



Gallatin Conservation Corner

DISTRICT SUPERVISORS:

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 Bill Wright, Vice-Chair
 John Schutter
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 Sherwin Leep

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISORS:

Loren Blanksma
 Duane Burkenpas
 Tom Milesnick

DISTRICT STAFF:

Marcie Murnion,
 District Administrator.
 Vacant,
 Resource Technician

310 CONSULTANTS

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

NRCS FIELD OFFICE:

Erik Suffridge,
 District Conservationist.
 Christopher Mahony, Soil
 Conservationist.
 Marvin Hansen,
 Soil Conservation Technician.

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Volume 12—Issue 2
 June, 2012

Cost Share Program

The Gallatin Conservation District is excited to announce a new program for Gallatin County landowners. A cost share program has been developed and the District is currently accepting applications.

The District will fund 50% of a project, up to \$1000.00. All applications will be ranked and the top applications will receive the funding. Applicants will receive the funding after the project has been installed and inspected. Applicants are expected to match up to 50% of the project and the match may come in the form of material, labor, or equipment rental.

The program is designed to assist landowners with natural resource-based projects with the main focus of improving soil and water. An array of projects will be considered including fencing, water management, alternative energy projects, seeding/revegetation, dry lots, composting, xeriscaping, weed management, and others. The program encourages the installation or improvement of more than one practice, i.e., reseeding, cross fencing, and weed management. The District will also work with applicants to develop a simple and useful management plan to be used for future improvements.

The program is available to landowners within the District boundary (which excludes major portions of Bozeman and Belgrade set by the 1949 boundary). Applicants will participate in an on-site consultation with the District's Resource Technician and after the project(s) are complete, recipients will participate in a follow up inspection.

Program information is available on the **NEW District website:**
www.gallatincd.org

For additional information on the cost share program please email Marcie at marcie@gallatincd.org

Employment Opportunity

The CD is seeking applications for a Resource Technician for an immediate start date (the close date is June 15, 2012).

The individual selected for this position should possess a degree in a natural resource/agricultural field and also have experience in the educational field.

The position is multi-faceted and the selected candidate will be providing natural resource management skills and techniques to small acreage landowners as well as hosting educational events for youth and adults. The selected candidate will also offer presentations to a variety of groups, collaborate on projects with different entities, and assist

the district in achieving the overall mission of 'local common sense conservation.'

To apply, please download the CD Application on the new CD website: www.gallatincd.org. Please provide a resume, references, and the CD application to: Gallatin CD, 3710 Fallon Street Ste B, Bozeman MT 59718 by/on June 15th. Application materials may also be emailed to: info@gallatincd.org.

This position was formally held by Michelle Dammen who recently accepted a new employment opportunity. We wish Michelle much success in her new endeavors.

Public Involvement Opportunities

The public is encouraged to participate in two upcoming CD events; the first is to develop a conceptual design for the educational outreach center (natural resource demonstration area) located at the vacant lots in Manhattan and the second is public input for the adoption of rules to address in-stream mining.

Conceptual Design

The CD is helping host two AmeriCorps members and the members are tasked with designing the demonstration areas and also developing a planning committee of professionals in certain fields to assist with the overall

design. If you are interested in participating, please contact either Marianne Pott at: Marianne.pott@montana.edu or Alicia DeGroot at: Alicia.t.degroot@gmail.com.

July 9th Public Meeting

The CD will host a public meeting on July 9th at 4:00 p.m. at the USDA Service Center, 3710 Fallon Street to accept public comment regarding the mining criteria developed to incorporate when considering an in-stream mining application or the issuance of a 310 permit. Public comment is limited to five minutes per person.

Upcoming Summer Youth Camps

The Gallatin CD offers scholarships to help offset costs for youth to attend the following camps. Go to: www.gallatincd.org and click on youth education for application.

