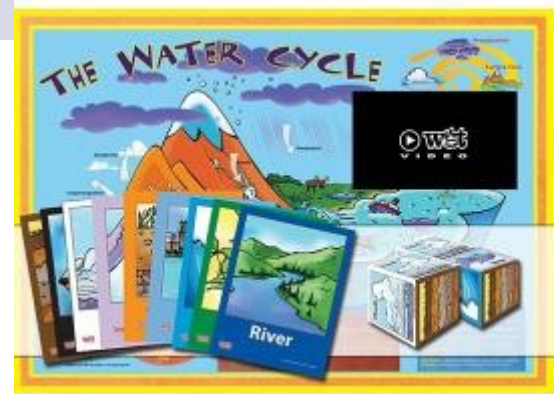


THE MONTANA CONSERVATIONIST

OF INTEREST TO CONSERVATION DISTRICTS:

Project WET simplifies the water cycle for educators teaching children between ages 8 and 12 years of age:

This comprehensive [Water Cycle Teaching Resource Pack](#) includes the popular "Incredible Journey" Activity, nine Station Markers and Activity Dice, colorful Water Cycle Poster and a Screencast to give educators the background information needed for teaching the water cycle. Visit the [Water Education Store](#) to purchase the [Water Cycle Teaching Resource Pack](#) and all the other resources available to help bring water into the classroom.



Your input is needed to make our newsletter better and provide feedback to MACD :

Think the newsletter needs to look a different way? Have thoughts about how to improve the newsletter? Want to have your events on the MACD website? We appreciate your time and input and look forward to gathering it via the link below:

[MACD Services and Newsletter Survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MACDServices) <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MACDServices>

Bylaw and resolution input is needed to improve the process:

The bylaws and resolution process could be changed to improve them. Please contact your area representative to provide ideas. Not sure who your area representatives are? Find out [here](#).

National Groundwater Association announces free webinars for household water well owners:

The webinars are scheduled for April 2, 9 and 17 and are described below (including links to register to attend):



Groundwater Protection: How You Can Protect Your Well Water Quality

April 2, 1 p.m. Eastern Time ~ [Click here](#) to register

Find out the Common causes of preventable groundwater contamination and actions that can be taken to protect groundwater-supplied drinking water from contamination.

Water Well Maintenance: Where Do You Begin?

April 9th, 1 p.m. Eastern Time ~ [Click here](#) to register

Attendees will learn how to stay on top of maintenance needs to protect water quality.

Water Well Flooding: What Do You Do?

April 17th, 1 p.m. Eastern Time ~ [Click here](#) to register

Attendees will learn what to do and not to do if their well is infiltrated by flood waters and how best to restore water quality and the functionality of the well system.

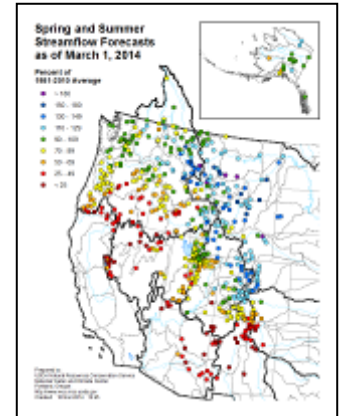
Household well owners with questions about their water well system, water quality, or well construction can contact the [National Ground Water Association](#) information hotline (**855-420-9355**). The Association's [website](#) also has other free online well owner lessons and webinars.

[In This Issue](#)

THE MONTANA CONSERVATIONIST

The latest precipitation, temperature, and snowpack conditions report:

The [National Water and Climate Center](#) publishes a weekly report on this topic for the western U.S. along with a national drought summary. In the latest report, for the "2014 Water Year" that began on October 1, 2013, only central Montana, all of Wyoming, and northern Colorado are experiencing surpluses. [Click here](#) for the snowpack and drought report. While recent snowfalls increased snowpack in the northern half of the West there was little relief for the dry southern half, including California, which is experiencing a record drought. This is according to data from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in its third [2014 water supply forecast](#).



