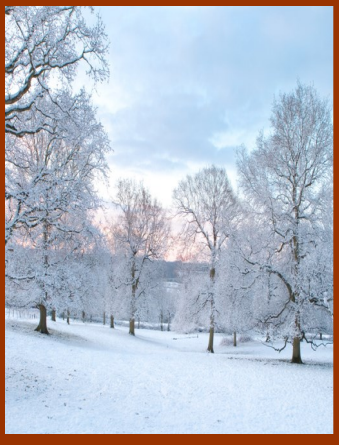


GLACIER COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

NEWSLETTER

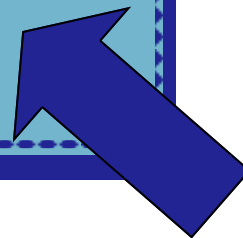


Glacier County Still GROWING Strong in Agriculture



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN AND AROUND GLACIER COUNTY

- 2014 NEW TRENDS SEMINAR
- UPCOMING BOARD ELECTIONS
- FSA SEMINAR
- IMPACT OF NEW FARM BILL
- NRCS and FSA ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS
- WEEDS AND WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW
- WINDBREAKS/COVER CROPS/CSP RECORDS NRCS
- CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS



WINTER ISSUE 2013



Glacier County
Conservation
District

The Public is always invited to attend the meetings of the Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Meetings are held the Third Tuesday of each month at 5:00 pm at the USDA Building.

The GCCD and NRCS programs are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, or handicap.

" Views expressed by individual columnists in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Glacier County Conservation District."

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- * Mark Lewis Treasurer/Urban Supervisor
- * Barb Broberg Supervisor
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- * Stacy Eneboe NRCS District Conservationist
- * Bonnie Thies NRCS Soil Conservationist
- * Holly Taylor NRCS Technician

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CALENDER OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- * NEW TRENDS WINTER SEMINAR
JANUARY 7th, 2014
- * FSA'S MONTANA'S NEXT GENERATION
CONFERENCE JAN 24TH AND 25TH
- * FSA AND NRCS DEADLINES LISTED ON
THE CALENDAR ON BACK PAGE
- * TREE ORDERS DUE BY FEBUARY 15TH IN
THE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OFFICE.

QUARTERLY WEED CORNER

WEEDS AND WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

Plant Identification– To Know You Is To Love You

The ability to identify a plant is important for several reasons. From a vegetation management perspective, it is important to know a plant's identity so you can determine if it is a weed and the level of risk it poses to desired vegetation. Identification is especially important for early detection of new weeds that have never been documented in an area before and can be targeted for eradication. Plant identification is also important to determine if a plant is toxic, especially for people who raise livestock or harvest edible plants from the wild. Knowing what plant you or your animals are about to eat can become a matter of life or death. Finally, being able to identify a plant is just plain fun and a great way to impress your friends and family. Most people that spend a lot of time dealing with plants, including weedy plants, find that plant identification becomes something they grow to love and take great pride in being able to do.

Plant identification can be challenging and even intimidating for the inexperienced. There are great resources to help you identify plants, though. One is a recently published MontGuide called "Plant Identification Basics" (<http://msuextension.org/publications/AgandNaturalResources/MT201304AG.pdf>). The publication walks the reader through eight questions to ask about the plant that will assist with speedy and accurate identification. Each question is accompanied by sketches that illustrate key features described in the question. The publication will be especially helpful if used in conjunction with your favorite field guide and will help you narrow down your choices so that you don't waste your time thumbing through the guide page by page until you happen to find a picture that looks similar to the plant you wish to identify.