Montana Range Days, hosted by the Deer Lodge Valley Conservation District; June 18-20 at St. Mary's Center. Cost is \$40.00 or \$90.00 for a family. Contact Susie Johnson at 406-846-1703 ext 4 for additional information.

Natural Resources Youth Camp, July 15-16 at Lubrecht Experimental Forest east of Missoula. Cost is \$200.00 due by June 15th. Contact Martin Twer at 406-243-2775 or director@mnryc.org for further information.

Montana Youth Range Camp hosted by Broadwater Conservation District, July 16-20 at Grassy Mountain Lodge, Townsend MT. Cost is \$125, for additional information contact Denise Thompson at 406-266-3146 ext 104.

Events and CD News

New Website Address

The District has a new website address!! Our new address is:

www.gallatincd.org The new site is more user friendly and offers event registration, polls, direct email, and a new fillable 310 application. Check it out today! Please remember to update your browser with our new address!

Request for Bids

The District will soon be accepting bids for the construction of the interior of the four condo units owned by the District. The condos are located at 120 South 5th Avenue in Manhattan MT. The bid announcement will be posted under public notices in local newspapers within the next month. Once announced, the bid package will be posted on the CD website at: www.gallatincd.org.

LWG Meeting Held

In conjunction with NRCS, the CD recently hosted the Local Work Group meeting in Bozeman. The focus for this group is to bring agency personnel and private citizens together to provide recommenda-

tions to NRCS for EQIP funding. This year the group choose 'soil health' as the top resource concern for Gallatin County.

Cover Crop Cocktail Field Day

MSU, in collaboration with NRCS and the Gallatin CD, is hosting a cover crop field day on June 14th from 10-noon at Carl Vandermolen's (Arnold Road, south of Amsterdam). The field day is free but please RSVP by June 11th as the Gallatin CD will be providing refreshments; email Marcie at: marcie@gallatincd.org or phone 522-4011.

Montana Envirothon

The Gallatin CD was able to sponsor the Belgrade FFA team in their first time participating at the Montana Envirothon, April 23-24th in Lewistown, MT. The team consisted of: Jason Francis, David (Trey) Rickett, Jared Barr, and David Oster. This year's topic was non-point source pollution and low impact development. Out of 33 teams, the team did very well considering this was their first year and they tied for 9th in Aquatics, and were 19th in Soils. Great job Belgrade FFA!

How vain it is to sit down to write when you have not stood up to live.

-Henry David Thoreau

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.



Meeting/310 Calendar

June		July		August	
7	310 Applications Due	5	310 Applications Due	2	310 Applications Due
12-13	310 Inspections	10-11	310 Inspections	7-8	310 Inspections
21	Board Meeting 4:00 p.m.	19	Board Meeting, 4:00 p.m.	16	Board Meeting 4:00 p.m.
		4	<i>Independence Day</i>		

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

NRCS Updates

By Erik Suffridge, District Conservationist

Soil Health: What is all the hubbub?

In recent months and years, there has been a flurry of media articles and other outreach information supplied by agencies, individuals and others on the topic of “soil health.” You may have been left wondering: What is soil health? Why is soil health being emphasized now? What are the benefits of soil health? What will it cost me? What will I gain? Where can I find more information? If these or other similar questions have you puzzled, then read on and consider attending the Cover Crop Field Day on June 14.

Due to limited space, I will attempt to answer these five questions with a brief narrative. Soil health is not a new concept. My experience has been that it is a progression of a topic that many of us in the conservation field were calling “soil quality” 10-15 years ago. The primary difference between “soil quality” and “soil health” is that other than a few of us with soil biology backgrounds who actually considered the biological roles in nutrient cycling, soil quality focused on the physical and chemical aspects of soil. Primary considerations in soil quality were given to reducing erosion and increasing organic matter through reduced (or no) tillage and residue management. Seen occasionally was the planting of cover crops (usually single species) over-winter to minimize water erosion during late fall, winter, and early spring or planting during summer fallow periods to increase organic matter, control weeds, and reduce erosion. That Midwest and Southeast philosophy led to widespread adoption of no-till operations in those areas. Today, soil health is meant to signify the inclusion and consideration of soil biology whereby recognition is given to the role that soil microorganisms play in processing, holding, and making available nutrients that your crop needs. To learn more, contact the local NRCS field office and/or plan to attend the Cover Crop Field Day on June 14.