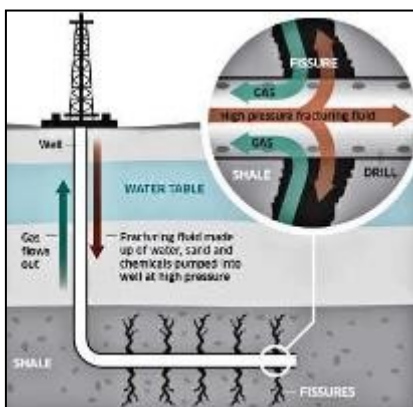
Xerces Society and Monarch Joint Venture working together to conserve western monarchs:

Volunteer efforts reveal that since 1997, there has been a decline of over 80% in the number of monarchs overwintering at many sites. An article in a previous edition of **TMC** talked about the decline in numbers of monarchs migrating to the forests in central Mexico. The partners conservation measures ensure maintaining native milkweed habitats across butterfly's breeding range. The Xerces Society created a database of over 7,000 milkweed locations that

identify potential monarch breeding grounds and prioritize conservation efforts. Anyone interested can report milkweed patches through Xerces' [milkweed survey](#)! Another way to help is to plant native milkweed and nectar plants for monarchs—Xerces [Milkweed Seed Finder](#) is available to find nurseries that carry native milkweed seed.

Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) intercepts its first mussel-fouled boat of the season:

Watercraft inspection stations opened in February. The intercepted boat had spent time in Lake Powell in the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Lake Powell, operated by the National Park service, was recently identified as being infested with quagga and zebra mussels. The National Park Service still does not require decontamination of watercraft leaving its facilities with mussel infestations. This indicates that potentially infested boats are being transported outside of the traditional boating season, which is a concern for Pacific Northwest states, including Montana.



What's in the water? Hydraulic fracturing has its proponents and its opponents. In recent months there has been a push for oil companies that use this process to disclose the chemicals they combine with the water. Oil companies are not required to disclose this information, considering their chemical mixes to be a "trade secret." The concern is not knowing what the chemical are and, therefore, what potential danger they may pose to groundwater. The US Energy Department recently recommended that oil and gas companies begin practicing full disclosure. [FracFocus.org](#), has been established for companies to disclose the additives they use in their drilling process; including the options for trade secret exemptions. [Read More](#)

[In This Issue](#)

THE MONTANA CONSERVATIONIST

NEWS FROM OUR PARTNERS:

Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Senator Tester Visit Montana

Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Senator Tester discussed a range of issues at an event sponsored by the Burton K. Wheeler Center at MSU. The discussion broached a range of topics and is covered in this article. Elena Evans, MACD Executive Director, was in attendance and asked what both Secretary Jewell and Senator Tester's thoughts were on the designation of future national monuments in Montana were. Both agreed that local support would be needed before such designations occurred.



Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense program celebrated Fix a Leak Week March 17 through 21.



Easy-to-fix household leaks account for more than one trillion gallons of water wasted each year. That's equal to the annual household water use of more than 11 million homes. In the race against water waste, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) urged people to fix household water leaks during the sixth annual Fix a Leak Week. If you have a pesky leak that you just keep

on dealing with rather than fixing it, think of this: fixing household water leaks can save homeowners about 10 percent on their water bills. If that's not incentive to pull out those tools and take a trip to a hardware store, I don't know what is! To learn more about finding and fixing leaks, visit [EPA's WaterSense](#) website.

Montana Board of Environmental Review opens for public comment its proposed criteria for maximum nitrogen and phosphorous levels in the state's streams and rivers.

By legislative mandate, the standards are accompanied by a rule-making component from the Department of Environmental Quality that outlines how these nitrogen and phosphorous standards will be met over time. The plan governing the state's surface waters is **open to public comment through April 1.**

Public hearings on the proposed adoption of rules are planned March 24 in Room 111 of the Metcalf Building at 1520 E. Sixth Ave., Helena. The DEQ hearing starts at 10 a.m., the BER hearing at 2 p.m., with an informal session from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Submit comments orally at the hearing or in writing before April 1, 2014 to the Department of Environmental Quality, 1520 East Sixth Avenue, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901. Comments on the BER nutrient criteria component can be mailed to the above address, c/o Elois Johnson or emailed to: ejohnson@mt.gov. Comments on the DEQ nutrient standards variances should be mailed to the above address, c/o Carrie Greeley or emailed before the April 1, 2014 deadline to: deqwqpad-min@mt.gov.

