



Conservation CONNECTION

Rosebud and Big Horn Conservation Districts

ROSEBUD CONSERVATION DISTRICT: 270 S. Prospect • P.O. Box 1200 • Forsyth, MT 59327

BIG HORN CONSERVATION DISTRICT: 724 West 3rd Street • Hardin, MT 59034

ROSEBUD CD: Meetings: 1st Thursday • 406-346-7333 ext. 101 • Fax/Phone: 406-346-7479 | BIG HORN CD: Meetings: 1st Thursday • 406-629-3229

NRCS FORSYTH FIELD OFFICE: 406-346-7333 | HARDIN FIELD OFFICE: 406-665-3442 | LAME DEER FIELD OFFICE: 406-477-6494 | CROW AGENCY FIELD OFFICE: 406-638-9102



CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.

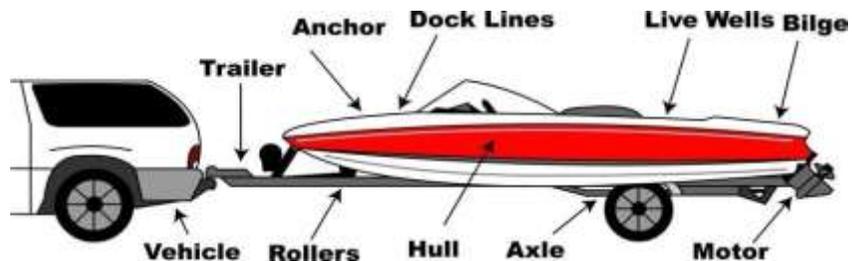
The Big Horn Conservation District has partnered with Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to better protect our waters from aquatic invasive species with the opening and operating of a new watercraft inspection station. The watercraft inspection station is located on Highway 313 between Saint Xavier and Fort Smith and will run until October 26th. The station is open Thursday to Saturday from 7 am to 7 pm.

Tips for a fast watercraft inspection:

- Remove water, mud, and vegetation from boat, trailer, and anchor.
- Remove boat plug and drain.
- Open and towel dry all compartments and live wells.
- Drain ballasts and bilge, wipe bilge areas dry if possible.
- Lower engine/motor to allow water to drain.
- Clear through-hull fitting.
- Be prepared to assist with the inspection.

Always remember to Clean, Drain & Dry your boat and gear every time to help protect our waters.

Key Areas:



For more information on watercraft inspection and the importance of protecting our waters please visit www.cleandraindrymt.com

NRCS Sets Conservation Program Funding Application Cutoff for August 30

Contact: [Jerry Shows](#) 406-587-6967

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Montana has set an Aug. 30, 2019, application cutoff for agricultural operators to be considered for the next conservation program funding cycle through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

NRCS provides funding and technical assistance to help farmers and ranchers implement conservation practices that provide environmental benefits to help sustain agricultural operations. Conservation program participation is voluntary and helps landowners and operators defray the costs of installing conservation practices.

Conservation funding is available for the following initiatives:

Capital 360 Forestry Project: This partnership project will improve forest health by integrating resource management across all administrative boundaries through reduction treatment projects strategically placed across Broadwater, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, and Powell counties.

High Tunnel Systems: These systems extend the growing seasons for high value crops in an environmentally safe manner. High tunnel benefits include better plant and soil quality and fewer nutrients and pesticides in the environment.

Honey Bee Pollinators: Combats future honey bee declines by implementing conservation practices that provide forage for honey bees while enhancing habitat for other pollinators and wildlife.

National On-Farm Energy Initiative: Agricultural producers work with an NRCS-approved technical service provider to develop agricultural energy management plans or farm energy audits that assess energy consumption on an operation. NRCS may also provide assistance to implement recommended measures identified in the energy audit through the use of conservation practice standards.

National Organic Initiative (NOI): Producers currently certified as organic, transitioning to organic, or National Organic Program exempt will have access to a broad set of conservation practices to assist in treating their resource concerns while fulfilling many of the requirements in an Organic System Plan.

