

# The Montana Conservationist

March 21, 2011 Vol. 4, Issue 6



Montana Association of Conservation Districts

## **MONTANA YOUTH CAMPS ON THE HORIZON**

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Youth Camps offer a great way to spend a week during the summer, while learning about and experiencing the outdoors: Visit DNRC's website (<http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/cardd/camps/default.asp>) to find out more about any of the camps noted below:



## **Montana Envirothon**

*An Educational Adventure Sponsored By  
Montana's Conservation Districts*

### **"Salt and Fresh Water Estuaries"**

Lewistown – April 18th & 19th, 2011

Contact [fcd@midrivers.com](mailto:fcd@midrivers.com) for general information



## **35th Annual Montana Range Days**

June 13-15, 2011

St. Mary's Center, Deer Lodge

### **Hosted by:**

Deer Lodge Valley CD Natural Resource Conservation Service  
Northern Ag Network



## **Hosted by Garfield County Conservation District and Petroleum County Conservation District**

June 27-July 1

The 7 Bar V Ranch  
(northwest of Jordan)

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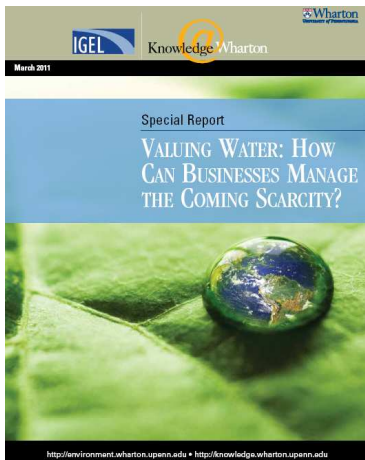
## **25th Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp**

July 17 – 22

Lubrecht Experimental Forest,  
Greenough



## OF INTEREST TO CONSERVATION DISTRICTS:



**Current school of thought regarding water issues:** MACD Executive Director Jeff Tiberi passed along a newly released report that shows the current thinking about water issues from one of the Ivy League's most famous members. The 26 page report, entitled "*Valuing Water: How Can Businesses Manage the Coming Scarcity?*" is from the Wharton Business School.

The description from the school states that the report answers such questions as: What is being done to track the use of water throughout the supply chain? Are the goals realistic and will they have enough impact? Those interested in reading/downloading the report may click on the following link: <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/2738.cfm>.

**Benefits of bale grazing during the winter months:** KFVR TV recently ran an interview with Gabe Brown who uses the "bale grazing" method to feed his cattle. Brown talked about the time and cost savings associated with letting his cattle feed on hay bales spread over his crop land. Visit the website to read a brief intro to and then watch the video that accompanies the story:



[http://www.kfyrtv.com/News\\_Stories.asp?news=46028&yr](http://www.kfyrtv.com/News_Stories.asp?news=46028&yr).

**Final Chesapeake Bay CEAP Study shows reduction in sediment and nutrient losses:** According to the recently released U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) study conservation practices and systems used by farmers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed are reducing sediment and nutrient losses from cultivated cropland.

The Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) study finds that conservation practices have reduced edge-of-field losses of sediment by 55 percent, nitrogen in surface runoff by 42 percent, nitrogen in subsurface flow by 31 percent and phosphorus by 40 percent.

The study also finds that additional conservation practices on acres with a high need for additional treatment can reduce per-acre sediment and nutrient losses by more than twice that of treatment of acres with low or moderate conservation needs.

Those interested in reading more on this topic

may click on the following link to read the full news release:

[http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/news/releases/2011/chesbay\\_ceap\\_3.15.11\\_print.html](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/news/releases/2011/chesbay_ceap_3.15.11_print.html).

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**Take a step back in history to the Great Depression around the inception of Conservation Districts:** The *Denver Post* recently published photographs taken by Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information staff between 1939 and 1943. Some are the only color photographs taken of the effects of the Depression on America's rural and small town populations. The photographs and captions are the property of the Library of Congress and were included in a 2006 exhibit *Bound for Glory: America in Color*. <http://blogs.denverpost.com/captured/2010/07/26/captured-america-in-color-from-1939-1943/2363/>.

