



Pondera County Conservation District

Local Common Sense Conservation

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RANGE DAYS '07&'08 IN PONDERA COUNTY

The Pondera County Range Days Committee has remained busy preparing for the 31st Annual Montana Range Days June 18-20, 2007. Montana Range Days is open to ages four to adult and is Montana's largest range education program. The Pondera County Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservations Service, Northern Ag Network and the local Range Days Committee are hosts for the event.

Range workshops and contest sites will center around Conrad in 2007, but the Committee hopes to move the event to the

Rocky Mountain Front for the 2008 event. Workshops will focus on plant anatomy and ID, range/soils sites, range planning and stocking rate/utilization. Range education tours will also take place for those adults not competing.

Montana Range Days typically draws about 300 FFA, 4-H and individual participants to the hosting community. Because of the size of this event a tremendous amount of community support is needed.

Sponsors are currently being sought by the lo-

cal planning committee. Whether through financial contribution, item donation for awards, meal supplies or your volunteered time, your effort to ensuring the 2007 & 2008 Montana Range Days' success is greatly appreciated.

The hosting groups are very excited to bring an event of this caliber to Pondera County. If you would like to contribute to Montana Range Days please fill out the enclosed form or contact the Pondera County Conservation District at 278-7611 ext 101 or Paul Jones, committee chairman, at 627-2222.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NRCS NEWS 2

OUR SPONSORS 3

WINDBREAK/ SHELTERBELTS 4

MACD CONVENTION 5

BIODIESEL GRANTS 5

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS 6

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 6

DON'T WAIT TO ORDER YOUR TREES & SHRUBS!

It is time to start thinking about tree and shrub planting for Spring 2007. The Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery availability sheets are available from the Pondera County Conservation District, NRCS or the Pondera County Extension Service. Orders must be place before March 1, 2007 and will be delivered mid-April.

Don't forget to let the Conservation District know if you need to order weed barrier. Orders placed before March 1 will not be charged for shipping.

The Conservation District has a tree planter and fabric layer available for rental. Be sure to get on the calendar early as the schedule fills up quickly!



NRCS NEWS - BY STACY DENNY ENEBOE

EQIP CONTRACTING UPDATES

NRCS has finished ranking the sixty-one 2007 EQIP applications. If NRCS budget remains the same as last year Pondera County allocation will be able to fund approximately six applications. The 2006 EQIP allocation for Pondera County was \$157,643 with special initiative EQIP program monies which funded an additional twenty contracts.

**** Please remember that any practices installed prior to having an approved contract are not eligible to receive cost share.*

The Local Working Group (LWG) set the following priorities for 2007. With projected limitations on cost share dollars available, NRCS anticipates funding for two-four priority 1 grazing applications and 2-4 irrigated applications.

Grazing

Priority 1 – Requested assistance to develop a Resource Management System (RMS). This includes the facilitating practices needed and a documented grazing system

Priority 2 – Treatment of noxious weeds to a higher level and/or water developments that replace a water source that is no longer usable due to drought or toxicity

Priority 3 – All other applications

Dry Cropland

Priority 1 – Address noxious weeds on non-cropland that is adjacent to or near cropland

Priority 2 – Include installation of new field borders, riparian buffers, riparian filter strips, and/or grass waterways

Priority 3 – Address salinity

Priority 4 – All other applications

Irrigated Land

Priority 1 – Replace eroding or leaking irrigation ditches with a buried pipeline

Priority 2 – Convert flood irrigation to pivot

Priority 3 – All other applications

****Please remember that it is the producer's responsibility to install practices as scheduled in their contract. If a contract holder is unable to complete practices as scheduled, please contact NRCS for modifications. Contracts that are not kept on schedule are considered to be in violation*

**07 CSP PAYMENTS
SCHEDULED**
Conservation Security Program payments for the 2007 year will be made in December. Contract participants must have met with NRCS staff prior to Dec. 8. Because NRCS does not have a finalized budget, payments are being made at the 2006 payment rate.