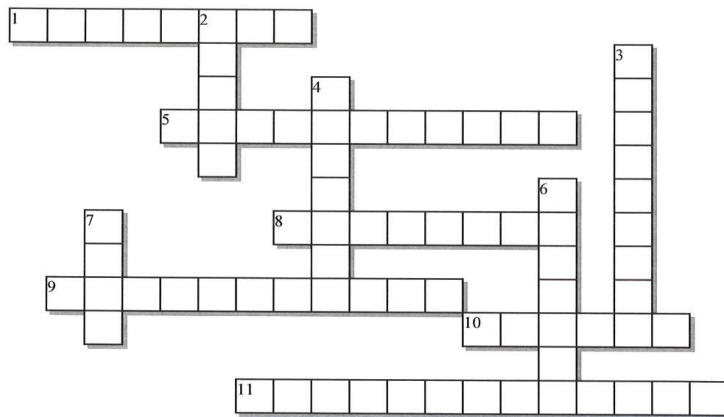
Even if you try and try and still can't seem to come up with the identity of an unknown plant, you can get the plant identified for free at the MSU Schutter Diagnostic Lab (<http://diagnostics.montana.edu/>). The lab accepts unknown plants from clients across Montana (and even from other states and Canada), identifies them, and provides management recommendations at the client's request. Each year the lab processes around 500 plants. To give you a better idea of what unknown plants are being found across Montana, here is a rundown of what has been submitted to the lab in 2013: The majority of plants were non-native. Forbs made up the vast majority of unknown plants, followed by grasses, shrubs, and aquatic species. Twenty-four of the submissions were state-listed noxious weeds; on submission was the first ever record in Montana of the invasive forb garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), which is noxious in many states in the eastern half of the U. S. Twenty-nine plants were submitted to determine if they were toxic to livestock, five of which were. Then were submitted by clients who planned to eat the plant, but wanted to verify they were safe. Four of those plants would have made the consumers very ill, a great example of why plant identification is so important! Nine of the submissions were new county records and were added to the Montana State University herbarium.

QUARTERLY WEED CORNER

WEEDS AND WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

These records help track how plants are moving across the state and their ability to tolerate different climate regimes and habitats. In spite of how much we already know about Montana plant communities, they continue to change and we learn new things about them every year!

Test Your Knowledge of Plant Identification



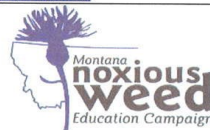
Across:

- 1 - _____ leaves are broadest in the middle and narrower at either end*
- 5 - Although it won't unlock the door to your house or car, this type of key is often used to unlock the identity of a plant
- 8 - Send plants to this lab to get help with identification
- 9 - This management goal is fitting for new weeds recently detected
- 10 - Stems of yellow starthistle are unique because they are pinched or _____*
- 11 - This plant was reported for the first time in Montana in the summer of 2013 (common name)

Down:

- 2 - Plant identification sometimes becomes a matter of life and death if the plant you or your livestock plan to eat is this
- 3 - Most of the plants submitted to the diagnostic lab in 2013 were _____
- 4 - One of the first questions you should ask about a plant when trying to identify it is whether it is a dicot or a _____*
- 6 - You can impress your _____ and family by being a plant identification superstar!
- 7 - Even though grasses seem to be the most prevalent plant form in Montana, this type of plant was submitted for identification the most often

*Refer to Extension MontGuide "Plant Identification Basics" for answer.
Solutions are posted to the MSU Extension Invasive Rangeland Weed website:
<http://www.msueextension.org/invasiveplantsMangold/extensionsub.html>



MARK YOUR CALENDARS JANUARY 7, 2014 FOR OUR FOUR COUNTY NEW TRENDS WINTER CONFERENCE

On January 7th, 2014 the combined efforts of Glacier, Toole, Liberty and Pondera Counties will sponsor a New Trends Winter Conference. The event will be held at the Shelby Civic Center beginning with registration at 8:30 am and ending with a Q and A forum/Producers Panel at 2:30pm. It is districts intent by combining all four counties to bring to the producers in our areas updated information to assist in developing an even more efficient and effect way to conserve the soils within our counties. We will be featuring Dr. Darrin Boss. He is with the Northern Ag Research Center located in Havre Montana. He has been working directly with the cover crop projects, as well as Rick Haney with ARS Labs in Texas on the testing of nutreints in our soils. As you can see the full agenda for Seminar is Listed just below.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL
BELINDA KNAPTON AT**



AGENDA FOR NEW TRENDS WINTER SEMINAR

COVER CROP

January 7, 2014 830am - 3:30pm at the Shelby Civic Center

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 8:30 AM | REGISTRATION- Ticket Price \$15.00 register by 12/20/2011, \$20.00 at the door. The registration fee includes the cost of the lunch. |
| 9:00 AM | WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF DR. DARRIN BOSS- NORHTERN AG RESEARCH CENTER, MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY |
| 10:15 AM | BREAK |
| 10:30 AM | LACY ROBERTS- FSA NEW LOAN PROGRAMS |
| 11:00 AM | RICK HANEY- ARS LAB PRESENTATION ON SOIL TESTING |
| 12:00 PM | LUNCH |
| 1:00 PM | NRCS SOIL HEALTH |
| 1:30 PM J | EFF SCHAH CZINSKI, AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIST |
| 2:30 PM | Q AND A FORUM/PRODUCERS PANEL |
| 3:15 PM | CLOSING |

