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Montana Association of Conservation District's (MACD) Irrigation Wa- ter Management Pro- gram enters its third year!

Sign up now for the 2014 irrigation season

Apply the technology and advantage of irrigation water management on your irrigated cropland. **Irrigation Water Management** will help you evaluate the effectiveness of irrigation equipment, calculate good water management decisions, and justify irrigation adjustments in your existing system.

MACD's team will work with irrigators to customize a management program specific to the watering requirements of their crops and soils.

Available tools include:

- ✓ "Checkbook" method to monitor and balance soil moisture in irrigated cropland.
- ✓ Flow meters to record instantaneous flow rates and total volume usage.
- ✓ Soil moisture sensors and meters to monitor soil water deficit.
- ✓ Soil moisture data loggers to record soil moisture history throughout the growing season.

MACD's **Irrigation Water Management Service** complements the financial and technical assistance provided by the NRCS EQIP program. The sign-up period for the 2014 growing season is now open. For more information visit [MACD's website](#) or send an email to the [Irrigation Water Management Team](#).



Fall Colors: Thank you to David Jones for sharing this photograph of a tree-lined street in Kalispell with [Jamie Kirby](#) of DNRC's Urban & Community Forestry. Kirby is always looking for these types of pictures so don't forget your camera when you're outdoors enjoying our urban forests.



OF INTEREST TO CONSERVATION DISTRICTS:



Fall: The Other Growing Season: Thank you to Sunni Heikes-Knapton, Madison Watershed Coordinator with the Madison Conservation District, for providing the following article on the importance of this season to conservationists.

During the different seasons of the year, your local conservation leaders do a wide range of activities. Winter is for planning- developing projects and securing necessary support. Spring is for startup- finalizing details and logistics. Summer is the rush- working on the ground while getting people out to see and learn from what is being done. All of these tasks are important, but difficult to do without the important period of growth that occurs in the fall.

Fall growth seems like an odd phrase, but it describes a renewal of energy and increased development for conservation leaders. We take time during this season to participate in local or state-wide meetings with other conservation leaders. These meetings help to lift the spirits and broaden the ideas; essentially growing the ability to effectively work in our areas.

Surrounded by our peers, we learn from their successes (and sometimes their failures), while getting a clear picture of how our local work fits into a bigger picture. We are reminded that when projects are successful in a small area, there is a ripple effect that benefits neighboring regions.

In these settings, hard work is recognized and celebrated. We talk about the projects and people in our areas that inspire us to keep going, while reminding each other that difficult situations can often have a simple answer. Education about other parts of Montana opens our eyes and our minds to the struggles that others face, while allowing for creative problem solving from a large network of supporters.

The allies in conservation efforts participate as well in these large conferences. They listen to the critical needs of the people on the ground and they provide help for better outcomes. It's a time to give and receive honest feedback to make sure time and money is being well spent.

Nearly as important is the chance to relax and unwind. There is no better way to appreciate the people behind the work than to share funny stories while enjoying a good meal. The new generation of leaders mixes with the veterans, learning lessons and sharing young wisdom.

While there is no shortage of meetings that demand our time and energy throughout the year, there is a big difference at these larger gatherings. Coming together to network and learn are a different experience altogether, often with better results and a renewed energy to bring home to our own areas.

If you are one of these leaders- let me say "Thank You" for your commitment and dedication to your local lands and people. The work being done in this region and throughout Montana is held in high regard by many, inspiring outside our own boundaries and influencing upcoming generations. I hope to hear of your own inspirations and goals, while we make the most of our season of growth.



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Join the Lewis & Clark Conservation District in Helena for a "Hard Work and Harmony: Effective Relationships in Family Businesses" workshop:

The workshop is November 7, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Valley Community Center located at 3553 Tizer Road – lunch will be provided after the workshop. The cost is \$25 per person. The cost is \$20 per person for those wanting to attend the workshop only. Those interested in attending should call 406-449-5000 x112 or email lccd@mt.net to register. Please note, payment in advance is required. [Click here](#) to print the flyer.



Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Mitigation News

Montana News:

Hybrid Milfoil Reported in MT: Dr. John Gaskin, USDA ARS in Sidney, MT reported that out of 121 native and Eurasian watermilfoil samples sent to his lab for DNA sequencing in 2012, only two hybrid plants (a cross between Eurasian watermilfoil and northern milfoil) were found. One hybrid was collected from Jefferson slough and one from the lower Jefferson River. Dr. Gaskin is continuing to pursue genetic work on potential backcrossing in milfoil.

Yellowstone River Watershed: Piney Creek in Johnson County, WY is confirmed positive for curlyleaf pondweed (CLP) below Lake DeSmet, increasing the potential that the lower reach of the Yellowstone River is also infested. Additional tributaries in WY are being surveyed to determine CLP distribution.

Regional News:

Northern Rockies Invasive Plant Council (NRIPC) Conference is February 10-13, 2014 at the Northern Quest Resort & Casino in Spokane, Washington. The NRIPC Conference will be in conjunction with the Russian Olive and Flowering Rush Symposia. For more information or to register visit the [website](#).