National Water Quality Initiative: Producers implement conservation systems to reduce nitrogen, phosphorous, sediment and pathogen contributions from agricultural land in the Lower Gallatin Watershed (Camp and Godfrey Creeks).

Sage Grouse Initiative: Landowners can work with NRCS on three different components to improve sage-grouse habitat. One is a general category to implement prescribed grazing management practices. The others are to seed cropland back to perennial species to improve the connectivity for sage-grouse that depend on large, intact landscapes and the removal of conifers to increase nest success rates.

Wildfire Adapted Missoula: A partnership project that addresses shared wildfire risk by mitigating current wildfire hazards surrounding the Missoula community via prescribed fire and thinning maintenance.

Montana Focused Conservation - 2019 Targeted Implementation Plans:

Big Horn County – Ventenata Invasive Grass Control
Control the spread of Ventenata in Big Horn County through proper rangeland management and chemical control methods to improve rangeland health.

Big Horn and Yellowstone Counties – Irrigation Improvement Project
Convert less efficient irrigation systems to subsurface drip irrigation to increase irrigation efficiency, improve soil health and reduce soil compaction. **Continued on next page...**

Broadwater County – Elkhorn Cooperative Management Area Range Health and Conifer Encroachment Treatment

Remove conifers to restore plant productivity and health, improve forest health, reestablish proper hydrologic function and reduce wildfire risk.

Lewis and Clark County – Hazardous Fuels Reduction

Manage unhealthy forest conditions to reduce fuel hazards, improve rangeland health by removing encroaching conifers, prevent runoff of sediment and heavy metals post fire, and control the spread of noxious weeds and undesirable plant species.

Lake County – Miller Coulee Water Quantity Improvement Project

Improve water quantity by reducing off-field movement of irrigation water in the Miller Coulee project area.

Lincoln County – Edna-Fortine Creek Forest Resiliency Project

Implement forest management practices to reduce hazardous fuels around homes and structures within the wildland urban interface, improve resiliency to insects and diseases, increase wildfire preparedness, and improve overall forest health.

Stillwater County – Pasture Monoculture Diversification Project

Diversify a monoculture, tame pastures to a diverse mix of introduced and native plants to improve available forage, expand grazing options, and increase grazing animal carrying capacity.

EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to eligible participants to install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land. In Montana, socially disadvantaged, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers will receive a higher payment rate for eligible conservation practices applied.

NRCS accepts conservation program applications year-round; however, applications for the next funding consideration must be submitted by Aug. 30, 2019. Applications made after the cutoff will be considered in the next funding cycle. Additional information is available on the Montana NRCS website at www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov under the Programs tab or by contacting a local NRCS service center.

Visit us at www.rosebudcd.com

Rosebud Conservation District

Cover Crop Cost Share

Rosebud Conservation District is looking for producers who are seeking diversity in no-till cropping systems.

Incentive- \$20 per acre with a max of 20 acres

The purpose of the soil health incentive is to encourage the utilization of cover crops in no-till cropping systems. The proper cover crop can economically control erosion, reduce runoff, increase organic matter, break up crop disease patterns, cycle deep nutrients, and be used for haying and/or grazing. RCD will pay the actual seed and seeding cost up to \$20 an acre up to 20 acres or \$400 per producer in the conservation district boundaries. Responsibilities of the producer are to prepare a weed free seed bed, note all important observations, agree to tours and news article, if applicable, and provide information regarding fertilizer techniques. A requirement of the cost share agreement is that seed mixtures consist of at least three species of seed in the cover crop planting.

Contact Rosebud Conservation District at 406.346.7333

GRASS CLASS WORKSHOP

SEPTEMBER 18TH, 2019, 9AM-4:30PM, TO SEPTEMBER
19TH, 2019, 8AM-NOON
BIG HORN COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM
HARDIN, MT

Do you want to learn how to best manage your rangeland for your livestock? Do you want to learn how to develop your own grazing plan for your ranch? Come and join us for a day and half of learning about rangeland management!