MONTANA DNRC RANGE IMPROVEMENT LOAN PROGRAM

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), not to be confused with NRCS, has a low-interest loan program for live-stock producers. The current interest rate is 3% with a maximum loan amount of \$50,000. Repayment is scheduled for a maximum of ten years with annual installments.

Additional information and loan applications can be picked up at the USDA Service Center in Conrad from either the Pondera County Conservation District or NRCS. You can also contact the Montana DNRC by calling Larry Bloxsom at (406) 444-6668 or visit their website at: http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/cardd/consdist/range_improvements.asp

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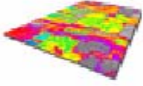


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To Advertise In Our Newsletter Please Call The Conservation District Office @ 278-7611 ext 101

310 PERMITS REQUIRED

A 310 Permit is **REQUIRED** if you are planning ANY project including the construction of new facilities or the modification, operation, and maintenance of an existing facility that may affect the natural existing shape and form of any stream or its banks or tributaries. Any private entity or non-governmental individual that proposes to work in or near a stream on public or private land **MUST** obtain a 310 Permit **PRIOR** to any activity in or near a perennially flowing stream. Please contact the PCCD for permit applications.

TIPS FOR WINDBREAK / SHELTERBELT ESTABLISHMENT

Roy Knudsen, NRCS Soil Conservation Tech

While most people will agree on the beneficial impacts of windbreaks and shelterbelts, we, as conservationists, need an occasional reminder of some factors that may be overlooked when planning a windbreak/shelterbelt. These factors include:

1. Slopes greater than 15% are generally considered too steep for windbreaks unless special precautions are taken to control water erosion.
2. Adapted species with showy flowers, brilliant fall colors or persistent colorful fruits in addition to evergreen species add aesthetic values to the shelterbelt.
3. Use different species in each row if the windbreak is less than 3 rows wide and if soils permit.
4. Select plants that are resistant to herbicides used in this area.
5. Obtain a history of herbicides applied at the site and determine what limitations they may impose.
6. A shelterbelt can act as a travel corridor to connect existing wildlife habitat areas.
7. Windbreaks may be used for odor and chemical control. They become more effective as the amount of foliage increases.

If the windbreak/shelterbelt still seems feasible after considering these factors, follow these steps in the designing process:

1. Consider the number of rows and species in each row; shorter shrubs or trees on the outer-rows with taller plants in the middle give the most protection.
2. Place a shrub row on the windward side of multiple row plantings.
3. Provide at least a twelve foot cultivated strip on each side of the windbreak to serve as a fireguard, aid in weed control and reduce competition for moisture.
4. For easier planting and cultivation make wide round corners for L shaped windbreaks.
5. Provide enough space between rows so tillage equipment will pass easily between rows.
6. Spacing of plants within rows is recommended at 3-6 feet for shrubs and 15-24 feet for trees.
7. Tillable sites should have competing vegetation completely destroyed. A fall seeded crop of small grain may be used where needed to control erosion.
8. Non tillable sites should have competing vegetation destroyed by chemical weed control and/or manually removing vegetation.

MONTANA CONSERVATION DISTRICTS TIDBITS

- ◆ Conservation Districts were organized in the 1930's in response to erosion problems of the "Dust Bowl" days
- ◆ Political subdivisions of the state, Montana's 58 conservation districts are governed by a board of five elected supervisors and two appointed supervisors to represent interests of the residents of incorporated cities within the District
- ◆ Funding for the operation and conservation activities of each district come from a maximum of 1.5 mills levied on real property within the district
- ◆ Conservation Districts help citizens conserve soil, water and other natural resources through:
 - ~ Water Quality & Riparian Area Management
 - ~ Watershed Planning
 - ~ Enforcement of Natural Streambed & Land Preservation Act (310 Law)
 - ~ Cooperation with NRCS on Federal Conservation Programs
 - ~ Conservation Education to Youth & Adults



MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS HOSTS THE 65TH ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION

MACD Press Release

More than 200 leaders representing Montana's 58 Conservation Districts met in Great Falls November 8-9 at the Best Western Heritage Inn. Representing the Pondera County Conservation District were Supervisors Ramsey Offerdal, Jack Judisch, Kory Kovatch and Paul Kronebusch as well as District Administrator Kody Farkell. "Energizing Montana's Conservation District's with Common \$en\$e" was the theme carried throughout the two-day meeting with breakout sessions focused on alternative energy such as wind power and bio-fuels. Governor Schweitzer also focused on the topic in his remarks to the group.



