

The Montana Conservationist

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News from Montana's Conservation Community



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Montana Association
of
Conservation Districts



Above: Julie (right) at Foothill Farm in St. Ignatius in Lake County, Montana

Women in Agriculture

Jillian Henrichon

Big Sky Watershed Corps Member

In 2018, *Montana Women from the Ground Up (Passionate Voices in Agriculture and Land Conservation)*, a book highlighting the experiences of women in agriculture, was published. Gail Cicon's continuing effort to gather more of these stories as well as a curiosity about how conservation districts interface with local agricultural producers led me to speak with Julie Pavlock, a woman who owns and operates Foothill Farm in St. Ignatius, Lake County. Julie studied at the University of Montana and then attended a farm program at UC Santa Cruz. She worked on several farms before coming back to Montana and starting Foothill Farm herself in 2004. Foothill farm produces beef cows, a myriad of organic vegetables, and seed garlic that is distributed all over the state and sold through the Western Montana Growers Coop.

Julie says lots of things inspired her to get into agriculture- "some of the biggest things are getting to work outside, the joy of growing, and the fact I get to produce delicious and healthy food for the people in the community." However, family tradition was not necessarily a big factor: although her father grew up on his dad's farm, Julie did not grow up on a farm herself. Nevertheless, her dad now helps to take care of the cows at Foothill. I asked Julie if she has experienced any unique challenges or opportunities because of the fact she is a woman in her field. She responded that "woman face challenges in most professions, that's not unique to farming." Something



Bottom: Inside Foothill Farm's Greenhouse.

challenging to her is trying to balance being a mom and a farmer; which is both wonderful and difficult given the busy nature of the job. She also said “it is difficult when people will prefer to talk to my dad rather than me.”

Julie has implemented many conservation practices at Foothill Farm with the help of services provided by Lake County Conservation District. Julie has been able to implement cover cropping, crop rotation, drip irrigation and planting of both fruit bearing and native pollinator trees. She said, she had always wanted to use these practices but may not have been able to achieve that without help from the district.

Julie says that the most rewarding parts of her job are working with animals, hiring people that are interested in learning how to farm on their own, and producing beautiful food. She comments that “without lots of help from my family and the community, I would not be where I am today.”

Note:

This story is an informal human-interest story. It was inspired by, but is not a part of, the Women's Oral History Project.

From The Ground Up

Gail Cicon, *Coordinator*

The Agricultural Women's Oral History project was started 2012 by Linda Brander, then Resource Specialist from the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). With the help of Conservation District Administrators and their boards, approximately 50 women from 24 districts were interviewed and recorded. These were stories from passionate voices in agriculture and land conservation. The recordings can be found on the DNRC website as well as the Montana Historical Society's website. Through grant funding, an author, Kristine Ellis was hired to sift through all these interviews of women of varying ages and experiences to write a book about Montana Women in agriculture and conservation.

The Montana DNRC deemed the project important enough to continue to obtain women's stories from the 34 other conservation districts who did not have interviews in the first round. These new interviews will be posted on the DNRC website as well as the website of the Montana Historical Society. Gail Cicon has been contracted with the DNRC to continue the project and get at least one story from each of the 34 districts who did not originally participate. After contacting most of these 34 districts, Gail hopes to get in touch with people interested in the project.

Contact

If you have questions, please feel free to contact the project:
email: cd.womens.history@gmail.com
phone: 406-460-1648