Sponsored by: Glacier County, Pondera County, Toole County, and Liberty County Conservation Districts

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT GLACIER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT AT 406.873.4292 X 101

IT'S A DIRTY JOB BUT SOMEONE HAD TO DO IT



Picture by: Mike Bashor



Picture by: Janell Watson

Whether they are wrestling pigs or producers the team at the USDA Office really works together to get the job done. At this year's Marias Fair both the FSA and NRCS put together teams to compete in the pig wrestling contest to raise money for the 4H group. The FSA team took 1st in the women's division and the NRCS team took 3rd in the Men's division. Way to go everybody and a great big thank you for a job well done. Here's to mud in your eye.

Chairman Suta Says

Glacier and Pondera District NRCS'S DC ~ Stacy Eneboe

Hello Everyone,

I'm not sure why, but this has been one of the busiest years we have ever put in. I know I'm not alone, because nobody has been going to the functions I've been at. Now that winter is approaching, I hope that changes.

Soil Health is the new buzz word. There is going to be countless meetings this winter on Soil Health. It is my hope that you don't look at the function and say "another soil health program". If you think about it, the modern farmer is really responsible for nothing else! Any kind of conservation, be it water, nutrition, or organic matter matters. If you go to the programs, they just talk about new ways to get the same results to gain you a better soil profile. There will be so many "Soil Health" meetings, please try to attend them.

You never know what you might learn.

Once again it is November and MACD Convention is here. Hope to see you all there and Happy Winter.

**Till next time,
Mark Suta
Chairman**

Glacier County Website is almost a reality look for it soon at www.glacierccd.org

On October 21, 2013 the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administratively combined the Cut Bank, Browning, and Conrad field offices under one Supervisory District Conservationist. The purpose of the position is to combine administrative responsibilities under one position to allow field office staff to have more time to be in the field helping producers. This new position has been filled by Stacy Denny Eneboe. Stacy has been a District Conservationist for the last 13 years. Of those years, the last 8 have been in the Conrad Field Office. Stacy is working two days a week in Cut Bank, two days a week in Conrad, and has one day to go wherever is needed. Stacy can be contacted in Cut Bank at (406)873-4292 ext. 111 or in Conrad at (406)278-7611 ext. 112. Producers and cooperators can contact Bonnie Thies (406)873-4292 ext. 114, Holly Taylor (406)873-4292 ext. 115 or Anne Stephens in Browning at (406) 338-3153. If the Browning offices are closed Anne can be reached in Cut Bank at extension 100.

Each year the Glacier County Conservation District has the opportunity to convene the Local Working Group (LWG) and discuss the county priority resource concerns. MT

NRCS uses the recommendations of the LWG to prioritize resource concerns. The Local Working Group identified priority resource concern is given a preference when producers apply for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The Glacier County Local Working Group met in 2013 and identified Soil Health on cropland as the first priority resource concern on land outside the Blackfeet Reservation. The priority resource concern within the Blackfeet Reservation remains Rangeland Health. NRCS are utilizing the recommendations of the local working groups and local Conservation Districts to focus staff time to address the identified priority resource concerns. The above identified recommendations will be utilized during the 2014 EQIP planning, ranking, and contracting process. Participants requesting financial assistance in 2014 signed up prior to June 1, 2013.

Producers who have any resource concerns they would like to address on agricultural lands can stop by their local NRCS office and request technical assistance at any time. Producers who may need financial assistance to implement conservation practices need to sign -up as soon as possible but no later than June 1, 2014.

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Farm Service Agency

From Michelle's Desk

Important Upcoming FSA Deadlines:

ASAP: We really appreciate producers that stop by our office, when they are in town, to see if we have anything for them to sign. **POST CARDS:** If you receive a post card indicating we need you to sign paper-work or take care of specific business, please do so immediately. It may be the only reminder you receive. **Failure to timely sign /complete the necessary paperwork will cost you \$\$\$\$\$\$!**

ASAP: FARM CHANGES.....Please contact the FSA office immediately if you have any changes to your operation such as: renewed, lost or gained leases, purchased or sold land, change in operator, etc. you need to provide our office with that information as soon as possible. If you are unsure, please contact our office with questions.