## **House passes second short-term continuing resolution (CR) to keep the U.S. government running through April 8.**

With no long-term funding deal in sight, this new House CR cuts \$6 billion in spending by reducing or eliminating programs.

The earmark terminations include \$37 million from the NRCS Conservation Operations account and \$30 million from the NRCS Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations program. Last week, the Senate failed to pass either the House proposal, which cuts \$60 billion, or the Senate alternative that proposed \$10 billion in cuts. The two sides remain \$50 billion apart.



### **Grant Opportunities:**

#### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is accepting applications for \$1.9 million in funding for environmental education projects and programs:**

The grants will promote environmental stewardship and help develop knowledgeable and responsible students, teachers and citizens. EPA expects to award at least 20 grants nationwide, ranging from a minimum of \$15,000 to a maximum of \$100,000. **Applications will be accepted until May 2, 2011.**

An informational conference call for potential applicants will take place **April 6 at 2 p.m (EDT)**. To participate in the call **dial: 1-866-379-5082, use conference ID number 48696117.**

The grants provide financial support for innovative projects that design, demonstrate, and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques. Projects should involve environmental education activities that go beyond disseminating information. Eligibility Information and application materials are available on EPA website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html>.

#### **EPA is also accepting grant applications for \$1.2 million in funding to support projects designed to research, educate, empower and enable communities to understand and address local health and environmental issues:**

Eligible applicants from non-profit, faith-based and tribal organizations working in the community of the proposed project are encouraged to apply. Environmental Justice Small Grants funding is available for two categories of projects:

- Forty grants of up to \$25,000 each to support projects that address a community's local environmental issues through collaborative partnerships.
- Four grants of up to \$50,000 each to gather better science on the environmental and health impacts of exposure to multiple sources of pollution in communities.

**Applications are due Thursday, March 31, 2011.**

Eligibility Information and application materials are available on EPA website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/resources/publications/grants/ej-smgrants-rfp-2011.pdf>.



#### **NACD extends deadline to receive 10% discount on Forestry Education materials:**

The discount has been extended until March 25. Visit the NACD Marketplace to place your order (<http://www.nacdstore.org/>). Use code **2011fp325** during checkout to receive the discount. These tools are great for school activities, conservation field days, county fairs, and other community events. Visit the Forestry Education webpage (<http://www.nacdnet.org/education/resources/forestry/index.phtml>) to view samples of the materials and see additional forestry resources.

