



# Gallatin Conservation Corner

**DISTRICT SUPERVISORS:**

Bill Skinner, Chairperson  
 Bill Wright, Vice-Chair  
 John Schutter  
 John Venhuizen  
 Sherwin Leep

**ASSOCIATE SUPERVISORS:**

Loren Blanksma  
 Duane Burkenpas  
 Tom Milesnick

**DISTRICT STAFF:**

Marcie Murnion,  
 District Administrator

**310 CONSULTANTS**

Dan March, Mike Rotar of Atkins  
 Mike Vaughn of FWP; Buddy  
 Drake, FWP

**NRCS FIELD OFFICE:**

Erik Suffridge,  
 District Conservationist  
 Vacant, Soil Conservationist  
 Marvin Hansen,  
 Soil Conservation Technician

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Volume 12—Issue 1  
 January, 2012

## New Office Building

The Gallatin Conservation District is excited to announce its recent acquisition of four business condominium units and three vacant lots located in Manhattan, MT. The condo units are incorporated in the Manhattan Marketplace and will serve as the new office location for the District. The lots are located just west of the condos and south of the Garden Café parking lot.

Chairperson for the District, Sherwin Leep, states, “It has been a goal of the Board of Supervisors for some time to acquire property that meets our needs and was within the cost range of funds we had saved for this specific purpose. Although our current location worked well in many ways, we were unable to expand or hire additional employees. With this new acquisition we are looking forward to the exciting prospect of enhancing our programs and thereby hopefully better serving the public.”

Supervisor Bill Wright added, “I am pleased that we will now be able to expand our services of the District (which covers the majority of Gallatin County) from a very adequate location.”

The interior of the condos, approximately 3000 sf, are unfinished and the District has finalized the interior plans and will place the project out for bid in the near future. Additional information about the bidding process will be posted on our website at: [www.gallatincd.mt.nacdnet.org](http://www.gallatincd.mt.nacdnet.org).

The new office complex will also feature a conference room and kitchen facility, able to host approximately 50 people for meetings, workshops, and events. It has been a goal of the District to incorporate a meeting hall and to help promote agriculture related, natural resource related, and community meetings at one central location.

The District has tentative plans to relocate to their new office in the summer of 2012 and plans to hold an open house in October, 2012. Watch the website for updates - [www.gallatincd.mt.nacdnet.org](http://www.gallatincd.mt.nacdnet.org) or call 522-4011 for additional information.

## Education Specialist

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The Board of Supervisors is excited to announce the addition of Michelle Dammen, the new Education Specialist. Michelle was hired as a temporary employee for the District and began her employment on January 3, 2012. At the end of the temporary position (before June 30, 2012) the District intends to fill the position on a permanent basis and will post the job announcement with Job Service and in the local newspapers. Michelle introduces herself below:

Hello, my name is Michelle Dammen, the new Education Specialist for the Gallatin Conservation District. I grew up in the Flathead Valley where my family farms and ranches and made my way to the beautiful Gallatin Valley to pursue my bachelor's degree in Agricultural Relations and returned for my Master's in Agricultural Education.

Upon graduating in May of 2010, I began work as the Resource Technician for the Gallatin CD contracted through Gallatin County Extension. For the past year and a half, I have been running the small acreage program and consulting with landowners all over Gallatin County.

My background has primarily been in production agriculture while I grew up and worked with my family as well as several summers at the Northwestern Agricultural Research Center in Creston, MT. As an avid 4-H and FFA member growing up, I also developed an enthusiasm for youth development and spent a summer as a youth specialist at a summer camp in upstate New York after earning my undergraduate degree. I also spent some time in Jamaica building houses and teaching at the local elementary schools.

I am very passionate about youth, agriculture and education and I am very excited to embark on a career that will allow me to combine my skills and my passions. I am looking forward to continuing the small acreage program and expanding educational programming to help achieve the goals of the Gallatin Conservation District.

Michelle's office number is 522-4016 and cell number is 209-2180. Her email will be available in a couple weeks and will be posted on the District website, [www.gallatincd.mt.nacdnet.org](http://www.gallatincd.mt.nacdnet.org).

Welcome aboard, Michelle!

## New FSA County Executive Director

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The Gallatin and Park FSA County Committees recently selected Billy Denison as the County Executive Director (CED), following the retirement of Bob Broyles.