StAGE

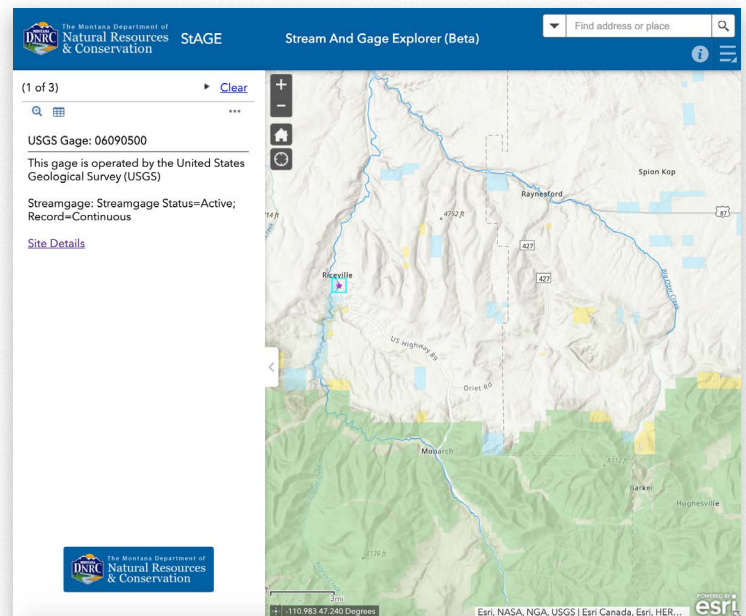
Stream and Gage Explorer

DNRC Mapping Service

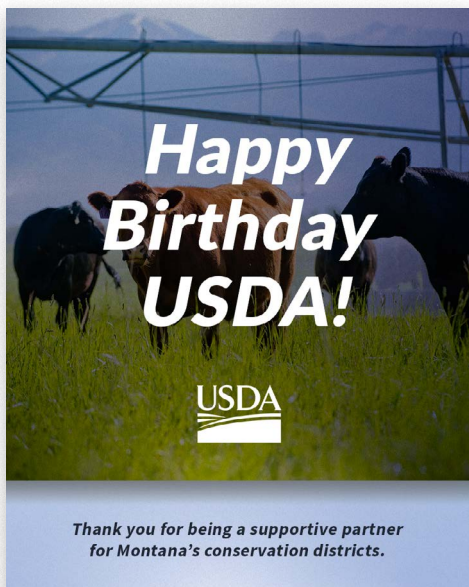
DNRC just released a new stream gage web app called StAGE. This is a product that we have been working on for quite some time and its finally publicly available. Below is the Press Release that we sent out. Please feel free to forward on to any interested parties.

DNRC's Water Management Bureau is pleased to introduce a new Web Application called StAGE (Stream and Gage Explorer). This mobile-friendly interactive web app allows you to access real-time streamflow data collected by DNRC stream gages, along with seasonal gage data, historic data from prior watershed studies, DNRC State Water Projects stream and canal data, as well as links to USGS data across Montana.

If you have any questions about using the app, or want more information, please contact Matt Norberg in Water Resources at (406) 444-6041.



<https://gis.dnrc.mt.gov/apps/StAGE/>



Happy Birthday USDA!

MACD and Montana's Conservation Districts

MACD would like to wish the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) a Happy Birthday! The agency was founded on May 15th, 1862. To this day NRCS has been an essential partner for conservation districts.

Thank you USDA for all of your support!

2020 MACD Annual Report

Eric Rannestad

MACD Communications Specialist

The MACD Annual Report is complete! This year, because of the SWCDM and MACD merger, the annual activities and finances of SWCDM are included in this document. In addition to the digital version below, a printed version of the annual report will be sent to each Montana CD.

[View the Annual Report](#)

Montana Association of Conservation Districts

MACD ANNUAL REPORT

2020

Montana Association of
Conservation Districts

Bridger Plant Materials Center

Co-owned by MT and WY conservation districts and leased to NRCS for maintenance and research

In 2020, the Bridger Plant Materials Center (BPMC) completed and posted several publications and continued its webinar-based training program for NRCS field staff and partners.

More information about the BPMC's 2020 accomplishments can be found in the BPMC 2020 Progress Report.

In 2020, 46 conservation districts continued to support the Bridger Plant Materials Center (BPMC) through annual voluntary donations. A special thank you to the Beaverhead and Powder River Conservation District who donated above and beyond the annually suggested donation amount!

For more information, visit <https://www.mt.wy.gov/conservation/districts/bridger-plant-materials-center/>

Ranching for Rivers

Primary Funder: DEQ and Federal 319

SWCDM, in partnership with the NRCS and DNRC Bangedand Resources Program, awarded 5 Ranching for Rivers applications, totaling \$20,491.40 in cost-share to conservation partners for the implementation of:

Projects

- 3 Fencing projects, affecting 32 acres of pasture and resulting in the protection of miles of streambank
- 2 Stock water gap/crossing projects
- 4 livestock watering tanks
- 2 Grazing Management Plans

Above: The fencing for rivers program funds projects such as exclusion fencing like this project along Laramie Creek.

