



## Pondera County Conservation District



## Local Common Sense Conservation

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VOLUME 35, ISSUE 3

SEPTEMBER 2006

### GOVERNOR'S RANGE TOUR COMING TO AREA

The 2006 Governor's Range Tour is on its way to Pondera County. Co-hosted with Toole, Glacier and Liberty County Conservation Districts, as well as the Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC), The Pondera County Conservation District is scheduling this two-day annual event.

Governor's Range Tour is an annual tour which travels to a different corner of the state each year. The tour is an opportunity for the hosting county to showcase outstanding rangeland man-

agement methods being implemented in their area. This also gives landowners and agency personnel a chance to share concerns and ideas on how to improve Montana's rangeland resources.

This year the Governor's Range Tour will visit three counties; Pondera, Toole and Glacier counties, with topics ranging from Conservation Easements to Integrating Wildlife & Cattle Grazing to Weed Management Strategies.

At the banquet on the evening of the 12th

Governor Brian Schweitzer will be offering a keynote address and attendees will be entertained by Wildlife Specialist Vince Yannone.

Four (4) Commercial and Two (2) Private Pesticide Applicator Credits will be available for attending.

Enclosed in this newsletter is a schedule & registration form for the event.

For more information on the Governor's Range Tour contact Kody Farkell at 406/278-2711 ext 101.

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### CONRAD FFA MEMBERS DO WELL AT RANGE DAYS

*By Jason Silvernale, Conrad FFA Reporter*

June 19-21, the Conrad FFA chapter sent eight members to Montana Range Days in Clyde Park. Range Days consists of three days of range ecology education taught by leading professionals from the NRCS, DNRC, BLM, and area Conservation Districts. Workshops focus on plant identification, range management, animal stocking rates, and weed control.

Overall the event had more than 150 students from across the state participating. Members from Conrad included Karl Bjelland, Dusty Jones, Steven Knox, Alex Linn, Cutter Martin, Evan Pearson, David Ratzburg, and Jason Silvernale.



*Con't on Page 4*

## NRCS NEWS - BY STACY DENNY ENEBOE

### CSP MODIFICATIONS

Conservation Security Contract (CSP) holders who have an existing 2004 or 2005 CSP contract can modify contracts until Sept. 15.

Participants that meet the constraints identified below may request the following types of changes to their contracts. Requests from FY 2004 and FY 2005 CSP contract participants for contract improvement modifications that are outside these constraints and types of modifications will not be accepted during this modification request period. These modification requests will be held as pending until the FY '07 budget level is known. NRCS will make decisions based on the FY 2007 CSP funding level. Contract modifications, if approved, will not take effect until after October 1.

<b>Tier Transition</b>	Modifications will be allowed to advance tiers on the operating unit identified in the benchmark agricultural operation delineation and still under the participant's control. Addition of land identified in the benchmark agricultural operation must result in a transition from a Tier I to a Tier II or Tier III contract.
<b>Adding Newly Acquired Land</b>	For Tier III contracts and those contracts advancing to Tier III, contract modifications will be allowed to add newly acquired land. A modification to add newly acquired land will require the participant to update the agricultural operation delineation to include all newly acquired agricultural land under their control. No newly acquired land will be added to Tier I or Tier II contracts, unless they are advancing to Tier III.
<b>Adding Enhancements</b>	For Tier III contracts and those contracts advancing to Tier III, contract modifications will be allowed to add new enhancements that have been established, or that are planned for future application. No new enhancements will be added to Tier I or Tier II contracts that are not advancing to a Tier III.

### CONTRACTOR LIST

The NRCS office is in the process of developing a list of available contractors in the area. We need your help to ensure that the list is complete. If you are a contractor or wish to have contractor included on the list please call office at (406) 278-7611 ext 112. The NRCS office cannot recommend a contractor but would like to have the most current information available for producers when requested. The list is only as accurate as the information that is provided to us.

### EQIP SPECIAL WILDLIFE SIGN-UP

NRCS plans to make \$2 million available to assist agricultural producers whose lands are impacted by wildfires in Montana. The sign-up for this special initiative starts immediately, but actual funding will come from fiscal year 2007 appropriations, decided by Congress this fall.

Private landowners who sustain damage from a documented 2006 wildfire may be eligible for a one-time \$11 per acre incentive payment. This incentive payment is intended to partially reimburse landowners for replacing fence, reestablishing livestock watering facilities, and allowing for the recovery of natural vegetation through deferred grazing. Grazing must be deferred from now until October 1, 2007 to be eligible for the sign-up. No more than 2,500 acres of grazing land can be contracted per agricultural operation under this special initiative.

The application period for the wildfire recovery special initiative begins immediately and closes Oct. 2. Adhering to program rules will not guarantee approval of a producer's application; however, it does mean interested producers will remain eligible for funding consideration.



## RANGE DAYS CON'T...

Montana Range Days will be held in Pondera County in June of 2007 and 2008. The Pondera County Conservation District is looking forward to welcoming this major statewide event to our area. Montana Range Days has been held annually since the early 1970s rotating every two years to a new county. The closest Montana Range Days has been to Pondera County is to the south in Cascade and to the east in Winifred.