Billy said, "I'm looking forward to serving the producers in Gallatin and Park, alongside with the other USDA Service Center employees. I appreciate the welcome I've received and look forward to meeting everyone."

Billy began his career with ASCS in 1987, and spent his first 23 years in the panhandle and south plains areas of West Texas as a CED. In July of 2010, Billy and his wife Cathy, a native Montanan, moved from Texas to Montana to join the Montana's FSA team as CED in the Ronan and Plains Service Centers.

Please feel free to come by the office, or call, anytime to visit and meet Billy.

# Events and CD News

## Gallatin County Landowner Books -

The Gallatin CD is now selling 8 1/2 x 11 spiral bound landownership books. The book lists landowners who have 15 or more acres. The book also denotes US Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Montana State Trust Lands, and Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks land.

The map itself is a color grid map and each page contains one township and lists the sections, township and range.

This is a great resource for recreationists, agriculture producers, and the general public as it helps promote private property rights. The books were updated in October 2011 and are \$30.00. The CD accepts checks or cash - please contact Marcie at 522-4011 to order.

## CD Annual Banquet -

Some exciting changes for the CD Annual Banquet include altering the date from March to October. We plan to change the entire venue and hold in conjunction with the open house this October. Sounds like fun - watch for details!

## 310's Processed in 2011 -

The District processed a larger than normal amount of 310's in 2011. The average number of emergencies in any given year is approximately five (5) and this year we processed 28. Most of the emergencies addressed were the result of flooding issues.

Landowners are encouraged to take the necessary measures now to avoid the stress of an emergency situation during the spring. A 310 is necessary for the protection of the resource and is required for any person who is proposing a project that would physically alter or modify the beds or banks of a perennial flowing stream, spring, or river.

## Tree Seedlings

Orders are being accepted at the CD or Conservation Nursery for seedling orders. Landowners with 10+ acres are given priority before March 1st. Seedlings must be for a conservation practice. Order forms and inventory list available at the CD (522-4011) or from the nursery at: <http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/nursery/>

**Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day.**

Some or all of the writings in this newsletter may not necessarily reflect the views of the Board of Supervisors, the staff, or both, or neither.



## Calendar

February		March		April	
2	310 Applications Due	1	310 Applications Due	5	310 Applications Due
7-8	310 Inspections	6-7	310 Inspections	10-11	310 Inspections
16	Board Mtg, 10:00 a.m.	15	Board Meeting, 10:00 a.m.	19	Board Mtg, 4:00 p.m.
20	Presidents Day Holiday				

*Board meetings are held at the USDA Building, 3710 Fallon Street in the east wing conference room.  
The office is closed on holidays.*

# Soil Health Workshop

January 10, 2012  
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Billings Hotel and Convention Center

Want to decrease your inputs while maintaining or increasing your yields? Find out how at a soil health workshop sponsored by the Yellowstone, Carbon, Stillwater, and Musselshell Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Soil Water Conservation Society (SWCS).

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Increase Soil Organic Matter
- Increase water infiltration
- Reduce Soil Compaction
- Deeper rooting systems
- Reduce weed pressures
- Decrease overall farm inputs
- Livestock integration onto cropland
- No-till planting equipment and troubleshooting and general information
- Observation of soil health practices in Montana

Jay Fuhrer internationally recognized NRCS soil conservationist will present several long-term farm case studies with proven results that used soil health focused techniques.

Paul Jasa is a no-till equipment and systems specialist. Paul is an engineer from the University of Nebraska has been worked with planting equipment and tillage system evaluation since 1978 and will be present detailed information on no-till planting equipment and system management.

Mike Choriki is a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) who has seen firsthand what has worked across the northern Great Plains. Mike was raised in Great Falls, attended MSU-Bozeman, and studied soils and agronomy.

Grower Panel Discussion including topics on forage winter wheat, cover crops and soil moisture, planting "no-till" sugar beets, dealing with surface residues when planting, and more...

Lunch provided with RSVP by January 5, 2012 to (406) 587-6856 or [soilhealthmontana@gmail.com](mailto:soilhealthmontana@gmail.com) with your name and contact information. For additional information please contact your local NRCS office.