You'll receive maps detailing your grazing operation, as well as a binder of vital information regarding developing a grazing plan and managing your grazing lands. USDA-NRCS staff will work with you to develop your own personalized grazing plan for your ranch and will provide suggestions for improving the management of your grazing operation.

Speakers Include:

- Joel Laliberty, USDA-NRCS Bozeman Area Resource Conservationist
- Nikki Rife, USDA-NRCS Bozeman Area Rangeland Management Specialist

There is no cost to attend! Limited to the first 10 ranches to RSVP!
Please RSVP no later than August 1st, 2019. Following this date, the Hardin FO staff will contact you to start developing ranch maps to be ready for the workshop in September.

Lunch will be provided on September 18th, and light refreshments will be available both days. For additional information regarding this workshop or to RSVP, please call the Hardin NRCS Field Office by calling: (406) 665-3442, ext. 3.



USDA provides reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities to participate in USDA programs and activities. If you require special accommodations, please contact the Hardin USDA-NRCS Field Office at: (406) 629-3220 prior to August 1st, 2019.

USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

TCCD SOIL HEALTH TOUR



WHEN

**September 18, 2019
1pm - 5pm**

WHERE

**Lions Park/Icopini Farms
Hysham, Mt. 59038**

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR A SOIL HEALTH TOUR
FOR FARMER AND RANCHERS COMBINED.
THE TOUR WILL BE FOLLOWED UP WITH
BBQ, DRINKS AND SOCIAL TIME. WE HOPE
TO SEE YOU THERE!**

LET'S GET TOGETHER

We will be meeting at Lions park in Hysham at 1pm for introductions. Tour of Icopini Farms and equipment demonstration will follow. We will end the tour back and Lions Park with a BBQ, drinks and social time.

FIELD TOUR

Companion Cropping
Minimum Till Beats
Grazing on Irrigated Crop Land
Rain Fall Simulator
Equipment Demonstration

SPEAKERS

Mark Henning, NRCS.

Susan Tallman, NRCS.

Marlin Winger, NRCS.

Bart Icopini, Producer.

Stacy Ogren, Rancher.

Contact for more info:

Angie Stahl

406-342-5510 ext. 102

*Big Horn River
Water Quality Workshop
Lunch & Learn*

Thursday, October 3rd, 2019

Noon-1:30pm

Bighorn Baptist Church

11 1st Street East

Fort Smith, MT

This meeting will focus on common agricultural practices in the Big Horn River Watershed, and the natural resource considerations along with related conservation practices that can impact the watershed.

Lunch will be provided! There is no cost to attend, but an RSVP is required. Please RSVP for this workshop no later than Tuesday, October 1st, 2019 by calling the Hardin USDA-NRCS Field Office at: (406) 629-3220.



USDA provides reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities to participate in USDA programs and activities. If you require special accommodations, please contact the Hardin USDA-NRCS Field Office at: (406) 629-3220 prior to September 23rd, 2019.

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Rosebud Conservation District Reserved Water

Montana's water reservation law provides an opportunity to legally allocate water for future consumptive uses as well as to maintain in-stream flows to protect water rights, aquatic life, and water quality.

The conservation district water reservations are for agricultural irrigation and in some districts for stock watering. Districts rely on land users within the basin to develop the water resource and put the reserved water to use. Districts encourage land users and resource managers to apply for reserved water for new or supplemental irrigation projects.

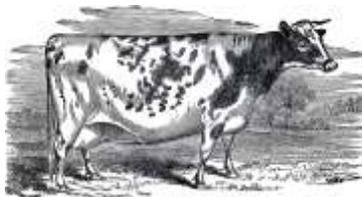
A reservation is subject to protection under the Montana Water Use Act and is an appropriate water right protected by law. In the case of the conservation district, the right is held by the district on behalf of the individual users. Individuals will apply to the district once they have plans to put the water to use. A water user receives an authorization or permit from the district for the right to use a portion of the district's reserved water. Legally, this is the same as when an individual obtains a permit from the Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC) to use water.