These products are also great for **Stewardship Week (April 24-May 1)!**

## **FROM OUR PARTNERS:**

### **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATIONS DISTRICTS (NACD):**

#### **Weekly report from NACD's acting CEO, Deb Bogar:**

- Sent URGENT ACTION ALERT on Senate's planned action for FY2011 Proposed Conservation Cuts; this week the Senate voted on the U.S. House-passed Continuing Resolution (CR) and an alternative long-term CR with smaller cuts; neither passed. Another short-term CR is likely as the current one ends March 18. Just as a reminder, an Alert had also been sent February 16 on House action.
- Attended House Agriculture Committee EPA Hearing; sent information to members on various policy issues including EAJA, wolves, and upcoming Wild Horses and Burros Advisory Committee meeting.
- Officers have met with Congressional staff and agency officials to discuss conservation funding and offer assistance in Farm Bill discussions.
- NACD Farm Bill Task Force met via teleconference; they set up three subcommittees to conduct additional research and discussions on selected issues.
- President Gene Schmidt, along with Past President Steve Robinson, Deb Bogar and Rich Duesterhaus, met with the national partnership leaders in D.C. this week; topics covered a wide range of subjects including recommendations to strengthen state conservation partnerships; a review of the current budget environment at the federal, state, and local levels; identification of common conservation messages that all of the partners could use in their respective outreach work; and reports or updates on various issues.
- Staff met with USFS Rangelands and USDA National Agroforestry Center to begin preliminary stages of Rangelands and Pastureland Survey with conservation districts.
- Submitted final comments on the Joint Forestry Team survey report, which will be on the website soon at <http://jointforestryteam.org>; continued team discussions via teleconference.
- Began coordination efforts for the upcoming International Year of the Forest event in Washington, DC on March 30, including the potential to host an exhibit at the event.
- Our joint project to develop a protocol for unreported conservation practices in the Chesapeake Bay watershed continues at a good pace; numerous meetings have been held with agricultural groups and federal, state, and local government representatives to obtain their input.
- Worked with Monsanto in developing some pilot project work on the impacts of herbicide resistance on conservation systems and practices.
- Rolled out Facebook page and made daily posts (including funding letters/press release; eNotes; Forestry Notes and President Schmidt's Brownfield interview); we currently have 69 fans.
- President Schmidt did interviews regarding FY11 conservation funding with AgriTalk, Brownfield and Cromwell Ag Net.
- Completed stories and materials for FY2010 Annual Report and Spring 2011 issue of NACD's The Resource, which should be mailed to all districts and others by the end of the month.
- Shipped NACD Forestry Education materials to customers and updates made to online store.
- Plans are well underway for the annual Executive Directors conference scheduled for May 17-20 in Maryland (with a visit to DC); be sure to encourage your ED to attend.
- Planning has begun for the Legislative Conference on July 18-20 and the summer board meeting on July 17-18.
- NACD's new Officer team met in D.C. for some leadership development and to organize for the up-

*Continued on page 5 - CEO*

## CEO - Continued from page 4

coming year, including planning for budget development, Congressional outreach, and communications. Executive Board met via teleconference. Committees and task forces assignments have been made, and Board Members will be notified soon.

- Path Forward Team submitted their recommendations for the CEO position qualifications and search process; these were approved with revisions, and will be sent to the NACD Board early next week.
- Operational activities include Department Directors preparing for discussions with staff on Strategic Plan implementation; updating NACD database of district officials nationwide as well as key leaders (NACD Board Members and Alternates, State Association Presidents and Execs and Principle Legislative Contacts); region board calls and much more.



### ***How the grizzly bear became Montana's state animal:***

The following article is provided by Diane Tipton, Statewide Information Officer for Fish, Wildlife & Parks

*The grizzly bear is Montana's state animal. The honor was conferred in 1983 through a democratic process conducted by more than 55,000 of the state's school children in 425 schools.*

*There were dissenting votes, but the grizzly with its innate charisma won in the end. The grizzly bear was listed as a threatened species in July 1975 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act.*

*Some of the dissenting votes cast were in favor of the bull frog.*

*Mark Chenovick, a sixth grader at Jefferson elementary school in Helena at the time, felt so strongly about the matter that he testified before the 'Fish and Game Commission' on behalf of the bullfrog.*

*"If we have the grizzly as our state animal we would have to put it on the map and this might scare away some of our tourists," he is reported to have said. He also thought the fact that he had never seen an elk or a grizzly bear himself limited these two species as a state symbol.*

*When the final student vote came, the grizzly won with 34,436 votes and the elk came in a distant second with only 18,354 votes. Votes for the bullfrog were not recorded, but a significant number of write-in votes— 2,259—were counted.*

*It is revisionist history, but imagine for a moment if the bull frog had become the state animal. The early days may have been fine, but in 2005 possession of the bullfrog—which is not a native species—was prohibited because of the potential harm it could do to native amphibians.*

*Secretary of State Jim Waltermire is recognized as the primary force behind the "state animal project." He wanted students to learn about how government works.*

*They held primary and general elections, complete with posters, voter rosters, speeches, campaign buttons, bumper stickers, and party caucuses. More than 1,000 school children attended the two hearings on the Grizzly Bill, some even testified or submitted written testimony.*

*The Grizzly Bill passed in both houses by wide margins. On April 7, 1983, Governor Ted Schwinden signed the bill into law, designating *Ursus Arctos Horribilis* as the official Montana state animal.*

