



# 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 • 406-665-3442

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

## Rocky Schwagler Retires

Rocky Schwagler, District Conservationist retired from NRCS after 35 years. Rocky began his career in Williston, North Dakota in 1983. He then joined the Selfridge Field Office as District Conservationist. In 1991 Rocky made the move to Forsyth to become the District Conservationist for Rosebud and Treasure Counties as well as the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. Throughout his 35 years Rocky assisted numerous local producers in making their operations better than ever!



# Eighth Annual Ladies Ag Night in Hardin Held

Seanna Torske, District Conservationist, Hardin NRCS Field Office

The Eighth Annual Ladies Ag Night in Hardin was held on Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at the Big Horn County Fairgrounds in Hardin, MT. Even with the snowy weather, we still had pretty decent turnout, with 55 area women in attendance! Topics included: Podcasts, Calving 101, and First Aid Basics. Year after year, we receive positive feedback regarding this workshop, as Ladies Ag Night has become a great place for local women to get together and to learn about various agriculture topics, and can gain knowledge about subject matter they may have never been aware about! While we have the support of numerous local businesses, this has also served as an excellent opportunity for NRCS, FSA, and MSU Extension to come together to organize this workshop!

*Dr. Betsy Bialon, DVM, talks to Ladies Ag Night attendees about what to look out for regarding proper calving presentation, and how to troubleshoot when problems arise.*



## ~Upcoming Events~

Soil Acidity and Soil Health Workshop

Montana Agricultural Center Fort Benton, Montana February 27, 2018

For more information: Tyler Lane 406-622-3751 or [tyler.lane@montana.edu](mailto:tyler.lane@montana.edu)

### **Annie's Project**

Haugo Center Forsyth, Montana February 12,19,26 March 5,12,19, 2018

For more information: MSU Extension Office 406-346-7320 or [rosebudtreasure@montana.edu](mailto:rosebudtreasure@montana.edu)

Informational Meeting on Exempt Water Rights Claims

Rosebud County Library Basement Forsyth, Montana March 2, 2018

For more information: Bobbi Vannattan 406-346-7333 or [bobbi.vannattan@mt.macdnet.net](mailto:bobbi.vannattan@mt.macdnet.net)

Montana Water Summit

Radisson Colonial Hotel Helena, Montana March 6-8, 2018

For more information: Sara Meloy 406-444-4247 or [smeloy@mt.gov](mailto:smeloy@mt.gov) or Ann Schwend 406-444-1806 or [aschwend@mt.gov](mailto:aschwend@mt.gov)

Tree Board Retreat

Yogo Inn Lewistown, Montana March 15-16, 2018

For more information: Josh Stoychoff 406-538-7789 or [jstoychoff@mt.gov](mailto:jstoychoff@mt.gov)

Montana Range Days

Red Lodge, Montana June 18-20, 2018

For more information: Darlene Schwend 406-962-3641 ext. 105 or [mabel.schwend@mt.nacdnet.net](mailto:mabel.schwend@mt.nacdnet.net)

# What Are Your Thoughts?

The Big Horn Conservation District is considering the purchase of a no-till drill to lease to producers of Big Horn County, provided there is enough interest. Before making a final decision the district would like to know the following:

- 1) How many people may be interested in leasing a no-till drill?
- 2) What make do you consider to be the best?
- 3) What size drill is best, considering transport needs?
- 4) What additional attachments would you recommend?
- 5) Who might be interested in storing the drill?

Please contact the conservation district at 406-629-3229 to provide your input. If no one is available at the office, please leave a message.

## ~ Wildlife Profile ~

### North American Beavers (*Castor Canadensis*)...

- Can be found throughout most of North America in or around lakes, streams, and tidal river deltas. They build their lodges out of sticks, twigs, rocks, and mud.
- Diet consists of the inner bark, twigs, shoots, and leaves of trees. Beavers will also eat aquatic vegetation such as cattails and sedges.
- Are considered ecosystem engineers because their dams often significantly modify the habitat around them by pooling water and creating additional wetland areas.
- Act as the mascot of several engineering schools, including MIT, because of their 'engineer' status.
- Have transparent 'third eyelids' that function as goggles when they're swimming underwater.
- Large front teeth never stop growing, but since they are constantly chewing on wood their teeth won't grow too long.



