

THE MONTANA CONSERVATIONIST



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Montana Conservation

Month: Montana's conservation districts and watershed groups have designated August as [Montana Conservation Month](#). This is a statewide effort to tell the story of conservation work being carried out in communities across the state. Montana Conservation Month is the result of a resolution passed at the Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) annual conference last November. MACD represents Montana's 58 conservation districts, which are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level.



Recent polling suggests conservation issues play a role in which candidates Montana's registered voters support: The

University of Montana's

Crown of the Continent and Greater Yellowstone Initiative surveyed 500 registered voters to gauge opinions on public land debates. Of those surveyed, 86 percent said the candidates' support or lack of support toward conservation issues played a role in their voting. In addition, of those surveyed, more than two-thirds supported the North Fork Watershed Protection Act and the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act.

[Read More](#)

Congratulations to the American teams that took first and second place in the inaugural International Soil Judging Contest:

Thirteen teams from 10 countries competed to see who could best interpret soil in Korea. The hope is that the students' experiences in soil evaluation will lead them to careers in natural resource conservation, including those at Natural Resources Conservation Service. The picture shows the American competitors and coaches that included Tyler Witkowski, Caitlin Hodges, Bianca Peixoto, John Galbraith, Brian Maule, Nancy Kammerer, Julia Gillespie and Chris Baxter. [Read more.](#)



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OF INTEREST TO CONSERVATION DISTRICTS:

Field to Market® announces launch of a new agricultural supply chain program for U.S. commodity crops:

The Field to Market metrics and benchmarks developed over the past several years will become an important platform for measuring, promoting and reporting on continuous improvement in corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton, rice, potatoes, and other crops. These are in relation to seven sustainability indicators: land use, soil conservation, soil carbon, irrigated water use, water quality, energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. [Click here](#) for the full announcement and more information on Field to Market®.



Documentary filmmaker explores the ins and outs of the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act:

Controversy surrounding the Act has neighbors lining up on both sides of the fence along this 200 mile stretch of Montana. Alexandria Bombach's new film, "Common Ground", explores the meaning of the act through conversations with several Montana residents working and living in the area. Bombach's film was an official selection for the 2014 Mountain Film in the Telluride Festival. The act would establish protections for 400,000 acres, including some new wilderness and a conservation management area. Over the years, the legislation has seen strong support from many groups, as well as opposition from some ranchers fearful of

risking access to land they have traditionally used. Some conservation groups believe the bill does not do enough to protect the front. The act currently has the support of Senators Tester and Walsh. Representative Daines has not yet expressed his views on the issue. Those interested can [click here](#) to watch the film.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) announces end to sage grouse hunting across most of the state:

This decision was made to try and keep the game bird off the federal Endangered Species Act. Sage grouse populations are declining across 11 states due primarily to the loss of habitat. Hunting has not been considered a factor in the bird's declining population. However, in Montana, two-thirds of the sage grouse population is on private property where FWP has no or limited regulatory authority. Montana's sage grouse habitat is the second largest in the nation, with the second highest number of birds, and the longest hunting season in the region. FWP commissioners approved closing sage grouse hunting in all but six counties in southwest Montana and 14 counties in the north-central area. All of southeast Montana from Gallatin County to North Dakota would be closed. The season would also be shortened from 60 days to 30. Bag limits would remain two birds per day and four in total. Closures would be in effect until nesting surveys show sage grouse populations climbing above 45 percent of the birds' long-term average for three consecutive years. [Read More](#)



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Latest news in aquatic invasive species:

Montana News:

Hardin Inspection Station: Intercepted a potentially zebra/quagga mussel infested boat from Lake Erie (Ohio). Officials are decontaminating the boat at Gull Marine in Missoula.

Fort Peck Lake: Herbicide treatments to control Eurasian Watermilfoil are planned for five 1-acre plots in the dredge cuts below the dam beginning July 21.

Noxon and Cabinet Gorge: Pretreatment assessment of the aquatic plant community within proposed treatment areas is completed. Herbicide application is planned toward the latter part of July or first of August depending on water flow conditions.

Jefferson Slough and Upper Missouri River: MCC crews, county weed/conservation districts, Golden Sunlight mine employees, and volunteers removed Eurasian Watermilfoil from the upper 1.2 miles of the infestation in Jefferson Slough, in selected sites on the lower Jefferson River, and near Cottonwood Slough. Confluence Consulting and the TAC are developing/reviewing options for long-term control, and improving water flow for irrigators in Jefferson Slough.

Regional News and Events:

Idaho: [Click here](#) for news about the control of aquatic invasive species in the Pend Oreille basin.

Lake Tahoe: Inspectors stop quagga mussels, snails from entering the lake. [Read More](#)

National: Congress looks at [legislation](#) to streamline federal funding of invasive species programs. [Read More](#)

Utah: [Click here](#) for status of quagga/zebra mussel-infested and 'inconclusive' water bodies. Wildlife officials say invasive mussels threaten Utah's water supply. [Read more](#)

Zequanox Approved: Marrone Bio Invasions has announced that the EPA has approved zequanox for open water uses. <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/epa-approves-zequanoxr-for-invasive-mussel-control-in-open-water-2014-07-08> [B. Wiltshire]

USGS' map of zebra and quagga mussels distribution: Current map available [online](#).