Conrad Anker holds several speed climbing records, but he is probably best known for discovering the body of George Mallory.

National Association of Conservation Districts president-elect Olin Simms led a discussion regarding the importance of marketing conservation districts and getting their "local, common-sense conservation" message out to the public. Each district was then able to take a marketing strategy home to utilize for their individual conservation district.

During the business session, delegates voted on resolutions ranging from Planning Board representation to the 310 Law. A highlight of the convention was listening to world-renowned mountain climber Conrad Anker. He gave a historical account of the expedition during which he found the body of early 20th Century Mount Everest explorer George Mallory.



KMON Radio Farm Director Shawn Fladager entertained at lunch by providing a live broadcast. Here he is interviewing Governor Schweitzer about renewable energy.

"This year's meeting is the perfect mix of education and energy-building about CD efforts," noted MACD Executive Director Sarah Carlson. "Montana's natural resource issues become more complex and varied every day. Conservation districts must have the information and resources necessary to meet these new challenges. Our annual convention is designed to assist the CDs in securing the tools necessary to successfully solve today's natural resource problems as they have been doing for 60 years," She added.

For additional information, contact the Montana Association of Conservation Districts at 443-5711 or the Pondera County Conservation District at 278-7611.

NCAT ANNOUNCES BIODIESEL/OILSEED INNOVATION GRANTS

Courtesy of www.ncat.org

Montana farmers interested in learning more about how to produce and use biodiesel or how to raise oilseed crops now have a new tool. Applications are now being accepted for Innovation Grants from the Oilseeds for Fuel, Feed and the Future Project. Maximum grant size is \$3,000, and the deadline for applications is January 19, 2007. Applications are available online at www.ncat.org.

The purpose of the grants program is to increase knowledge in three areas:

- Oilseed crops that can be used for a range of products (such as lubricants, culinary oils or biodiesel)
- On-farm production and/or personal use of biodiesel and its co-products
- Markets and buyers' expectations for oilseed crops

"The grants can be used for a wide range of learning, testing or development activities," said Al Kurki, Project Coordinator, from the National

Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT). "This could range from performance testing biodiesel to feeding oilseed cake to livestock."

The Oilseeds for the Future Project aims to reduce the risk and create new opportunities for Montana farmers that want to participate in, and benefit from, an emerging bio-based economy. The project combines educational opportunities (workshops, farm tours) with incentive grants and farmer feedback to advance knowledge and action.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December

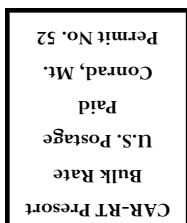
5th - 7th - Watershed Symposium (Great Falls)
11th - NO PCCD Regular Meeting
12th - Marias River Watershed Meeting (Shelby) @ 1:00 pm
21st - Montana Range Days Planning Meeting @ 7:30 pm
25st - Christmas (Office Closed)

January

1st - New Years Day (Office Closed)
2nd - Marias River Watershed Meeting (Shelby) @ 1:00 pm
8th - PCCD Regular Meeting @ 7:30pm
15th - Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday (Office Closed)
18th - Montana Range Days Planning Meeting @ 7:30pm

February

6th - Marias River Watershed Annual Meeting (Shelby)- 1:00 pm
12th - PCCD Regular Meeting @ 7:30pm
14th - Valentine's Day
19th - Washington's Birthday (Office Closed)
22nd - Montana Range Days Planning Meeting @ 7:30pm



PONDERA COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
406 NORTH MAIN
CONRAD MONTANA 59425