Photo by Rick Bohn

-If you're interested in having a free presentation, for your group or class, about wildlife, conservation, or habitat please call Heather Nenner at 406-346-7333.

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

# Soil Health: Principle 5 of 5 – Livestock Integration

By: Jay Fuhrer, NRCS Soil Health Specialist

The Soil Health foundation consists of five principles which are: soil armor, minimizing soil disturbance, plant diversity, continual live plant/root, and livestock integration. This article will discuss the fifth principle, livestock integration.

In this fifth of five articles on soil health, Jay explains the concept of “livestock integration” and why animals are important for building soil health.

Animals, plants, and soils have played a synergistic role together over geological time. In recent years, animals are playing a reduced role due to being placed in confinement and fewer farms now include livestock as part of their overall operation.

Why do we want to return livestock to the landscape?

- Fall or winter grazing to convert high carbon annual crop residue to low carbon organic material; balancing the carbon/nitrogen ratio and managing our crop rotation residue for no-till seeding.
- Spring or summer grazing annual and/or perennial plants with short exposure periods followed by long recovery periods; allows the plants to regrow and harvest additional sunlight and CO<sub>2</sub>.
- Reduce nutrient export from our cropland and hayland fields. In lieu of transporting feed to a feed lot, we can reverse the roles and have the livestock graze the material in place. Recycling the majority of nutrients, minerals, vitamins, and carbon.
- Manage weed pressure by grazing in lieu of an herbicide.
- Grazing cover crops and/or crop residues allow us to take the livestock off the perennial grasslands earlier in the fall. Extending the grass recovery period and providing a higher livestock nutritional diet.
- Grazing reduces livestock waste associated with confinement; helping manage our water quality and nutrient management concerns. Allowing cattle and sheep to be herbivores by securing their energy needs from plants.

How do we return livestock to the landscape?

- Winter and fall grazing cover crops and annual crop residues.
- Summer grazing a full season cover crop, allowing adequate plant recovery, followed by a second grazing during the fall or winter.
- Winter feeding on hayland fields by rolling out bales or bale grazing.
- Seed rotational perennials, graze and manage as part of the crop rotation.

Yearlings and dry ewes grazing rotational perennials; grass plants, legumes, and forbs at the Menoken Farm; diversity in plants and diversity in animals.



“To be a successful farmer one must first know the nature of the soil.” ~Xenophon~

## ~Rosebud Conservation District Tree Sales~

- Tree orders are being taken and will continue through March 31, 2018.
- For the best availability, please place orders before March 1st
- There is a large variety of trees, shrubs, grasses, and perennials offered.
- Pricing and ordering information available at [rosebudcd.com](http://rosebudcd.com) and the Forsyth USDA Center at 270 Prospect .
- Delivery will be in late April or early May, depending on the weather.
- Please contact Monica with questions or to place an order at (406) 346-7333 or [monica.boyer@mt.usda.gov](mailto:monica.boyer@mt.usda.gov)



[www.rosebudcd.com](http://www.rosebudcd.com)

## 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.)



**Currently the Rosebud Conservation District has 83,249.40 acre-feet and a flow rate of 466.07 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. 101 [or](http://www.rosebudcd.com) [or](http://www.rosebudcd.com) via email at [bobbi.vannattan@mt.usda.gov](mailto:bobbi.vannattan@mt.usda.gov)

## **\*\*Fascinating Facts\*\***



- \* Cattle produce about 25 billion pounds of meat each year
- \* The combined value of the cattle and beef industry is \$200 billion
- \* Cows have almost 300 degrees of vision, with blind spots only right in front or behind them
- \* Cattle have an excellent sense of smell and can detect odors up to six miles away
- \* The hide from one cow can make 144 baseballs, 20 footballs, or 12 basketballs

visit us at [www.rosebudcd.com](http://www.rosebudcd.com)

## **Questions About Exempt Water Right Claims?**

### **Rosebud Conservation District**

Is hosting an informational meeting on

### **Exempt Water Rights Claims**

**March 2, 2018 at 6:30 PM**

**Rosebud County Library Basement**

Several months ago all Montana land owners received a form to file for Exempt Claimed Water Rights. This is an important opportunity to file on rights for livestock drinking directly from natural water sources, and domestic and stockwater wells put to use before July 1, 1973.