Visit [DEQ's website](#) for more information about the base numeric nutrient standards, the proposed rulemaking, and the statutes governing Montana water quality.

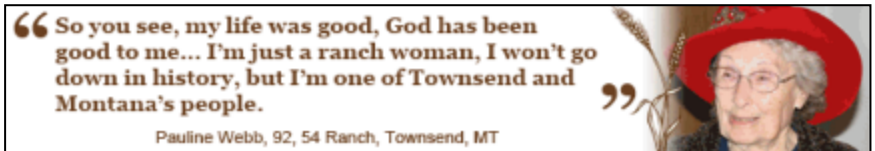
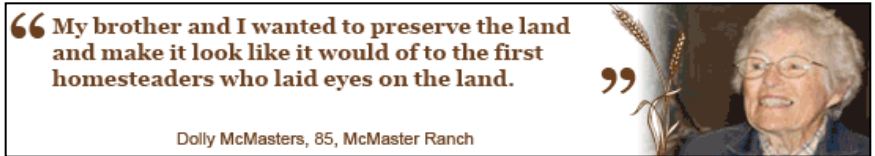
[In This Issue](#)

THE MONTANA CONSERVATIONIST

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation's (DNRC) March 8 "From the Ground Up, Montana Women and Agriculture, Oral History Project" event was a huge success: The event, honoring Women's History Month, was attended by more than 150 people. Those unable to attend in person can [click here](#) to watch the event on YouTube. [From the Ground Up, Montana Women & Agriculture, Oral History Project](#) pays tribute to farm and ranch women by preserving their stories of life on the land.

Presentations given by Montana ranch women included:

- Glenna Stucky, Avon
- Arlene Pile, Big Timber
- Esther McDonald, Philipsburg
- Dolly McMaster, Townsend
- Pauline Webb, Townsend



Serenading those in attendance were Judy Williams and Carla Ahern of the Divine Bovines out of Townsend.

Linda Brander, DNRC Resource Specialist, would like to thank the many people that contributed to the success of this event:

- DNRC leaders John Tubbs, Ray Beck, and Laurie Zeller who have supported Brander's efforts to develop and grow this project
- Pam Bucy, Commissioner, Department of Labor & Industry who moderated the panel
- Montana Historical Society Staff: Bruce Whittenberg, Kirby Lambert, Katie White, Information Desk Personnel and the volunteers
- Montana History Foundation
- John Grassy, DNRC's public relations expert who helped promote this event at the state and local levels
- Ross Campbell (DNRC) for his graphic design expertise
- Montana Stock Growers Association
- The four CD administrators who secured the speakers and promoted the event in their communities: Denise Thompson, Broadwater; Gelda Halverson, Sweet Grass; Karen Peterson, Granite, and Susie Johnson, Deer Lodge Valley
- Conservation Districts in general and the following in particular who have been completing oral histories since 2012: Broadwater; Deer Lodge Valley; Eastern Sanders; Flathead; Glacier; Granite; Hill; Little Beaver; Madison; Meagher; Sweet Grass, and Treasurer.
- Big Sky Watershed Corps Members: Ali Bratton, Taylor Fridrich, and Brandin Krempasky



The U.S. Forest Service marshals on with wilderness conserva-

tion: As part of the ["Room to Roam" Wilderness Issues Lecture Series](#), Chief Tom Tidwell said, "Once you use wilderness for something else, for our generation or future generations, it's gone." The Wilderness Act was founded on the idea of conserving the nation's wild country. This mission, according to Chief Tidwell, will continue even though there are fewer opportunities to do so. Wilderness is a hot topic in Washington. As part of his lecture, Tidwell stated that on one hand are those who insist on "clean" wilderness bills that only involve additional acreage added to the system, and the other hand that combines new wilderness with new logging or recreation compromises. [Read More](#)

[In This Issue](#)