Research:

Abstract on field study of interrelations between Dreissena polymorpha colonization and autotrophic periphyton development in a temperate floodplain lake

Review of aquatic plant [monitoring and assessment methods](#)

[Research paper](#) describes impacts of didymo on other organisms

Report on the "Selective Control of Eurasian Watermilfoil and Curlyleaf Pondweed in Noxon Rapids Reservoir, Montana Aquatic Herbicide Evaluations, 2010-2011" (Getsinger et al)

Montana Department of Agriculture launches its "Grown in Montana" magazine:

The magazine covers the state's wheat and barley farming, cattle ranching, local foods agriculture, and other topics affecting Montana's agriculture industry. The magazine will coordinate with Governor Bullock's Main Street Montana Project to help market Montana's agricultural products. The Department named the magazine after the "Grown in Montana" program run by the Department of Commerce. This program allows farmers and ranchers to register their locally grown products for marketing purposes.

[Read More](#)



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NEWS FROM OUR PARTNERS:

U.S. Department of Agriculture:

Releases Interim Rule for crop insurance:

The [Interim Rule](#) reflects the 2014 Farm Bill conservation compliance and regional sodsaver provisions. For the 2016 reinsurance year, a producer must file an AD-1026 for Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and wetlands; follow a conservation plan on HEL; not convert a wetland for the purposes of farming an annually tilled crop after February 7, 2014 (date Farm Bill went into effect with President's signature); and not plant an agriculture commodity on a wetland converted after February 7, 2014.

The Interim Rule also provides for a reduced subsidy for native sod converted to the production of an annual crop in Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota (regional sodsaver). Starting in the fall of 2014, producers who till native sod and plant an annual crop on that

land will see reductions in their crop insurance benefits during the first four years. Native sod is acreage that has never been tilled, or land which a producer cannot substantiate has ever been tilled for the production of a crop.

Seeking public's help in reporting sightings of Japanese beetles:

This pesky bug is highly destructive to grass roots and is very difficult and expensive to control. Japanese beetle grubs damage lawns, golf courses, and pastures. Adult beetles attack the foliage, flowers, or fruits of more than 300 different ornamental and agricultural plants.

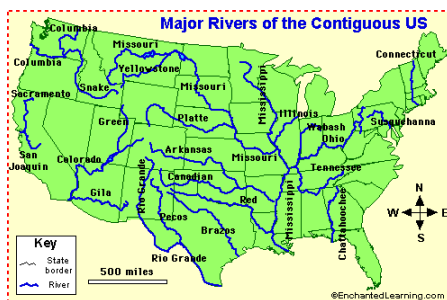
[Read More](#)



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

Addresses concerns and misconceptions about the proposed Clean Water Act rule.

The proposed rule, being referred to as "**Waters of the U.S.**" clarifies protection for streams and wetlands. EPA is providing the facts on how the proposed rule cuts through red tape to make normal farming practices easier while also ensuring that waters are clean for our health, communities, and the economy. Click on the links below to find out more:



- ✓ Know the facts and find infographics to share [here](#)
- ✓ View photos from EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy's recent visit to a Missouri farm [here](#)

- ✓ Read McCarthy's recent remarks to the Kansas City Agribusiness Council [here](#)

- ✓ Read a quick summary of the facts [here](#).

Releases tool to help communities with flood management:

The new tool is designed to help communities prepare for a flood event, handle the event, and then recover from it. The [Flood Resilience Checklist](#) offers strategies such as conserving land in flood-prone areas; directing new development to safer areas; and using green infrastructure approaches. The checklist was developed by Vermont as part of EPA's [Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program](#) (SGIA).



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

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Calendar

July—October 2014

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

August 11 ~ MACD Conference Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

August 25 ~ MACD Executive Committee Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

September 1 ~ Labor Day

September 8 ~ MACD Conference Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

September 9 ~ Grandparent's Day

September 22 ~ MACD Executive Committee Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

September 23 ~ Area VI Meeting, Hosted by Lewis & Clark CD in Helena, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

September 24 ~ Area IV Meeting, hosted by Carbon CD in Joliet, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

September 25 ~ Area II Meeting, hosted by Custer CD in Miles City, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

September 26 ~ Area I Meeting, hosted by Garfield CD in Jordan, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

September 30 ~ Area III Meeting, hosted by Cascade CD in Great Falls, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

October 1 ~ Area V Meeting, hosted by Lake CD in Polson, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**443-5711**)

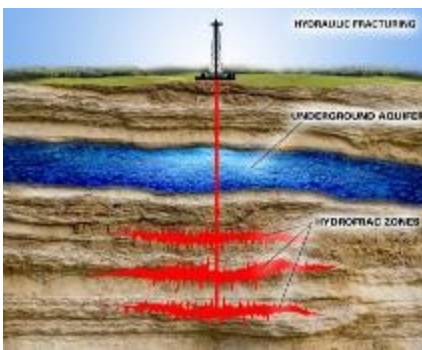
October 13 ~ Columbus Day

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

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

October 31 ~ Halloween

California restricts water use and begins charging higher fees for water use above restricted levels: Water restrictions are hitting all users; agricultural, private, and business, with some areas imposing restrictions that cut water use as much as 50%. Along with higher fees for those using water beyond the restricted levels, some areas have put inspectors in the field to monitor water usage. So far, Sacramento has imposed the harshest restrictions. Between January and mid-June 2014, 2,444 water violation notices were issued with repeat offenders receiving a fine. Fines can be waived if the violator attends a class on water conservation. Watering is allowed just two days per week and the city is offering homeowners up to \$1,000 to replace landscaping with vegetation that requires little water use.



Citizens of Denton, Texas set to vote on petition to outlaw hydraulic fracturing:

While the process has led to economic benefits there is also concern the chemicals used in the process could spread to water supplies, worsen air quality and even cause small earthquakes. Denton is not the first community to consider this

type of action, however, what happens in Denton could be an indicator for the future. In particular, can a community stand against the industry and still thrive economically? [Read More](#)



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



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