Above credit: NRCS

Leadership Letter

The year 2020 included challenges for MACD and Conservation Districts, as well as the entire nation. Although 2020 began with the release of the previous ED, which temporarily slowed the Association's activity, Jim Simpson, Stephanie Adams, and Melissa Downing stepped up to pick up the Executive's responsibilities. In addition to significant effort by the Education and District Operations Committees, an ad-hoc committee on the potential merger was chaired by Darla Workman, and Jeff Tiberi was hired to lead an ad-hoc committee on updating the MACD and SWCDM Bylaws.

In August, Rebecca Bookbough accepted the offer for the Executive Director position, and MACD's pace started to pick back up. Despite the ongoing covid pandemic, Area Meetings were successfully held in-person and virtually, and the 2020 Annual Convention took place virtually with approximately 200 participants attending each day!

MACD also successfully advocated for Districts to receive funding from the CARES Act, which the State unfortunately left Districts out of to start. MACD's efforts resulted in Districts receiving approximately \$90k in technology and other covid-related costs through both the Business Adaptability Grant Program and the Local Government Reimbursement Program.

Starting in August, Jeff Tiberi began leading the Association's efforts for the 2021 Legislative Session. With the support of DNRC, Communications Specialist Eric Rannestad joined MACD in December 2020. And last but not least, MACD and SWCDM officially merged on December 31st, 2020! The next steps and details of the merger will take place throughout 2021, with completion of all actions planned to take place by the 2021 Convention.

Although the year ended with significant uncertainty due to coal severance tax shortfalls and vacancies at DNRC, MACD has continued to advocate for and work closely with our partners to support Districts. 2021 is already showing significant signs of success, particularly in terms of funding for Districts and DNRC in the legislature... more on that in our next annual report!

MACD would like to thank all of the Districts that supported us this year. Our role of service to Conservation Districts remains foremost in our minds as we go about our daily business. Like all organizations, we will continue to change and react and hopefully influence future events that set the stage we operate under. We remain open to suggestions and input from you as we progress through what is hopefully the final year of the virus that has changed much of what we do.

Jim Simpson
MACD Board President

Dean Bragg
MACD Board Vice-President

Rebecca Bookbough
MACD Executive Director

Programs

Highlights

11

Mini-Grants Awarded

4

Big Sky Watershed Corps members placed with SWCDM cost-share

32

Onl Webcams provided to Montana's conservation districts

90k+

In COVID Relief Funding Provided to Montana's conservation districts

5

Ranching for Rivers projects funded

► Sage Grouse Initiative

► Big Sky Watershed Corps

► Soil Health Symposium

► Ranching for Rivers

► Rolling Rivers Trailer

► Bridger Plant Materials Center

► DEQ Mini Grants

► Montana Conservation Partnership Initiative

► District Technology Assistance

Note from DNRC CARDD Administrator, Mark Bostrom

Mark Bostrom

Chouteau CD Administrator

The 2021 session is in our rearview mirror and the July 1 trigger point for the next fiscal year and implementation of HB 374, which levels the CD funding in the next biennium, is in our sights. With the new fiscal year and a reset of funding, DNRC can launch the long-awaited recruitment for the CD Program Manager Position. The position will appear on the State jobs site. Announcements are also planned for websites at MACD, NACD, NASCA, and MWCC.

The selection of the CD Program Manager is the first and most critical step to retooling and optimizing the services DNRC provides to Districts. Once the CD Program Manager is selected, the incumbent will have the opportunity to hire two new team members to round out the DNRC team. Director Kaster has asked that a focus group comprised of CD supervisors, MACD Board members, and CD employees be convened to help inform her and the new program manager on the retool of DNRC's CD program.

The past six months have been difficult. Not only as a result of the Coal tax crisis, but also Legislative Session, Covid, and a weirdly long spring. I wish to express thanks to the "last staff standing" in the CD program who did double-duty during this time. Also, special thanks to the supervisors, administrators, MACD staff and NRCS staff who collectively joined together to keep District operations on track as best as possible. Thank you all.

Thank you,
Mark Bostrom

NACD Responds to "America the Beautiful" Preliminary Report

Sara Kangas

NACD Director of Communications

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) issued a response to the release of the interagency report, "Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful," regarding the proposed 30x30 initiative as announced in President Biden's Executive Order 14008.

This preliminary report, a joint effort from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Interior, Department of Commerce and Council on Environmental Quality, is the Administration's initial effort toward developing the Executive Order.