THE MONTANA CONSERVATIONIST

STATE AND LOCAL NEWS

Texas businessmen seeking additional land exchanges: The businessmen own ranches in the state and are offering to give the Bureau of Land Management 5,000 acres of private land in return for receiving public parcels within their holdings. The proposed exchange has led to an opposing petition organized by sportsmen groups and support from a conservation group. The parcels of land are located in Fergus and Blaine counties. Of particular interest, and causing most of the controversy, is the 2,700-acre Durfee Hills in Fergus County that has fly-in access. [Read More](#)



A bit of Montana History: An historic vote was called for the first weeks of April 1917. That vote was whether or not to declare war on the German Empire. After a President Woodrow Wilson asked a special joint session of Congress for the declaration, war was declared on April 6, 1917 and the United



States officially entered World War I. While that was a pretty major event in our Nation's history, what made this vote historic was that there was a woman in Congress, and she voted against the war. [Jeannette Rankin](#), the first woman to be voted into Congress, took up her official duties November 1916. She was a life-long pacifist and one of fifty members of Congress that voted against U.S. entry into World War I. Rankin was re-elected to Congress in 1940. After the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, she was the only member of Congress that voted against declaring war on Japan. (Picture courtesy of Wikipedia)

Charles M. Russel NWR Community Working Group –Monitoring Workshop for Healthy Habitats :

The group is comprised of members of the World Wildlife Fund, National Wildlife Federation, CMR Staff, BLM Staff, Montana FWP Staff, Montana Wilderness Society, the Missouri River Conservation District Council, conservation district members, grazing permittees, local residents and those representing the interests of recreation , sportsmen, and just a love of Montana's great outdoors and the CMR.

The latest focus of the group is on rangeland and wildlife habitat monitoring and how that influences the progress of the CMR toward meeting its habitat management goals. Please join them for presentations by experts in the field of grazing management and animal behavior at their next meeting in Circle, MT on April 17th. The group will host a monitoring workshop in early summer where at least 3 different monitoring methods will be demonstrated. The methods will be discussed as to their feasibility for implementation on the CMR and surrounding landscape, their value in providing quantitative data and their relevance to the goals of the CMR.

For more information please contact Rachel Frost mrcdc@macdnet.org or visit the [MRCDC website](#).

[In This Issue](#)

<http://www.macdnet.org/>

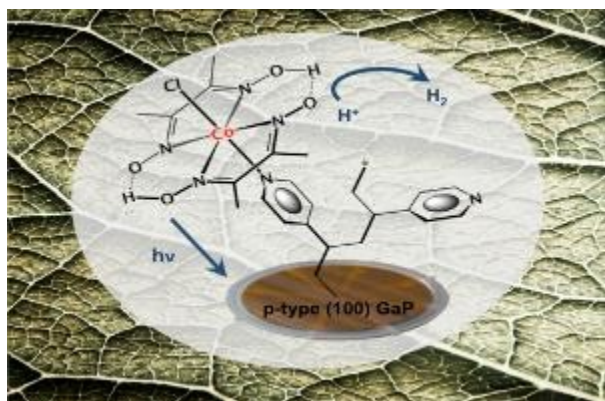
PAGE 6

THE MONTANA CONSERVATIONIST

CONSERVING PLANET EARTH

New bionic leaf can convert energy from sunlight into an energy-dense fuel:

That's the claim researchers from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory are making. This new bionic leaf imitates the photosynthetic process of plants. While the concept and technology is not necessary new, the Berkeley project puts a new twist on it that could provide more efficiency. Berkeley's process uses a photovoltaic cell to generate electricity directly from sunlight. A chemical reaction is deployed that stores solar energy in the form of hydrogen, which can then be used in a hydrogen fuel cell to generate electricity. [Click here](#) to find out more and, if you're brave enough to try and read all the big scientific words that describe this new process!



Bionic leaf courtesy of Berkeley Lab.

British company, Xeros, working to revolutionize laundry day:

The next big thing in washing machines uses beads made with nylon or an equivalent polymer to help displace water, re-



move stains, and capture and store dirt. During testing, one set of beads effectively cleaned 500 loads of laundry. Once the beads are no longer a viable washing tool, they can be collected and recycled into other plastic goods such as car dashboards, according to Xeros. Xeros' machines are already being used in commercial laundries with great success. The next step is to roll the out to consumers some time in 2015.