IMMEDIATELY: Keep Track of Disaster-Related Livestock Deaths.....Livestock producers affected by natural disasters, including storms and flooding should keep thorough records of their livestock losses. FSA recommends that producers record all pertinent information of natural disaster consequences, including storm weather information (such as temperature, wind speed, amount of snow received, etc.), documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented by photographs of losses (with dates included on the photos & eartag# on animal readable in photo); dates of death supported by birth records or purchase receipts; and documentation of livestock kind, type, and weight. Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA offices to obtain more information regarding documenting livestock losses. Although currently the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP); the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP); and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP) program are not authorized, it is critical that livestock producers document their losses in the event programs are authorized at a later date.

January 17, 2014: Final date to register for the Montana's Next Generation Conference to be held in Shelby on January 24 & 25, 2014. Additional information on this conference is in this newsletter. For questions and further information contact the FSA or MSU Extension Office.

March 15, 2014: Final date to purchase a NAP (Non-Insurable Assistance Program). In the past, having NAP on your uninsurable crops was required in order to participate in most disaster programs.

March 31, 2014: The final date to request a Marketing Assistance Loan on the following commodities produced in 2013: wheat, barley, oats, canola, flax & honey.

April 1, 2014: 2014 Spring Map Certification Packets will be ready for pick up at the FSA Office. Due to budget constraints, we are no longer allowed to mail them.

May 31, 2014: The final date to request a Marketing Assistance Loan on the following commodities produced in 2013: dry peas, lentils, mustard, & chickpeas.

June 6, 2014: The final date to return your completed 2014 Crop Certification Maps to FSA.

July 15, 2014: The final date for the following crops to have the FSA-578 Crop Certification signed & certified: Spring Alfalfa Seed, Barley, Canola, Dry Beans, Dry Peas, Flax, Forage Seeding, Mustard, Oats, Spring Wheat, and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Glacier County should have your Spring Certification Map Packets ready by April 1, 2014. **Your 2014 Spring Certification Maps must be completed & returned to our office by June 6, 2014.**

As always, please feel free to contact our office at (406) 873-5618 Ext 2 OR stop by the Cut Bank or Browning Office, if you have any questions.

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2013 MACD CONVENTION

This year's convention was held in Great Falls and was host by Area III made up of 13 surrounding Conservation Districts. It was these 13 district Administrators jobs to organize, plan, attend and work this event. The event generally has an attendance of approximately 200 people and this year was no different. This week long event is filled with valuable educational seminars ranging from soil health to water conservation practices to new proposed resolutions needing to be discussed and voted on. At the end of each day there is an evening of dinner and entertainment. Pictured below is Chairman Mark Suta of

the Glacier County Conservation District and now the MACD Vice President and Heidi Crum with DNRC. They were dressed and ready to enjoy the Speak Easy dinner event centered around the prohibition period. Not only did they partake in a great dinner but were surprisingly entertained with a great play with audience involvement based on the gangsta and flapper era. The whole event was well worth attending for the educational information alone. If you have never attended one of these conventions you should consider attending next year's, it will be held in Butte for more information please call your local Conservation District office.



For Glacier County call Belinda Knapton at 406.873.4292 x 101

2012 ELECTION PETITIONS

With the new year close upon us and the 2014 election petitions due in March 2014, anyone interested in serving on the Glacier County Conservation District Board will need to pick up petition and have it completed and turned back in by March 15th. The new term will start serve on the board in January of 2015. The board meetings are held every third Tuesday of the month. For more information and description of duties please call Belinda Knapton at 406.873.4292 x 101

Technical Corner With Holly Taylor-NRCS

By Holly Taylor, Soil Conservation Technician

Windbreaks Provide Multiple Benefits



Even though winter is upon us, spring is right around the corner. Tree planting season will be here before you know it, and it's time to start thinking about ordering trees (tree orders placed through the Glacier County Conservation District are due in February). Planting windbreaks can be an economical way for producers to enhance crop production, conserve energy, protect livestock, reduce dust and odors, reduce erosion, manage troublesome snow, diversify income, and/or provide wildlife habitat.

The species you select to plant in your windbreak will depend upon species suitability to your soils, local climate, and management objectives. NRCS can provide you with soils information and tree/shrub suitability information. If wildlife is a primary or secondary concern, trees or shrubs that produce berries or cover habitat are a good choice. If you wish to diversify your income, you may wish to plant species that produce harvestable fruit, nuts, or ornamental greenery. If your windbreak is intended to trap snow, you will want to choose species whose limbs do not easily break under the weight of drifted snow. Consider also the amount of maintenance you are prepared to contribute over the years. Some species may require more effort to establish or require pruning over the years.