Pondera County has much to offer in range ecology and diversity. Please consider volunteering for Montana's premier range education event to showcase our county and be a part of teaching youth about conservation and good management practices.

The Pondera County Conservation District is looking for volunteers to help with this major event the next two years. Help is needed in a wide variety of areas including (but not limited to) coordinating events, kitchen staff, computer data entry, and first aid staff. To help or inquire about the event contact Pondera County Conservation District Administrator, Kody Farkell at 278-7611 ext 101, or Paul Jones 2007-2008 Montana Range Days Pondera County Steering Committee Chairman at 627-2222.



Photo 1 back row L to R: Dusty Jones, Evan Pearson, Steven Knox, and David Ratzburg

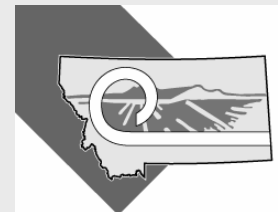


## SEEKING PONDERA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD

The Pondera County Conservation is currently seeking volunteers to serve as Associate Supervisors.

If you are interested in helping to conserve natural resources and educate others on natural resources conservation issues, contact the Pondera County Conservation District for information on becoming an Associate Supervisor. Some goals and activities of the Pondera County Conservation District are:

- √ Assess natural resource concerns in the District & develop strategies to address these issues
- √ Encourage participation in rangeland, watershed, weed and other natural resource programs
- √ Promote soil & water conservation
- √ Provide educational programs for schools, youth, adults and civic groups
- √ Participate in soil erosion control, salinity control, and weed management programs
- √ Drought Monitoring
- √ Natural Streambed & Land Preservation Act - (310 Law) Regulation



*If you are interested in serving as an Associate Member for the Pondera County Conservation District please call the District Office at 278-7611 ext 101 or any current Board Member.*

## WEEDING-OUT WHITETOP

*by Roger Sheley, MSU Extension Range Weed Specialist*

Whitetop is a serious threat to Montana. Three types of whitetop, all classified as noxious weeds, are currently invading Montana. This noxious weed threatens biodiversity that comprises our valuable plant and animal species. Biodiversity is critical for:

- conserving healthy wildlife populations
- sustaining recreation opportunities
- increasing stocking rates for livestock through enhanced forage production
- controlling soil erosion and sedimentation
- correctly functioning riparian areas



When whitetop invades an area, biodiversity becomes threatened, directly impacting the economy of Montana.

To identify mature whitetop, look for plants between 10 to 24 inches tall with snowy-white flowers having four petals. Notice that the arrow-shaped leaves on the stem occur alternately. Patches of mature whitetop sometimes resemble a patch of late-melting snow.

Whitetop spreads through seed dispersal via the wind, waterways and irrigation systems, on vehicles and machinery, and in hay and crop seed.

A single whitetop plant can produce up to 4,800 seeds each year and seeds remain viable for up to 3 years in the soil. Whitetop patches become 2 to 4 feet larger per year; a single plant can spread to an area 12 feet in diameter in its first year of growth.

Management of whitetop includes preventing new invasions by limiting seed dispersal. In infested areas during the seeding period refrain from driving vehicles and machinery through infested areas and refrain from livestock grazing.

To prevent new invasions to rangelands, proper livestock management is essential. Consider a grazing system that includes livestock rotation and altering the season of use.

Identify new, small invasions through continual systematic surveys, then quickly eradicate. If whitetop has already invaded and become established, integrate various combinations of competitive plantings, crop rotations, herbicides, and fertilizers to reduce whitetop to a manageable level.

If you notice a patch of whitetop on your property, eradicate it!

With a small whitetop infestation, digging and pulling while the soil is moist is an effective control method if the entire plant and its root system is removed. If infestations are larger, mowing to ground level before flowering and applying a metsulfuron herbicide can be effective, but must be repeated until the root reserves are depleted.

For large infestations in cropland-pasture rotation areas, planting legumes has the ability to greatly reduce whitetop. Extremely dense stands of legumes, like alfalfa, have the ability to compete with whitetop for soil moisture and have successfully shaded whitetop to the point of root reserve elimination.

Managing whitetop requires an integrated strategy; no single treatment will provide effective long-term control.

For additional information contact your local county extension agent or weed district supervisor.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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STEVE BECKER, PONDERA CO. WEED SUPERVISOR  
MIKE HABETS, BWQA  
PONDERA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

*September*

4th - Labor Day (Office Closed)  
5th - Marias River Watershed Meeting (Shelby)  
12th-13th - Governor's Range Tour (begins in Pondera County)  
21st - Montana Range Days Planning Meeting

*October*

3rd - Marias River Watershed Meeting (Shelby)  
9th - Columbus Day (Office Closed)  
9th - PCCD Regular Meeting @ 7:30pm  
19th - Montana Range Days Planning Meeting  
29th - Daylight Savings Time Begins  
31st - Halloween

*November*

7th - Election Day  
7th - Marias River Watershed Meeting (Shelby)  
8th-10th - MACD Convention (Great Falls)  
13th - PCCD Regular Meeting @ 7:30pm  
16th - Montana Range Days Planning Meeting @ 7:30pm  
23rd - Thanksgiving

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406 NORTH MAIN  
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