[Read more](#)

If you think you've got problems . . . :

If you think you've got problems, check out what's happening in the [Corvus constellation](#) where two galaxies are on a collision course. But don't expect anything to happen during our lifetime. It will take about a hundred million years for them to actually collide with each other, but that doesn't mean there might not be some pre-fireworks. As the galaxies move closer to each other their gravity wells could start ripping the other galaxy apart, kicking up dust and gas that will begin to collide. The dark [dust pillars](#) mark massive [molecular clouds](#) being compressed during the [galactic encounter](#). The result is a rapid birth of millions of stars, some of which are gravitationally bound together forming [massive star clusters](#).



[In This Issue](#)

Calendar

March thru June 2014

THE MONTANA CONSERVATIONIST

March 24 ~ MACD Executive Committee Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

March 27 thru 27 ~ 15th Annual Association Of Montana Floodplain Managers Conference, Billings Hotel & Convention Center

April 1 ~ April Fool's Day

April 8 thru 10 ~ 2014 Montana Storm Water Conference, Billings, for more information visit Montana Watercourse

April 14 ~ MACD Conference Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

April 22 ~ CMR Working Group Meeting in Circle

April 22 ~ Earth Day

April 25 ~ Arbor Day

April 18 ~ Good Friday

April April 27 thru May 4 ~ NACD's Soil and Water Stewardship Week, visit NACD's website

April 28 ~ MACD Executive Committee Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

April 28 thru 29 ~ Montana Envirothon in Lewistown, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

May 12 ~ MACD Conference Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

May 11 ~ Mother's Day

May 17 ~ Armed Forces Day

May 26 ~ Memorial Day

May 27 (Tuesday) ~ MACD Executive Committee Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

June 3 & 4 ~ MACD Spring Board Meeting—Helena

June 9 ~ MACD Conference Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

June 15 ~ Father's Day

June 23 ~ MACD Executive Committee Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

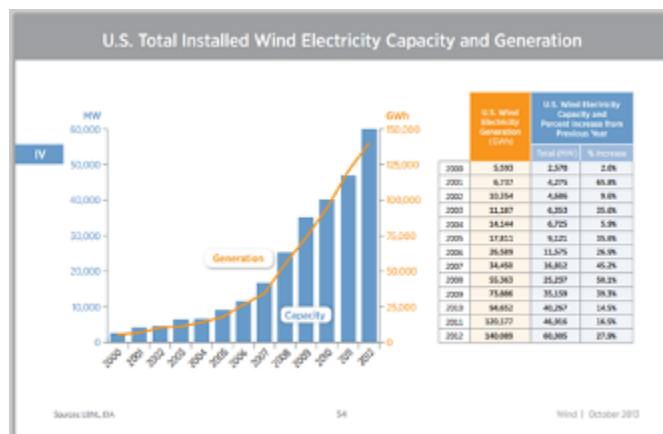
Winter's bitter cold takes its toll on fish-eating water-fowl:

The Niagara River corridor from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario is a winter haven for water birds. Unfortunately, there have been widespread reports of diving ducks and other waterfowl turning up dead by the hundreds. They're starving because they can't get to the minnows in the lakes due to ice covering. Toxicity analysis has also shown that some died from toxic levels of selenium as a result of living off of invasive zebra mussels, which filter toxins from the water and pass them up the food chain.



Most of the dead ducks are red-breasted mergansers that breed in northern Canada and Alaska and come to the Great Lakes region for the winter. Most years, there is enough thawing to provide breaks in the ice for the ducks to dive for minnows. This winter, ice has covered nearly 92.2% of the Great Lakes' surface area. The record of 94.7% was set in 1979. [Read More](#)

Check out the [U.S. Energy Information Administration's](#) website for find out more out the electric power





**1101 11th Avenue
Helena, MT 59601**

Phone: 406-443-5711

Fax: 406-443-0174

<http://www.macdnet.org/>

MONTANA CDs: LOCAL COMMON SENSE CONSERVATION

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

Unless specifically requested, **The Montana Conservationist** is not sent to CD Supervisors. MACD relies on District Administrators to forward **The Montana Conservationist** to the Board Chair, Supervisors, Associate Supervisors and CD Staff. Thank you.

The Montana Conservationist is made possible by a 223 Grant from DNRC