[Read the Full NACD Press Release](#)



Lifetime Achievement Award - Ronald Long

Lorna Krause

Chouteau CD Administrator

The Chouteau County Conservation District congratulates Ronald Long as the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award and thanks him for his exemplary dedication and vision to the research, application and stewardship leading to the conservation and sustainability of our natural resources.

[Read the full write-up](#)



Supervisor Jeff Ryan receives Montana Watershed Stewardship Award

Montana Watershed Coordination Council

A lifetime dedicated to rivers and people: Jeff Ryan receives Montana Watershed Stewardship Award.

[Read the full write-up](#)

In The News

Video of Milk River Highlights Progress Since 2016

(MRWA) In Spring 2021, a new clip was developed in partnership with the Milk River Joint Board of Control to highlight all the progress and challenges facing St. Mary's and the Milk River Project.

[Watch the Video](#)

NACD Pres. Michael Crowder - Civilian Climate Corps Important to Ag Fight

(Agri-View) Working through locally led conservation districts that have existing state legal authority to deploy resources in every community, especially those that are underserved, is the most efficient and effective way to deploy the proposed \$10 billion for the Civilian Climate Corps.

[Read the Article](#)

| Upcoming Events | | Funding Opportunities | |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| May 2021 | | | |
| May 27-31 | <p>No Scheduled Events</p> <p><i>Have a nice Memorial Day Weekend!</i></p> | | |
| June 2021 | | | |
| June 4 12:30pm | <p>Using Drones for Weed Spraying (flyer attached)</p> <p>2-hour demo by Lewis & Clark CD. Event starts at 12:30pm. Location: Gates of the Mountains Exit off I-15. For more information contact chris@lewisandclarkcd.org or call (406) 449-500.</p> | May 28 | <p>USDA Agroforestry Proposal Deadline</p> <p>The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agroforestry Center is requesting proposals to create regionally-applicable and practice-specific agroforestry educational materials based on producer production information, experiences and testimonies.</p> <p>Learn More</p> |
| June 9 | <p>Managing Profitable Pastures</p> <p>Managing Profitable Pasture will feature Dallas Mount, ranch management consultant.</p> <p>Event Details</p> | May 28 | <p>USDA Seeks Innovative Partner-led Projects Delivering Sustainable Agricultural Solutions</p> <p>The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking proposals to fund up to \$75 million in new, unique projects under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program's (RCPP) Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA) that take innovative and non-traditional approaches to conservation solutions at the local, regional and landscape scales. NRCS is accepting AFA project proposals now through May 28.</p> <p>Learn More</p> |
| June 7-9 | <p>Spring Board Meeting</p> <p>Meeting being held in-person in Helena, MT</p> | May 28 | <p>Regional Conservation Partnership Program's (RCPP) Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA) Proposal Deadline</p> <p>Learn More</p> |
| June 10 | <p>Judith Basin Range School</p> <p>Eventbrite Tickets</p> | June 6 11:49pm EST | <p>2021 Technical Assistance Grants</p> <p>Like previous Technical Assistance (TA) Grants the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has entered into an agreement with NACD to provide funding to further enhance conservation district technical assistance across the nation. The granted funds will be awarded directly to conservation districts to hire staff where additional capacity is needed to improve customer service and reduce workload pressure.</p> <p>Learn More</p> |
| June 10 | <p>Core Partners Meeting</p> <p>Core Parnters Meeting in-person in Helena, MT</p> | | |
| June 15-16 | <p>Enhancing Your Livestock Operation: Surviving in a World of Change</p> <p>Little Beaver CD is hosting a 2-day workshop featuring: Fred Provenza, & Dr. Allen Williams. \$75 per person includes meals. Fallon County Fairgrounds, Baker, MT</p> <p>Event Details</p> | | |
| June 21-23 | <p>Montana Range Days</p> <p>At Montana Range Days, youth and adults of all ages gather for three days to celebrate and learn more about our rangelands, including plant identification, soils, ecology, rangeland inventory, and management tools and techniques. Tours of local operations showcase natural resource management. Contests allow participants to test their knowledge and earn prizes and other awards including scholarships.</p> <p>Montana Range Days Website</p> | June 21 | <p>Irrigation Development Grant from DNRC June 21</p> <p>Any project that further develops and sustains Irrigation in Montana Up to \$20,000 per project available. Closes May 31st, 2021, with Award Notification June 21st, 2021.</p> <p>Learn More</p> |
| June 28-30 | <p>406 Grazing Academy</p> <p>Location Ennis, MT</p> <p>This 3-day, hands-on grazing workshop will include the opportunity for each ranch to create or update a ranch specific grazing plan with the assistance of leading experts.</p> <p>Learn More</p> | | |
| June 29 | <p>Rural Resilience Meetings - Reducing costs by increasing resilience in Winnett, MT</p> <p>World renowned agroecologist Nicole Masters of New Zealand-based Integrity Soils will lead four similar day-long workshops across North-Central Montana on soil biology and carbon</p> | | |
| July | | | |
| July 18-23 | <p>Summer Camp: Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp Greenough, MT July 18-23</p> <p>Campers attending the Montana Extension Service Natural Resources Youth Camp spend one week at the Lubrecht State Forest east of Missoula learning about forestry, water, soils, geology, range, wildlife, recreation and having a lot of fun. The camp is open to all youth entering grades 10-12. Camp fee includes meals, supplies, and lodging. Sponsorship may be available through your local conservation district.</p> <p>More Information</p> | | |
| July 24-27 | <p>National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Summer Meeting in Chicago</p> <p>The 2021 Summer Conservation Forum and Tour will be held July 24-27 in Chicago, Illinois.</p> <p>Meeting Information</p> | | |
| July 26-29 | <p>Montana Youth Range Camp 2021</p> <p>Lewis and Clark Conservation District is hosting Montana youth Range Camp July 26-29. 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.</p> <p>Tickets Facebook All DNRC Youth Camps</p> | | |
| Looking Forward | | | |
| Sept 14 8:30am | <p>Riparian Grazing Workshop</p> <p>Featuring Dr. Clayton Marlow and Allen McNeal (McNeal Resources), the day will begin with a classroom style presentation at the Augusta Youth Center, lunch from the Buckhorn Bar, and then a field portion on the Converse Ranch. Resource professionals are welcome to be there to talk to landowners.</p> <p>Event</p> | Ongoing | <p>Joint Funding by MACD Education Committee and the Montana Watershed Coordination Council</p> <p>If your CD is looking for funding assistance for trainings or other professional development opportunities, there are 2 good options for you! The Montana Watershed Coordination Council Watershed Fund has funding available for professional development opportunities that allow our watershed and conservation partners to acquire skills, knowledge, and resources relevant to watershed and natural resource health in their communities. The Lewis & Clark CD also has a grant from DNRC directed by the Education Committee to be used for a variety of things, one of which is training for CD employees and supervisors. Up to \$200 per person per CD can be applied for by filling out a simple request form. Funding is on a reimbursement basis.</p> <p>Learn More</p> |
| | | | <p>Think about ARPA 632 grants coming up!</p> <p>HB 632 deals with the distribution of some of the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) money. CD's were not named under local government in the bill, so MACD worked alongside other entities (irrigation districts etc) to get this definition changed through an amendment! Districts should start thinking now about how they can position themselves for grants relating to this money.</p> |