To estimate the number of trees you will need, consider the length of your desired windbreak, the number of rows, and the spacing between trees/shrubs in rows. In general, shrubs should be planted from 3 to 6 feet apart, larger shrubs and small trees 6 to 10 feet apart, and large trees 10 to 15 feet apart. Always consider individual species size and space requirements at maturity (20 years) when designing your windbreak. Keep in mind the season of your most troublesome winds and orient windbreaks perpendicular to the direction of wind during this season. An 'L' shaped or curved windbreak will provide better protection against shifting winds. Curved windbreaks will provide the additional benefit of easy mowing, tilling, or spraying between rows.

The density of your windbreak is an important factor because denser foliage provides greater reduction of wind speed over a short distance. A windbreak with less dense foliage reduces wind speed to a lesser degree but protects over a longer distance. Density is determined by the species planted and the spacing between trees. A windbreak with deciduous trees and shrubs will have a lower density during the winter because they lose their leaves. One row of deciduous shrubs (density 25-35%) provides even snow distribution across a field and captures moisture. Three rows with at least one evergreen species (density 50-60%) will trap and accumulate snow. Three or more rows combining evergreen trees, deciduous trees, and deciduous shrubs (density above 65%) is better to protect buildings and livestock.

Technical Corner With Holly Taylor-NRCS

By Holly Taylor, Soil Conservation Technician

Windbreaks Provide Multiple Benefits Continues

In addition to density, the area protected by a windbreak will depend upon the height and length of your windbreak. The taller the windbreak, the further downwind the effects will be noticed. Significant wind speed reduction can be achieved at a downwind distance up to 20 times the height of the tallest row of vegetation, and there is also slight reduction of wind speed upwind of the windbreak. The greatest reduction in wind speed is achieved at a downwind distance from the windbreak between 5 to 10 times the height of the tallest row. Combined with the height, the length of the windbreak will determine the total area protected by the windbreak. Windbreaks should extend beyond the area to be protected because wind will swirl around the edges.

Proper site preparation is critical to the successful establishment of your windbreak. Grassland should be cleared of vegetation through cultivation, herbicides, or a combination of both the year before planting is to take place. On cropland, summer fallow the year before planting is recommended. If troublesome weeds exist on the site, they also must be destroyed before planting. Care must be taken on sloping sites to prevent erosion, such as planting on the contour. Windbreaks are generally not recommended on slopes greater than 15 degrees.

When properly established and maintained, windbreaks can provide a variety of benefits to the landowner. For example, living snow fences have greater snow storage capacity, less maintenance once established, and a longer life span than slat-fence barriers. Windbreaks have also been shown to enhance crop productivity by reducing wind evaporation, reducing stress to crops, and improving microclimate. Shelterbelts surrounding homesteads can reduce energy costs by 3 to 26% by reducing air exchange into and out of buildings, not to mention maintaining the sanity of inhabitants. Shelterbelts for livestock reduce wind chill, which can result in greater weight gain, reduced feed costs, greater calf survival, and lower incidence of stress induced diseases.

Because the application of windbreak technology requires the consideration of so many variables, I don't want to overwhelm the readers with too much information at this time. In the next GCCD newsletter I will discuss tree handling and storage, planting, and windbreak maintenance.

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WHAT'S IN YOUR ORGANIC MATTER

What's in Your Organic Matter?

By Stacy Eneboe, NRCS & Jane Holzer, Montana Salinity Control Association (MSCA)

When agricultural producers look at their soil tests, most pay attention to the available Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), and Potassium (K), % Organic Matter (OM), and pH in the soil. The percent organic matter is a result of various environmental and management factors that affect soil over time. For example, OM in cereal grain fields can be less than 1% or greater than 3% in the Golden Triangle Area, while native range soil can have 4-6% OM. So why should a producer or gardener care about the OM in the soil? Organic matter is an indicator of soil health so the higher the percentage, the better the soil health and fertility level. It is a good idea to compare the new soil analyses to historical soil tests to detect a declining or improving trend.

Organic Matter is the storehouse for energy and nutrients used by the plants and organisms found in the soil. This storehouse is composed of the living, the dead, and the very dead. The living or the "livestock below the ground" are living organisms in the soil that cannot be seen with the average human eye. These organisms are bacteria, fungi, nematodes, protozoa, earthworms, arthropods, and living roots. The fresh organic matter is comprised of dead plants, animals, or other organic substances recently added to the soils that have just started to decay. Some organisms decompose quickly. Com-

pounds secreted by the roots of living plants include sugars and amino acids that feed the soil organisms.