The meeting will feature Jim Beck, retired from the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation's Helena Regional Office where he worked in several water resource areas, including water rights. Jim has been a member of the Broadwater Conservation District for 26 years, and for the past 20 years he has been an instructor for the State's water commissioner training program. Jim will discuss the exempt claim filings in detail and will explain the consequences of the loss of priority date if the filings are not made. He will also describe how to search for previous water right filings, provide resources for completing the claim forms, and explain what to expect from a consultant.





Hi everyone! My name is Randell Hopkins, and I am the new Soil Conservationist with NRCS in the Hardin Field Office. I graduated from Montana State University Bozeman with a degree in Natural Resource and Rangeland Ecology in 2016. Since then, I have worked seasonally as a Range Technician for the Forest Service in Stanford, MT.

I am from Billings, MT, but I have lived in Colstrip and Lame Deer as well. I enjoy hunting, fishing, archery, and anything outdoors. I am really looking forward to fishing the Big Horn River. I want to help implement conservation practices to protect natural resources for future generations to enjoy. I look forward to getting to know Big Horn County and the people who call this place home.

Randell Hopkins, Soil Conservationist, Hardin NRCS Field Office

“Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are dirt.” ~John Muir~

“Some call it the middle of nowhere, I call it the center of my world.” ~Unknown~

## Big Horn Conservation District Cover Crop Cost Share Available

It's time to think about utilizing a cover crop in no-till cropping systems. In order to encourage producers to learn the benefits of cover crops, the Big Horn Conservation District has initiated a program to pay the actual cover crop seed costs up to \$20 per acre on a **maximum of 40 acres per producer**.

Producer responsibilities to participate in this program are to prepare a weed-free seedbed, use a minimum of three varieties of seed in the cover crop mixture, and agree to tours and newsletter articles, if applicable, concerning the experience.

Contact the Big Horn Conservation District at 406-665-3442, ext. 112

## Sign up now for the Rosebud Conservation District Cover Crop Cost Share 2018

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

***Incentive- \$20 per acre with a maximum 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. The Rosebud Conservation District will pay the actual seed and seeding cost up to \$20 per 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 varieties of seed in the cover crop planting.

Contact the Conservation District office at 406.346.7333 or stop by the office located at 270 South Prospect in Forsyth.

# Rolling Rivers Trailer Demonstration

Rosebud Conservation District Administrator, Bobbi Vannattan, spent a day in Colstrip at the High School Ag Shop demonstrating how rivers function using an educational trailer called 'The Rolling Rivers Trailer.' The trailer is used to exhibit a variety of scenarios involving the workings of rivers and streams, even including touching base on groundwater systems. One of the most important subjects discussed was the origin of the water in their homes. Many of the students in Colstrip acquire their water from the Yellowstone River, which brought the ideas close to home.



Using the trailer students arranged two different river systems, they were then encouraged to brainstorm different approaches to improve the damaged system and stabilize the streambanks. Some students chose to place fences to prevent livestock from entering the river, while others stabilized the banks with new vegetation and rip rap. The importance of encouraging contractors to build homes and buildings away from the floodplain to prevent disaster was also addressed. Students benefited from learning how



quickly nature and humans can have a negative impact on bodies of water.



Rosebud Conservation District has a variety of educational tools available to schools and other entities that are interested in learning about water, soils, and other natural resources. We partner with many other state and federal agencies who also provide educational materials and learning experiences for all ages.