Research

An invasive mussel not harmed by toxins has invaded freshwaters of Europe and North America. While most freshwater mussels react stressfully and weaken when exposed to the toxins in blue-green algae in their water environment, the little zebra mussel is not affected by the toxins. [Read More](#)

In the News

Hayden Lake, ID: Native freshwater bryozoan colonies thriving in Hayden Lake this year. [Read more](#)

Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship has confirmed the existence of adult zebra mussels in Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba:

Mussels were recently found on the hull of a private boat and a dock at Winnipeg Beach, and on some fishing boats dry docked at Gimli. Rapid-response protocols have been initiated to address the situation. Those living or recreating in the Red River, Lake Winnipeg, and Nelson River are being asked to watch for zebra mussels and report any findings. [Read More](#)



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National Groundwater Association launches its Private Well Owner Tip Sheet:

Those interested can sign up to receive, free of charge, the monthly [Private Well Owner Tip Sheet](#) online. The one-page tip sheet will include practical information on how to reduce risks to your water supply through:



- ✓ Proper well construction
- ✓ Regular well maintenance
- ✓ Regular water testing and treatment, if necessary
- ✓ Groundwater protection.

NEW FROM THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Recent government shutdown postpones start of NACD's Urban and Community webinars: The 2014 webinars will begin in November. Webinars will continue to be held the third Thursday of each month, however the time may change to 12 p.m. Eastern Time. As with the previous year's webinars, there is no cost, but attendance is on a first-come first-served basis. Keep watching the **TMC** for the schedule with the dates, time, and topics. [Debra Bogar](#) remains the contact to sign up for the webinars.

NACD's 2014 Annual Meeting is February 2 through 5 in Anaheim, California:

As always, this will be a great opportunity for networking with peers and to learn tips and tools to bring back home; all while having some fun with special events like [tours](#), [Pack a Book](#), and the [NACD Live Auction](#)! Visit [NACD's website](#) for more information.

**National Conservation Foundation (NCF) and the Presidents Association (PA) seeking projects for their \$10,000 Conservation District Award:**

Projects must be "on-the-ground" and touch local communities. Applications must be submitted by **December 2** for evaluation by the NCF Board of Trustees. Three finalists will have the opportunity to present a video of their project during the Leadership Luncheon during NACD's 2014 Annual. The award to the winning finalist will be presented during the Appreciation Banquet. For more information and to download an application form, visit [NACD's website](#).

Please note: Videos and application forms will not be returned to applicants.

NRCS "Profile in Soil Health" shines the spotlight on New Mexico farmer Loretta Sandoval:

As part of her soil health management system, she uses strict cropping rotations and specific cover crops following her cash crops. Like a growing number of farmers across the nation, Sandoval recognizes that healthy soil is her operation's most important asset. [Hear from her in her own words in this short video.](#)



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Calendar
October – December 2013

October 25 ~ [Celebrate Agriculture!](#) at MSU's Ag Fair

October 28 ~ MACD Executive Committee Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**406-443-5711**)

October 31 ~ Halloween

November 3 ~ End of Daylights Savings Time

November 10 thru 13 ~ [Montana Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention](#)

November 11 ~ Veteran's Day

November 12 (Tuesday) ~ MACD Board Conference Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**406-443-5711**)

November 18, 19, 20, 21 ~ NRCS Soil Health Workshops (Missoula, Great Falls/Bozeman, Billings, Miles City)

November 19 thru 21 ~ MACD Annual Conference, Great Falls, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**406-443-5711**)

November 25 ~ MACD Executive Committee Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**406-443-5711**)

November 28 ~ Thanksgiving

December 5 ~ Montana Grain Growers Association Annual Meeting, Great Falls, for more information contact Donna Wilham (**406-761-4596**)

December 6 ~ Montana Woolgrowers Association Annual Meeting, Billings, for more information contact James Brown (**406-442-1330**)

December 7 ~ Pearl Harbor Day

December 9 ~ MACD Board Conference Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**406-443-5711**)

December 12 through 14 ~ Montana Stockgrowers Association Annual Meeting, Billings, for more information contact Katie Stokes (**406-449-5105**)

December 12 through 14 ~ Montana Organic Association Annual Meeting, Kalispell, for more information contact Daryl Lassila (**406-452-0565**)

December 17 ~ Northern Pulse Growers Annual Meeting, Great Falls

December 21 ~ First Day of Winter

December 23 ~ MACD Executive Committee Call, for more information contact Jan Fontaine (**406-443-5711**)

December 25 ~ Christmas

What do toilet tanks and dragonflies have in common?

Read on to find out:

The relationship is really pretty simple, more efficient toilet tanks means more water stays in our rivers and lakes. That means more water for wildlife. Freshwater invertebrates play key roles in nutrient cycling, substrate mixing, and water clarity and they are an energy-rich food source for fish, birds, amphibians, and mammals. The economic impact can't be overlooked either with the various fishing industries like shrimp, crayfish and crabs. Over 90,000 species of freshwater invertebrates have been identified worldwide, and as many as 10,000 may already be extinct or imperiled. Much remains to be learned about many species' life history and conservation needs. The [Xerces Society](#) is working to increase knowledge, awareness, and protection for a wide range of freshwater invertebrates, like the dragonfly (check out their [Aquatic Red List](#)). Here are some ways to help make a difference:

- ✓ participate in [Pond Watch](#) to help the Society learn more about dragonflies;
- ✓ [conserve water in your house](#);
- ✓ build a [rain garden](#) to manage stormwater;
- ✓ create a [xeriscape](#) to save water; or
- ✓ find a local volunteer group via the [EPA Surf Your Watershed](#) website.



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Please send your thoughts as to how to improve **The Montana Conservationist** to

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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.

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