Job Opportunities

MACD is seeking a Range Technician [Circle, MT]

Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD)

This position will maintain and/or expand technical assistance capacity in key rangeland focal areas to strengthen working ranchlands management. Employees will work with private landowners in Montana to increase the sustainability and economic viability of ranches while improving the habitat for sage grouse and other rangeland dependent wildlife.

[Learn More](#)

Good Neighbor Agreement Technical Advisor

Northern Plains Resource Council

Northern Plains Resource Council seeks a qualified independent contractor to serve as a technical advisor/consultant. The Resource Council is a grassroots conservation organization that organizes Montanans to protect our water quality, family farms and ranches, and our unique quality of life. This advisor will participate in the ongoing implementation of the Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA) with Sibanye-Stillwater that oversees work at the company's platinum-palladium operation in Montana's Beartooth Mountains. This is the largest active mine in Montana.

[Position Details](#)

MACD Communications Update

Eric Rannestad

MACD Communications Specialist

As always I'm so appreciative of everyone who contributed to the May issue of *The Montana Conservationist*. Going forward, this monthly publication will continue to stories from districts and our partners, but to do that we need your help! MACD is accepting pitches for TMC stories on an ongoing basis. We prioritize content about conservation districts and their partner organizations.

TMC Submissions

eric@macdnet.org

To submit your proposal, please email MACD Communications Specialist, Eric Rannestad.

Montana Association of Conservation Districts



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