*When asked recently if he was disappointed with how the election turned out, Chenovick, who is executive director of the Second Story Repertory in Redmond, Wash., said not at all.*

*"I embraced the democratic process! I didn't need to win, I just wanted to be part of it. We sure had a good time." he said.*

## MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS (FWP)

***FWP is offering a new program with the Upland Game Bird Habitat Enhancement Program in 15 counties to assist agricultural producers who enroll lands in the federal Conservation Reserve Program.***

Enrollment into the new FWP program will be competitively awarded to landowners who have been accepted into CRP for 10 years and who agree to:

- allow free, reasonable public upland game bird hunting
- no emergency haying or grazing throughout the term of the FWP contract
- post program signs on enrolled property to identify boundaries
- annual publication of enrolled tracts in a hunting access guide.

Producers improve their CRP ranking by planting high-scoring seed mixtures that provide the greatest benefits to wildlife. These seed mixes consist of a larger number of native grasses and forbs but are more costly to the producer.

Two of the seed mixes, CP2 and CP25, are eligible through the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program for \$14 or \$16 respectively in additional cost-sharing benefits per acre. Producers may enroll up to 640 acres in the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program.

The counties eligible for FWP's cost-share program are: Cascade, Chouteau, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Glacier, Liberty, McCone, Pondera, Richland, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Teton, Toole,

and Wibaux.

For an online application form, visit FWP's web site at [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov) – search "Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program." To be considered, applications must be post-marked no later than **April 15** and mailed to: Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks – Wildlife Division; P.O. Box 200701; Helena, MT 59620.

For more information, contact Debbie Hohler (406-444-5674 | [dhohler@mt.gov](mailto:dhohler@mt.gov)).

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***FWP is seeking public comment on several water safety issues:*** FWP has proposed the following:

- a no wake zone within the boat ramp and dock area and the buoyed swimming area on Brush Lake in Sheridan County;
- a no wake zone at Neck Bay on the Tongue River Reservoir, similar to the other bays on the west side of the reservoir in Big Horn County, and
- a new rule requiring all potential waterway hazards be approved by FWP through a formal application process, the unattended objects marked visibly with the owner's name and equipped with lights for overnight.

The deadline for public comments is **April 8**. Comments may be submitted by email to: [rjendro@mt.gov](mailto:rjendro@mt.gov) or by mail to: MT FWP, ATTN: Ron Jendro, 1420 East 6th Ave, Helena, MT, 59620.

***The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has set general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) from March 14 through April 15, 2011:*** During the signup period Montana farmers and ranchers may offer eligible land for CRP's competitive general signup at their county Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. Land currently not enrolled in CRP may be offered in this signup provided all eligibility requirements are met. Additionally, current CRP participants with contracts expiring this fall may make new contract offers. Contracts awarded under this signup are scheduled to become effective October 1, 2011. Additional information about the program is available at local FSA offices or online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

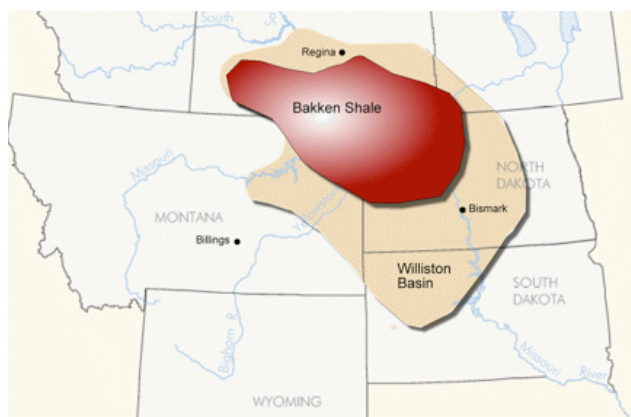
**Administration settles litigation against claims that female, Native American and African American farmers and ranchers were improperly denied farm loan benefits between 1981 and 2000:** Those affected may be eligible for benefits under the Class Action Settlement and can apply for compensation if:

- a farm loan or farm-loan servicing from USDA was sought during that period; and
- the loan was denied, provided late, approved for a lesser amount than requested, approved with restrictive conditions, or USDA failed to provide an appropriate loan service; and
- these actions are believed to have occurred because of the applicant being a female, or Hispanic, or Native American.