The Significance of Partnerships!

The partnership between the NRCS and the conservation district movement has been ongoing since the 1930s and 40s. But, what is the effect of that partnership, specifically at the local level? A recent soil health workshop in Billings can serve as a good illustration. While this example uses the soil health workshop, the example can easily be transferred to other topics, events and efforts. This workshop was attended by over 180 individuals from across the state of Montana. Unlike many events, the vast majority of attendees were agricultural producers and not agency employees. This successful event was not successful solely because of NRCS. This successful event was not successful solely because of the local conservation districts that sponsored it. This successful event was not solely successful due to the topic or the broad, knowledgeable out-of-state speakers that were present. The event’s success can be traced to one word – partnership! The partnership between local NRCS field offices and local conservation districts is what made the workshop successful. It was the ability of the NRCS field offices and the local conservation districts, which walk hand-in-hand in this journey of conservation, which made the event’s success possible. The Conservation Districts were able to generate local interest and support and provide funding for the meal and other aspects. The NRCS field offices were able to generate agency support from agency technical support staff and funding from management for the speakers. So, the next time that you have an idea for a natural resource conservation project, workshop, or other effort, consider engaging your local NRCS field office and your local conservation district in the effort. We all might just be the better for it.

Leadership in 21st Century Conservation

The term “leadership” means different things to different people. To some it is merely related to the office or position that a person holds. This thought arises from a philosophy or belief that magic occurs when one is appointed to a position and that the appointee suddenly becomes a “leader”. To others, there is a distinction between simply being an administrator, a manager or a supervisor and being a leader. A few examples of leadership that quickly come to mind for me are the special initiative efforts of Dave White, the former Montana NRCS state conservationist. Dave pushed the national office to think outside the box by directing his state office staff to work with field, area, and state technical staff to develop, document, and justify the use of farm bill conservation program funds for targeted natural resource concerns at the county, area, and state levels in Montana. Those successful models of conservation innovation are now being widely used within states around the country as well as on a national level with sage grouse, water quality, and other national conservation initiatives.

Conservation leadership is also demonstrated when you lay the foundation for future conservation efforts, often by going against the flow of conventional thinking. Don Tyler (<http://milan.tennessee.edu/> & <http://milan.tennessee.edu/MNTFD/>) and others were working on soil quality (no-till, precision farming and cover crops) in the Southeast long before “soil quality” or “soil health” became buzzwords. Jay Fuhrer and the Burleigh County Conservation District (Bismarck, ND) *(continued on page 5)*

New Soil Conservationist

Greetings,

My name is Christopher Mahony and I have been given the privilege of working here in Bozeman as a Soil Conservationist. I originally moved to Bozeman in 1991 for the skiing but realized that the summers were even more beautiful so decided to stay. To fulfill my skiing passion I was gainfully employed by Bridger Bowl for 19 years in the ski shop, with a few years of grooming and snowmaking. After a few seasons working for landscapers in town during the off-season I decided to start my own landscape and irrigation business. In 1996, I decided that I wanted something more out of a career and returned to school with the hope of obtaining a masters degree in natural resources. Since my undergraduate degree was in political science I was required to complete some science courses in order to qualify for a masters program. During this period I spent 2 semesters at University of Montana in their forestry program, 2 semesters in Morocco and a number of semesters at Montana state University. Eventually I was accepted into the masters program at Montana State University in plant science and graduated in 2005. After graduating I started a native plant nursery/reclamation business for a number of years. During this period I was involved in numerous stream restoration, wetland mitigation and other planting projects.