The Rosebud Conservation District, as a water reservation holder, is responsible for apportioning the reservation in an equitable manner. The district is also responsible for administering the use of its reserved water and in accordance with the "Board of Natural Resources Board Order Establishing Water Reservations". Rosebud Conservation District holds a water reservation of 87,003 acre-feet per year with a maximum flow rate of 540.7 cubic feet per second from the main stem of the Yellowstone River which has a priority date of December 15, 1978 (4:18 P.M.)

Rosebud Conservation District has
82,880.40 acre-feet and a flow rate of 464.61 cubic feet per second available.

If you are in need of reserved water and would like more information or an application contact
Rosebud Conservation District's Administrator Bobbi Vannattan at 406-346-7333 ext. 8012



"If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere." ~Vincent van Gogh~

"The best classroom and the richest cupboard is roofed only by the sky." ~Margaret McMillan~

"Gardening simply does not allow one to be mentally old, because too many hopes and dreams are yet to be realized." ~Allan Armitage~

"I had an inheritance from my father, it was the moon and the sun. And though I roam all over the world, the spending of it's never done." ~Ernest Hemingway~

Hello Sterling!

The Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) would like to welcome Sterling Spilinek, Range and Wildlife Conservationist with Pheasants Forever!

Sterling Spilinek is the eldest son of three and was born and raised in Douglas Wyoming. Sterling attended Whitman College in Walla Walla Washington where he played on the baseball team and received a degree in Biology. During his time at Whitman, Sterling wrote a thesis on foraging activities of oligolectic bees, from field work performed in Öland Sweden. After college Sterling moved back to Wyoming and started working for the Wyoming Game and Fish. For over three years Sterling worked seasonal jobs across Wyoming from, Habitat and Access Technician, Access Yes Technician, Hunter Manager Coordinator, and Black Bear Monitoring Technician. After making the decision to continue his education, Sterling enrolled at Texas State University into the Wildlife Ecology program. Sterling wrote his graduate thesis on rumen morphology of white-tailed deer comparing energy of diets and presented his research for the coveted Cottam Award at the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society. Sterling was the recipient of the Dan L. Duncan scholarship through the Houston Safari Club, which funded his research and schooling. In his spare time Sterling enjoys archery hunting, fly fishing, and bird hunting with his German Wirehaired Pointer Flint.



Houndstongue

By: Randell Hopkins, Soil Conservationist, Hardin NRCS Field Office

Have you ever come home from being in the outdoors and you notice little burs stuck to your clothing or your dog's coat? You might have discovered Houndstongue, or *Cynoglossum officinale* L. Houndstongue is a wide spread biennial noxious weed that is easily distributed by seed. Their seeds are barbed burs that can stick to animal's fur or human's clothing and can get distributed by hitching a ride. Like other invasive species, Houndstongue establishes well in disturbed areas. The seeds can stay dormant with viable seeds for about 3 years. Houndstongue gets its name from the shape of its rosette leaves. They are shaped liked a dog's tongue. Houndstongue has a large taproot which allows it to use moisture deep in the soil and produce enough nutrients for its seed production in the second year of life. Houndstongue is not a desired plant for grazing.

Some management and control options for Houndstongue includes herbicide application, hand pulling, mowing, prescribed burning, or revegetation. Hand pulling can be difficult, due to the large taproot, but can be an effective method to control patches. Mowing can help manage the above ground growth and prevent the current year's seed production. Mowing can miss the crown of the rosette and leave the plant viable to regenerate in the future. Prescribed burning can help control the above ground growth and burn the seeds. This can leave the ground open for new establishment of desired plant species but could also attract invasive species without management. Revegetation of desired plant species can be effective by filling any bare ground and outcompeting invasive species that try to establish. For more information on Houndstongue or other invasive species you might be noticing, please contact your local USDA-NRCS office and we can help with identification, conservation programs, or help you find a contact for weed control. You can find your local USDA-NRCS Field Office here: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mt/contact/local/>.



Houndstongue seeds by: Steve Hurst, hosted by the USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Houndstongue sketch by: USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Vol. 3: 76.

~ Wildlife Profile ~

Black-Footed Ferret (Mustela nigripes)...