Those wanting to register to receive a claims package may call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or access the Website USDA website at: [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov).

## STATE & LOCAL INTEREST

**Could Central Montana be the next "big thing" in the oil industry?** That's what Tom Hauptman believes. An independent oil and gas producer from Billings, Hauptman expressed his belief that Central Montana could be a mini-Bakken – referring to the Bakken Shale Formation that is expected to produce a total of 270 million barrels of oil ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bakken\\_Formation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bakken_Formation)). According to Hauptman, the Heath Shale Formation, which runs about 30 miles north and 30 miles south of the Musselshell River from Lavina straight east into North Dakota could be the place for the next oil boom. Land leases and drilling permits in the area suggest there may be a lot of drilling in the near future. As with any new venture, there are issues and it's not yet clear whether it will be commercially viable. Only time will tell!



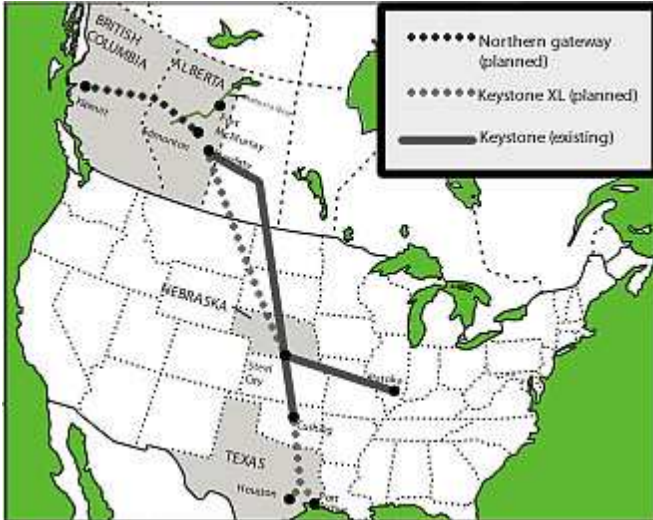
Those interested in reading the article as it appears in the *Billings Gazette* may click on the following link: [http://billingsgazette.com/business/article\\_e8dba1c2-de7e-5488-aa12-34dff4f2f31c.html?oCampaign=hottopics](http://billingsgazette.com/business/article_e8dba1c2-de7e-5488-aa12-34dff4f2f31c.html?oCampaign=hottopics).



### **More on the issue of hydraulic fracturing:**

There have been a few articles in past editions addressing this process of extracting natural gas. Just recently, the New Jersey Senate Environment Committee passed the first bill aimed at banning the process throughout New Jersey. To read more about it, click on the following link:

[http://cleantechnica.com/2011/03/10/nj-senate-passes-bill-banning-controversial-hydraulic-gas-fracturing-frack-ing/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+IM-cleantechnica+%28CleanTechnica%29](http://cleantechnica.com/2011/03/10/nj-senate-passes-bill-banning-controversial-hydraulic-gas-fracturing-frack-ing/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+IM-cleantechnica+%28CleanTechnica%29).



***TransCanada’s Keystone XL pipeline at the heart of a national debate that will affect the future of Bakken Oil in Montana and North Dakota:***

While the area continues to produce barrels full of oil, the lack of transportation to market could serious affect the continued operation. The 1,690-mile TransCanada Keystone XL pipeline is intended to help move the oil from Alberta, Canada to the U.S. Gulf Coast. Permit issues continue to plague the pipeline. In Montana, government officials convinced Keystone to add a \$100 million on-ramp at Baker that would give local production access. Industry officials believe that attaching Bakken to a globally traded market is essential and the only way to do that is through the pipeline. This project continues to be

of interest and worth keeping an eye on. Those interested in reading more about the issues may click on the following link to access the article as published in the *Big Sky Business Journal*:

[http://www.bigskybusiness.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1831:keystone-is-the-key-to-montana-oil&catid=29:montanabusiness&Itemid=114](http://www.bigskybusiness.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1831:keystone-is-the-key-to-montana-oil&catid=29:montanabusiness&Itemid=114).