The 'dead' component is called lignin or the hard to decay fibers of older plants. Humus or the 'very dead' is the complex organic matter that has already been processed by soil organisms. Humus does not readily decompose because it is either physically protected inside soil aggregates or chemically too complex to be used by most organisms. Humus binds the soil and improves water and nutrient holding capacity of the soil. (Information can be found in the "*Soil Biology Primer*", USDA-NRCS.)

Producers are using minimum tillage and no-till cropping systems as a tool to improve soil organic matter. Some producers use a varied cropping rotation, such as annual and perennial legumes and oilseeds, to slowly improve the OM level over time. Used in conjunction with no-tillage and alternative crops, the process of increasing OM is sped up. Another faster method is known as cover crop cocktails where multiple crop species are planted together to enhance the soil organisms in number and quantity. Demonstrations of cover crop cocktail agriculture are being tried on a trial basis in Pondera County and other parts of the state. Contact your local NRCS office Stacy Eneboe/NRCS and Jane Holzer/MSCA for more information on cover crop cocktails.

Doug Norman Manager 406-873-5313
Kim Norman Jack Norman Jodi Norman



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IMPACT OF FARM BILL PROGRAMS ON OUR ENVIRONMENT AND OUR ECONOMY

The Tremendous Impact of Farm Bill Programs on Our Environment and Our Economy

TODAY, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack joined Dale Hall, Chief Executive Officer of Ducks Unlimited, to highlight the value of public-private conservation efforts and the record conservation results achieved by producers, landowners and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) since 2009. Secretary Vilsack emphasized the critical need for Congress to pass a new Farm Bill to continue these efforts.

Across the nation, USDA works directly with farmers and ranchers to carry out conservation practices aimed at strengthening our nation's soil and water resources. **USDA has partnered with more than 500,000 farmers, ranchers and landowners on these conservation projects since 2009—a record number.**

By protecting marginal cropland, preserving habitat and implementing environmentally-friendly production methods, these efforts preserve the ability of America's farmers and ranchers to continue producing an abundant food supply in the years to come. **Conservation also strengthens outdoor recreation, which adds more than \$640 billion every year to our economy.**

The Farm Bill represents the nation's largest investment supporting the voluntary and successful conservation, restoration and management of America's working lands. A new Farm Bill would:

- ◆ **Continue targeted conservation efforts** through a streamlined Regional Conservation Partnership Program. This new program will continue efforts under existing programs like the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative, Healthy Forest Restoration Program, and Great Lakes Initiative to ensure soil quality, water quality, erosion control, forest restoration, and wildlife habitat.
- ◆ **Maintain key working lands programs** including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program.
- ◆ **Continue participation in the Conservation Reserve Program**—under which USDA has held a general signup each year since 2009.
- ◆ **Help ensure that natural resource conservation continues** on tens of millions of acres, and further expand conservation, by linking crop insurance compliance to conservation program participation.

◆
A Farm Bill would strengthen efforts USDA has undertaken across a range of innovative new landscape-scale initiatives aimed at restoring land and water. For example:

- ◆ **More than 844,000 acres were enrolled since 2010 under the [Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative](#)** to help treat land along the Mississippi River,
- ◆ **More than 275,000 acres were enrolled since 2011 under the [Ogallala Aquifer Initiative](#),** helping farmers and ranchers in the central United States conserve water.
- ◆ **More than 246,000 acres were enrolled since 2010 under the [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#),** working with producers to protect water quality and combat invasive species. America's Great Lakes hold 21 percent of the world's surface fresh water.
- ◆ **The USDA [Everglades Initiative](#) has enrolled nearly 215,000 acres since 2010,** improving water quality and helping to restore fish and wildlife habitat in this unique coastal region.

IMPACT OF FARM BILL PROGRAMS ON OUR ENVIRONMENT AND OUR ECONOMY

The Tremendous Impact of Farm Bill Programs on Our Environment and Our Economy

In addition to America's working land, our forest lands are providing new opportunities in conservation that benefit rural communities. USDA has undertaken new measures designed to modernize forest restoration and achieve the maximum benefit for landowners and the environment.