- Are only found in and around prairie dog towns.
- Diet consists of over 90% prairie dogs, one ferret and her litter may eat over 400 prairie dogs in a year.
- Were declared extinct in 1979, however there was a population found in Wyoming, so the US Fish and Wildlife Services were able to begin a captive breeding and reintroduction program.
- Are North America's only native ferret species
- Other names include the American polecat and prairie dog hunter.
- If you are interested in having a free presentation for your group or class, about wildlife, conservation, or habitat please contact Heather Nenninger at 406-346-7333.



**Read upcoming editions of the Conservation Connection for more intriguing facts about Montana's native wildlife, presented by Heather Nenninger, Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI) Partner Biologist!

When is a 310 permit needed?

A 310 permit is REQUIRED if you are planning ANY project that physically alters or modifies the bed or banks of a stream. The purpose of the permit is to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, protect and preserve streams and rivers in their natural or existing state, and to prevent damage to the lands and property immediately adjacent to streams and rivers.

The application process is easy, simply pick one up at your local conservation district, upon completion, return the application to the office.. An inspection of the proposed project is necessary, afterwards, the Board of Supervisors determine the fate of the 310 permit. Sometimes additional permits are required and it is the responsibility of the producer to secure all permits before beginning any projects.

Rosebud County

- ◆ Yellowstone River
- ◆ Tongue River
- ◆ Rosebud Creek
- ◆ Reservation Creek
- ◆ Otter Creek
- ◆ Armell's Creek
- ◆ Numerous Other Creeks

Big Horn County

- ◆ Big Horn River
- ◆ Tongue River
- ◆ Little Big Horn River
- ◆ Rosebud Creek
- ◆ Numerous Other Creeks

Treasure County

- ◆ Yellowstone River
- ◆ Big Horn River
- ◆ Sarpy Creek

*All Perennial Streams in Big Horn, Treasure, and Rosebud Counties Require a 310 Permit!
If you are unsure, please contact your local conservation district!*

Local Working Group Meeting Held

The Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) and Rosebud Conservation District hosted a Local Working Group meeting on July 24 at the Haugo Center in Forsyth. The purpose of the meeting was to talk with local producers, while gathering their input, regarding resource concerns in Rosebud County. After completion of a questionnaire and a good discussion it was determined that the greatest concerns for producers attending the meeting were soil quality, water conservation and water quality. The meeting also included a presentation from Joel Laliberty, NRCS Resource Conservation, explaining the new Montana Focused Conservation Program from NRCS. The local working group meeting was successful time spent. If you would like join the next one, please contact either NRCS or RCD at the USDA Forsyth Field Office at 406-346-7333.



~For Sale or Rent~

Rosebud Conservation District

270 Prospect Forsyth, MT 406-346-7333

For Sale:

- *Wildlife Ramp~ \$20.00
- *Gate Latch~ \$20.00
- *Marking Flags (5"x8")~ \$10.00/bundle

For Rent:

- *Track Filler~ \$100.00/day or \$200.00/week
- *No Till Drill~ \$7.00/acre (200 acre maximum)

Books For Sale:

- *Range Plants of Montana~ \$15.00
- *Rosebud County Land Ownership Map Books \$28.00/small or \$40.00/large \$38.00/small aerial view or \$50.00/large aerial view

Treasure County Conservation District

211 Elliot Avenue Hysham, MT 59038 406-342-5510 ext. 102

For Sale:

- *Marking Flags (5"x8")~ \$10.00/bundle
- *Wildlife Ramp~ \$20.00

For Rent:

- *Great Plains Native Grass Drill~ \$7.00/acre (200 acre maximum)

Books For Sale:

- *Treasure County Land Ownership Map Books~ \$16.00 small or \$20.00/large

Big Horn Conservation District

724 W 3rd Street Hardin, MT 59034 406-665-3442

For Sale:

- *Moisture Probe~ \$65.00
- *Wildlife Ramp~ \$25.00
- *Hydro source Plant Gel~ \$7.00/pint

For Rent:

- *Tree Planter~ \$.10/tree (\$30.00 min)
- *Fabric Layer~ \$.10/tree (\$30.00 min w/o fabric purchase) or \$.05/tree + fabric cost (w/ fabric purchase)



Big Horn Conservation District launches a new website

Visit the site to view meeting agendas and minutes, calendars and events, as well as other resources!

www.bighorncd.org



~Upcoming Events~

Montana Range Tour

Harlowton, Montana September 4-5, 2019

For more information: Stacey Barta 406-444-6619 or sbarta@mt.gov

Treasure County Conservation District's Soil Health Tour

Lion's Park & Icopini Farms Hysham, Montana September 18, 2019

For more information: Angie Stahl 406-342-5510 ext. 102 or angela.stahl@mt.nacdnet.net

Grass Class Workshop

Big Horn Historical Museum Hardin, Montana September 18-19, 2019

For more information: 406-665-3442 ext. 3

Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Conference

Gallatin County Fairgrounds Bozeman, Montana October 1-3, 2019

For more information: www.womensteppingforward.org

Montana Watershed Coordination Council Watershed Symposium

Copper King Hotel Butte, Montana October 14-16, 2019

For more information: www.mtwatersheds.org/app/watershed-symposium/

Montana Association of Conservation Districts Annual Convention

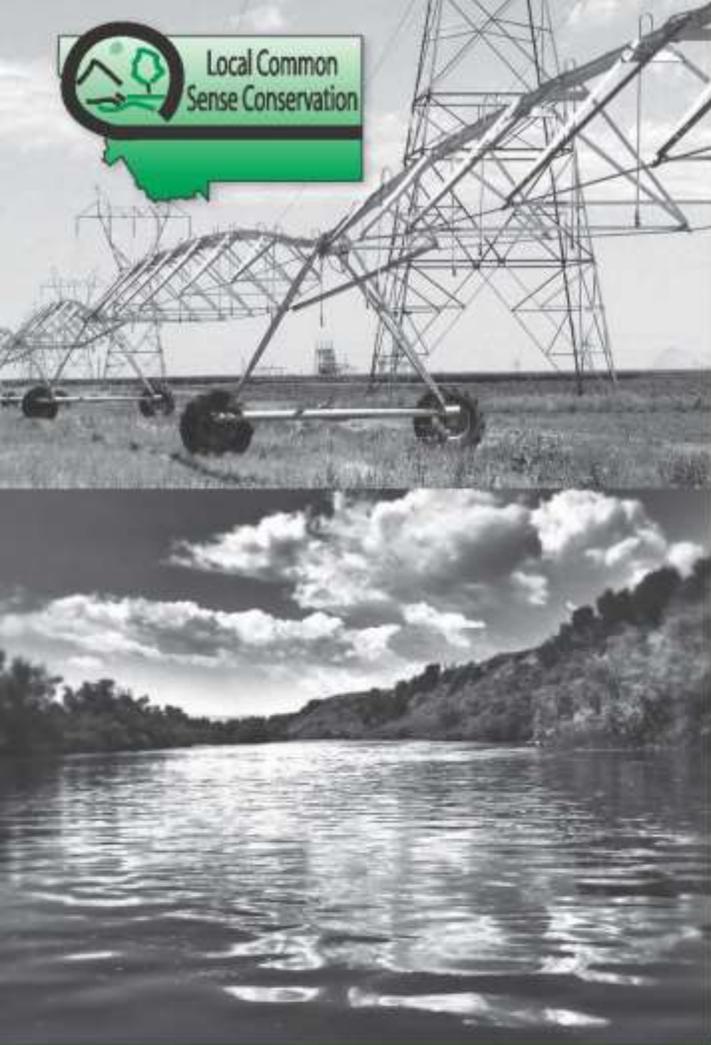
Red Lion Hotel & Convention Center Kalispell, Montana November 18-21, 2019

For more information: www.convention.macdnet.org



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**PROTECT OUR
WATERS**

To learn how you can help protect the great state of Montana from
Aquatic Invasive Species visit www.cleandraindrymt.com