***Proposed settlement filed in Montana’s U.S. District Court that could lift protections for wolves in Montana and Idaho:***

If approved by the court, management authority over wolves would be returned to Montana and Idaho and take wolves off the Endangered Species List. Full protection for wolves in Washington, Oregon, Wyoming and Utah would remain intact. The Interior Department would agree to conduct rigorous scientific monitoring of wolf populations across the region and an independent scientific review by an expert advisory board after three years. Stay tuned for the next chapter!



***With "Warm Hearts Warm Home" Governor Schweitzer issues a Call to Service to help our neighbors:***

The recent cold snap was a reminder that even though Spring is nearly here, in Montana, that doesn’t always mean a huge jump in temperature. It also means that some of our neighbors may still be struggling to heat their homes – especially in these more difficult economic times. This program’s website has information about home weatherization; saving energy and other resources to help identify ways and means to stay warm: <http://deq.mt.gov/energy/warmhomes/default.mcp.x>.

## **Calendar March—June 2011**

- March 22 & 23 ~ Spring Weed Professionals Training Session, Helena
- March 28 ~ MACD Executive Committee Tele Conference Call
- April 6 & 7 ~ Spring Weed Professionals Training Session, Miles City
- April 11 ~ MACD Board Tele Conference Call
- April 18 & 19 ~ Montana Envirothon Competition, Lewistown, for more information visit <http://montanaenvirothon.org/>
- April 22 ~ Earth Day 2011
- April 25 ~ MACD Executive Committee Tele Conference Call
- May 9 ~ MACD Board Tele Conference Call
- May 10 ~ AWWA/MWEA/APWA Conference, Bozeman
- May 10 thru 12 ~ 13th Annual Water Summit, Chico Hot Springs, Pray
- May 14 ~ Posters due to MACD office for contest judging
- May 17 ~ Exempt Well Conference, Walla Walla, Washington
- May 23 ~ MACD Executive Committee Tele Conference Call
- May 26, ~ Montana Wetland Council and Montana Watershed Coordination Council Awards Ceremony, State Capitol, Helena
- June TBA ~ MACDEO Board Meeting
- June TBA ~ MWCC Quarterly Meeting
- June 3 thru 6 ~ River Rally, Charleston, South Carolina
- June 5 thru 7 ~ NACD Northern Plains Meeting, Hot Springs, South Dakota
- June 8 & 9 ~ MACD Spring Board Meeting, Hardin
- June 13 ~ MACD Board Tele Conference Call
- June 13 thru 15 ~ Montana Range Days, Deer Lodge
- June 27 ~ MACD Executive Committee Tele Conference Call
- June 27 thru July 1 ~ Montana Youth Range Camp, 7 Bar V Ranch northwest of Jordan

# NUTRIENT TRADING TRAINING WORKSHOP

**April 13, 2011  
8:00 AM to 5:00 PM**

**April 14, 2011  
8:00 AM to 3:00 PM**

**Department of Public Health & Human Services Auditorium  
11 North Sanders, Helena, MT**

**This is a Free Workshop, No Registration Required**

**Refreshments Provided, Meals on Your Own**

**RSVP (Not Required, but Appreciated) to:  
[Judel.Buls@ae2s.com](mailto:Judel.Buls@ae2s.com)**

### SPONSORS:



Earth; teach me to forget myself as melted snow forgets its life.  
 Earth; teach me resignation as the leaves which die in the fall.  
 Earth; teach me courage as the tree which stands all alone.  
 Earth; teach me regeneration as the seed which rises in the spring.

William Alexander ~ Author



Montana Association of Conservation Districts

**MONTANA CDS: Local Common Sense CONSERVATION**

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

Please send your thoughts as to how to improve *The Montana Conservationist* to [jtiberi@macdnet.org](mailto:jtiberi@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.

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