- ◆ **USDA has treated or harvested more than 500,000 acres for timber** as part of 23 new " Collaborative Forest Restoration Projects." These efforts reduce fire risk and create jobs in rural America.
- ◆ **USDA has sold more than 10.3 million board feet of timber since 2009** from National Forest lands—and to ensure modern Forest management, USDA released and implemented a new Planning Rule to balance forest care and restoration with commonsense job creation.

To help spur innovation in conservation, USDA has invested in new research, monitoring and coordination efforts that help researchers and producers enhance conservation benefits on the land.

- ◆ **More than 1,000 [Conservation Innovation Grants](#)** since 2009 have helped to fund technical assistance, research and capacity-building for innovative new conservation efforts and sustainable growing practices. For example, a CIG partnership with Michigan State University has helped small dairy farmers to evaluate the performance of a new technology to treat wastewater.
- ◆ **USDA undertook the [Rapid Carbon Assessment](#)**, released this year to support conservation planner; and released the [COMET~FARM](#) tool, which enables farmers and ranchers to calculate how much carbon their soil is storing.
- ◆ And to help American agriculture mitigate and adapt to climate change, **USDA will soon announce seven regional "Climate Hubs"** around the nation. The hubs will deliver region-specific information to help farmers and ranchers adapt to climate threats specific to their area.
- ◆ **We have boosted efforts to strengthen ecosystem markets.** USDA has supported the creation of water quality trading markets that hold potential to boost income for producers while providing environmental benefits at a lower cost than more traditional approaches. And through the [Working Lands for Wildlife Initiative](#), we are helping farmers and ranchers proactively protect species with declining populations.

Many of these conservation efforts and USDA's ability to continue working with farmers, ranchers and landowners to protect our environment, depend on Congressional passage of a new Farm Bill. Americans are counting on Congress to get its job done and pass a Farm Bill as soon as possible.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washing, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-Free Customer Service). (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay). (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).

Applications for Conservation Stewardship Program Due Jan. 17

Popular Farm Bill conservation program seeks producer participation

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2, 2013 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is opening the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) for new enrollments for federal fiscal year 2014. Starting today through January 17, 2014, producers interested in participating in the program can submit applications to NRCS.

"Through the Conservation Stewardship Program, farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners are going the extra mile to conserve our nation's resources," NRCS Chief Jason Weller said. "Through their conservation actions, they are ensuring that their operations are more productive and sustainable over the long run."

The CSP is an important Farm Bill conservation program that helps established conservation stewards with taking their level of natural resource management to the next level to improve both their agricultural production and provide valuable conservation benefits such as cleaner and more abundant water, as well as healthier soils and better wildlife habitat.

Weller said today's announcement is another example of USDA's comprehensive focus on promoting environmental conservation and strengthening the rural economy, and it is a reminder that a new Food, Farm and Jobs Bill is pivotal to continue these efforts. CSP is now in its fifth year and so far, NRCS has partnered with producers to enroll more than 59 million acres across the nation.

The program emphasizes conservation performance — producers earn higher payments for higher performance. In CSP, producers install conservation enhancements to make positive changes in soil quality, soil erosion, water quality, water quantity, air quality, plant resources, animal resources and energy.

Some popular enhancements used by farmers and ranchers include:

Using new nozzles that reduce the drift of pesticides, lowering input costs and making sure pesticides are used where they are most needed;

Modifying water facilities to prevent bats and bird species from being trapped;

Rotating feeding areas and monitoring key grazing areas to improve grazing management.

Eligible landowners and operators in all states and territories can enroll in CSP through January 17th to be eligible during the 2014 federal fiscal year. While local NRCS offices accept CSP applications year round, NRCS evaluates applications during announced ranking periods.

To be eligible for this year's enrollment, producers must have their applications submitted to NRCS by the closing date.

A CSP self-screening checklist is available to help producers determine if the program is suitable for their operation. The checklist highlights basic information about CSP eligibility requirements, stewardship threshold requirements and payment types.

Learn more about CSP by visiting the [NRCS website](#) or a [local NRCS field office](#).



SIMPLY EMAIL

If you are receiving this newsletter by mail and would like to receive it by email please contact our office at 406.873.4292x101 and simply provide us with your email address.