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Persons with disabilities who require special accommodations and/or alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, Large print, audiotape, etc.) associated with this meeting should contact Kate Norvell at (406) 587-6856 or [soilhealthmontana@gmail.com](mailto:soilhealthmontana@gmail.com) at least two weeks prior to the meeting with his/her specific request.

# NRCS News

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## NRCS Field Office Staffing Update

Wendy Williams, the soil conservationist in the Bozeman Field Office of NRCS since 1993, left her position in October 2011 for an opportunity to work in the NRCS state office in Bozeman. In her new position, Wendy will have statewide responsibilities dealing with NRCS cost lists, CRP, conservation planning, and more. We wish Wendy much success in her new position! Currently, her position is vacant and has yet to be advertised, but we hope to have a new employee on board in time for the spring field season.

## NRCS Conservation Program Deadlines

NRCS has established the following 2012 conservation program and initiative deadlines. Interested applicants are encouraged to apply 3-4 weeks prior to these cut-off dates in order to ensure that all eligibility paperwork and determinations can be completed by the deadline (CSP is the exception). Initiatives available in Gallatin County and their applicable deadlines are:

**January 13, 2012:** 2012 Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) application deadline - <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/news/releases/csp12-12-11.html>

**February 3, 2012:** Round 1 - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Seasonal High Tunnel Pilot

Initiative, EQIP On-Farm Energy Initiative, and EQIP Organic Initiative - <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/news/releases/EQIP12-5-11.html>

**March 16, 2012:** EQIP Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures Initiative - [http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/eqip2012/2012\\_SPCC\\_si.html](http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/eqip2012/2012_SPCC_si.html)

**March 30, 2012:** Round 2 (pending funding availability) - EQIP Seasonal High Tunnel Pilot Initiative, EQIP On-Farm Energy Initiative, and EQIP Organic Initiative - <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/news/releases/EQIP12-5-11.html>

**June 1, 2012:** Round 3 (pending funding availability) - EQIP Seasonal High Tunnel Pilot Initiative, EQIP On-Farm Energy Initiative, and EQIP Organic Initiative - <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/news/releases/EQIP12-5-11.html>

As always, the general EQIP application cut-off date is June 1. Therefore, in order to be considered for general EQIP assistance in 2013, applications must be submitted to NRCS by June 1, 2012.

*Submitted by Erik Suffridge, District Conservationist*

## FSA - New AGI Certification Form

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The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has recently developed a new form that will consolidate the process of adjusted gross income (AGI) certification and providing written consent for the disclosure of tax information required for the compliance purposes. The two part process has been combined into a single one-page document. The new form, CCC-931, is a required eligibility form for all 2012 FSA and NRCS programs. The county office will provide assistance in filling out the form and will be responsible for sending the forms to the IRS in California.

In addition to the new form, an additional AGI limitation will apply to the 2012 direct payments. The recently passed Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2012, included a \$1 million average AGI limitation, in addition to the \$500,000 average nonfarm AGI and the \$750 average farm AGI limitations that applies to all persons and legal entities that request 2012 DCP payments. Entities and individuals that make more than \$1 million in combined farm and nonfarm income will not be eligible for 2012 DCP payments.

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## Featured Weed

### Useless Facts?

- ◆ Poison oak is not oak; poison ivy is not ivy. Both are members of the cashew family.
- ◆ A crocodile weighing 120 lbs exerts about 1,540 lbs of force between its jaws. A human exerts about 40-60 lbs.
- ◆ The earthworm can clear and aerate half a pound of soil in a day. On average there are 3 million worms per acre of fertile soil.

Tall Buttercup, *Ranunculus acris* L, is a hairy perennial that may grow up to three feet in height.

Stems are hollow and branched at the top of the plant. The leaves are unique as they are thicker on the bottom and have long petioles, with 3 to 5 lobes. The upper leaves are reduced to 3 to 4 narrow segments.

Flowers are bright yellow with five rounded petals, are one inch or more in diameter and have a glossy appearance. Each flower produces yellowish, egg-shaped, flat seeds with a short, tipped hook on the ends.

This weed was introduced from Europe and is very common in the western states and is present in Gallatin County. Tall buttercup is toxic to livestock while on the stem and livestock usually avoid the weed due to an unpalatable juice.

Control measures include herbicides, hand pulling (more effective if entire root system is removed), and prescribed mowing.



Photo from Montana Weed Control Association website.