For the past two years I have been employed by the NRCS

in Scobey, MT as a soil conservationist. Much of my work as a soil conservationist in Daniels County was related to dry land farming with some range and pasture mixed in. Specifically, I was involved with no-till, cover crops, spring developments, CRP, pipelines, tree and shrub plantings, grazing plans, fencing, crop rotations and pasture and range planting to name a few. Previous to my employment with the NRCS I had worked for the Forest Service as a seasonal forestry technician here on the Gallatin for a number of years and one summer in southeast Alaska. Additionally, I spent one summer as a range technician for the BLM out of Malta, MT and one summer traversing Wyoming mapping vegetative cover.

In summary, I am truly excited to be here in the Gallatin valley. It is my hope that I might be able to help producers achieve their conservation goals while maintaining a viable, profitable and sustainable operation. While I do have some expertise in some areas, I do realize that I also have much to learn from the producers here in the Gallatin. I believe every operation is unique, especially here in the Gallatin Valley, and consequently there are many opportunities to learn and work with folks.

I can be reached at 522-4012 and my email is Christopher.Mahony@mt.usda.gov

Leadership in 21st Century Conservation Con't

<http://www.bcsd.com/>), and Dwayne Beck (South Dakota State University) (<http://dakotalakes.com/index.htm>) were working on soil quality/soil health issues before the subject became "cool." Montana soil health leaders have included Ann Fischer (Baker, MT), Wendy Williams (Bozeman, MT), and other members of the Montana Soil and Water Conservation Society (<http://www.mtswcs.org/>) who also picked up and successfully promoted the topic years before soil health became the latest catch phrase.

This leads me to my latest, perhaps most important example of conservation leadership for readers of this newsletter. For a number of years, the Gallatin CD has pondered, discussed, budgeted, and otherwise planned for the day when they could expand the assistance that they offer to the citizens and natural resources of Gallatin County. Like any new endeavor, they probably felt their share of skepticism, maybe even a little criticism. They stuck with it and a few years ago, they brought on a field-level resource technician to fill a niche with small acre producers and conservation education programs that NRCS was less able to support due to decreasing staff levels and increasing programmatic workload. Further, they are now realizing their long-term plan to branch out and obtain their own facility from which they can continue to plan to fill any resource niche that they may deem necessary. I have offered local NRCS assistance to them to achieve their goals and I hope you will join me in congratulating them on their conservation leadership stance and their commitment to agriculture and natural resource conservation in Gallatin County. I also hope that you will join with me in providing input to them on the needs within the county so that they can better position themselves in an ever-changing world of resource needs and locally-led conservation.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Do not think that love, in order to be genuine, has to be extraordinary. What we need is to love without getting tired. —Mother Theresa



3710 Fallon St. #B
Bozeman, MT 59718

PH 406-522-4011
Fax 406-522-4037

NEW SITE → www.gallatincd.org

Featured Weed

Useless Facts?

- ◆ 400 quarter pounders can be made from one cow.
- ◆ Honeybees have a type of hair on their eyes.
- ◆ If a rooster can't fully extend it's neck, it can't crow.
- ◆ The average person spends 12 weeks a year 'looking for things'. (This explains a lot!)
- ◆ 2000 lbs of space dust and other space debris fall on the Earth every day.

Sulfur Cinquefoil, *Potentilla recta*

Sulfur Cinquefoil is a perennial weed growing 1-3 feet tall with a single woody taproot.

The leaves are palmate with 5 to 7 toothed leaflets and may appear green on the underside rather than silvery. Leaves are 2-4 inches long and resemble marijuana leaves.

Flowers are light yellow with five petals and flowering occurs from May-July. Seeds are dark brown with ridges and shaped like a comma. The plant may spread via seed or roots.

Control can be tricky as herbicide seems to be the most effective method. Hand pulling (wear gloves) can be effective in small areas. Cutting/mowing as well as biological control are ineffective.



Photo by Matt Lavin ; obtained from Montana Weed Control Association website.