Do's and Don'ts by Bonnie Thies-NRCS

RECORD KEEPING FOR CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS

By Bonnie Thies, NRCS

Record keeping is very important for any operation or business especially if you have a Conservation Stewardship Program contract or are thinking about entering into a contract. The CSP program requires complete and accurate records to be kept for documentation of installing and maintaining enhancements. These enhancements have to be implemented and maintained according to the criteria stated on the enhancements sheets. The records should provide an accurate history of the what, why where, how, and when of the implementation of the enhancement. Some enhancements even require photos as part of the documentation. So be sure to keep a camera or cell phone handy when you are working on the

enhancements. Other tools that can be helpful for documentation are calendars (calving dates written on them), computers, and maps with the information written on them. Incomplete or incorrect records will result in noncompliance of the contract. Once in noncompliance, the producer has only a year to implement the enhancement to meet the required criteria.

If problems occur such as spray data not recording, notify the office early in the season about the problem. Sometimes the problem can be corrected and prevent noncompliance of the contract.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is de-





January 7, 2014

REGISTRATION FOR NEW TRENDS WINTER SEMINAR

To Register for the New Trends Winter Seminar being held on Jan. 7th, 2014 At the Shelby Civic Center from 8:30 to 3:30, please fill out and return to Glacier County Conservation District at address listed below. Early register fee is \$15.00 per person if you register before Dec. 20th, 2013. Register after Dec 20th, 2013, the registration fee will be \$20.00 per person.

For more information please contact:

Glacier County Conservation District: #1 Third St. NE, Cut Bank, Mt. 59427—406.873.4292x101*Belinda Knapton

Toole County Conservation District: 1125 Oilfield Ave. , Shelby, Mt. 59474—406.434.5234x113*Marlene Moon

Pondera County Conservation District: 406 N. Main, Conrad, Mt. 59425—406.278.7611x101*Erica Jones

Liberty County Conservation District: 18 Main St., Chester, Mt. 59522—406.759.5778x102*Gail Cicon

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ **DATE:** _____

PHONE: _____ **EMAIL:** _____

COUNTY: _____ **AMOUNT PAID:** _____

Please mail registrations to:

Glacier Co. Conservation District

#1 Third St. NE

Cut Bank, MT 59427

Make Checks Payable to: Glacier County Conservation District

MAPS

Glacier County Book Maps

Teton County Book Maps

Liberty County Book Maps

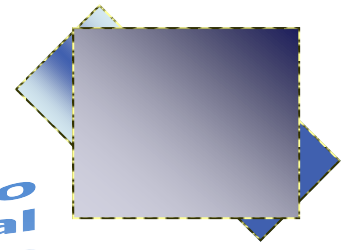
\$30.00

Glacier County Wall Map

\$25.00

**Now available at the
Glacier County
Conservation District
#1 Third St. NE, Cut Bank,
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*We would like to
extend a special
thank you to the
individual business's
that make it possible
for us to provide
you with
this newsletter*



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- * Stockman Bank
- * Northern Chrysler
- * Bank of Glacier County

- * Hi Line Chemical and
CG Ag Consulting
- * Billman's Inc
- * Frontline Ag
- * Bell Motors

- * Cut Bank Building Service
- * Royal Real Estate
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- * Northern Montana
Insurance Services

- * Norman's
- * CHS
- * McDonalds
- * Northern Ford
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TREE PLANTER

\$25.00 MINIMUM OR

1-400 trees-\$25.00 rental per
day

401-1000 trees-7.5c/tree per
day

1001 or more trees-5c/tree
per day

Now available at the Glacier
County Conservation District

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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 2013 TO MARCH 2014

DEC	JAN	FEB	MARCH
DEC. 20TH DEADLINE TO PRE-REGISTER FOR NEW TRENDS SEMINAR	JAN 1 , 2014 HAPPY NEW YEAR	FEB. 2, 2014 GROUNDHOG DAY	ORDER TREES ON THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES mtnursery@mt.gov www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/nursery
DEC. 25TH CHRISTMAS	JAN. 7TH, 2014 ~ NEW TRENDS SEMINAR	FEB 14, 2014 REMEMBER YOUR SWEETHEART DAY	MARCH 9, 2014 DAYLIGHT SAVING MARCH 15, 2014 FINAL DATE TO PURCHASE NAP
DEC 31ST NEW YEAR'S EVE	JAN. 17th, 2014~Registation due for Montana next generation	FEB 17, 2014 PRESIDENT'S DAY	MARCH 31,2014 MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOAN REQUEST DUE MARCH 17, 2014 ST. PATRICK'S DAY MARCH 20, 2014 SPRING BEGINS
	JAN. 20TH, 2014 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY		COMMUNITY GARDEN SIGN UP COMING IN MAY 2014 2ND YEAR OF COVER CROP PROJECT TO BEGIN IN MAY 2014