Contact us at 406-346-7333

## Tribal Local Working Group Meeting

Wednesday, March 7th, 2018 Noon -3:30 pm

Little Big Horn College

Library Programs Room Crow Agency, MT

Local working groups (LWG) provide recommendations on local natural resource priorities and criteria for USDA conservation activities and programs. The local work group supports the locally led conservation effort by coordinating USDA programs with other Federal, State, Tribal, and local conservation programs to provide an integrated solution to addressing natural resource concerns.

Local Working Group meetings are open to the public.

No RSVP is required, and lunch will be provided. If you have any questions, or are unable to attend but would like to provide input, please contact Seanna Torske, USDA-NRCS, prior to the meeting, at (406) 629-3220.



USDA-NRCS provides reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities to participate in NRCS programs and activities. If you require special accommodations, please contact the Hardin NRCS Field Office at (406) 629-3220 no later than March 1, 2018. USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

# 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 simple, pick one up at the local conservation district office. Upon completion return it to the conservation district. 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 the any projects.

## 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

## Rosebud County

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

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



*Views expressed by individual columnists in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Rosebud, Big Horn, and Treasure County Conservation Districts.*

The Rosebud, Big Horn, and Treasure County Conservation Districts proudly salute and thank our Servicemen and Women at home and overseas.

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~ For Sale or Rent ~



### Rosebud Conservation District

270 Prospect Forsyth, MT  
406-346-7333 ext. 101

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

#### For Rent:

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

### Big Horn Conservation District

724 W 3rd Street Hardin, MT 59034  
406-665-3442 ext. 112

#### For Sale:

- \*Moisture Probe~ \$65.00
- \*Wildlife Ramp~ \$25.00
- \*Hydrosource 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)



visit us at [www.rosebudcd.com](http://www.rosebudcd.com)



**ANNIE'S PROJECT**  
empowering women in agriculture

**Educating and empowering farm & ranch women to become better business partners/managers on their operation.**

**SERIES SCHEDULE**

<b>FEBRUARY 12</b>
REAL CONCERNS: Tax, Animal, Credit, Family, Insurance, GOAL SETTING Marilyn Anderson, Rosebud County Extension
<b>FEBRUARY 19</b>
PRODUCTION COST, SUPPLEMENTATION & MINERALS NUTRITION & WATER QUALITY Dr. Angela Van Soest, MSU Extension, Rosebud County Extension Dr. Brad Johnson, Rosebud County Extension
<b>FEBRUARY 26</b>
TAXES FOR FARM & RANCH OPERATIONS Marilyn Anderson, Rosebud County Extension
<b>MARCH 5</b>
MARKETING OPTIONS FOR RISEY CATTLE Marilyn Anderson, Rosebud County Extension
<b>MARCH 12</b>
PASSING THE FARM/RANCH TO THE NEXT GENERATION Marilyn Anderson, Rosebud County Extension
<b>MARCH 19</b>
UNDERSTANDING LEASES Dr. Sara Fisher, MSU Extension, Rosebud County Extension RETIREMENT PLANNING Marilyn Anderson, Rosebud County Extension
<b>DATE - TRA</b>
CASH FLOW, BANK STATEMENTS & ALLOWANCE Marilyn Anderson, Rosebud County Extension

**ANNIE'S PROJECT**  
Annie's Project is a six week course that is a discussion-based workshop bringing women together to learn from experts in production, financial management, human resources, marketing and the legal field. There's plenty of time for questions, sharing, meeting and connecting with presenters and fellow participants. It's a relaxed, fun and dynamic way to learn, grow and meet other farm/ranch women.

**MONDAYS, FEB 12 - MARCH 19  
8 - 9 PM**

**HAUGO CENTER  
RIVERVIEW VILLA, FORBETH**

**REGISTRATION: \$75**

**FOR MORE INFO OR TO REGISTER:  
MSU EXTENSION OFFICE 346-7330  
[rosebudtreasure@montana.edu](mailto:rosebudtreasure@montana.edu)**



**MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**  
Wooded & Treasured Counties

*A program from the MSU Extension Service  
Wooded & Treasured Counties*  
346-7330  
[rosebudtreasure@montana.edu](mailto:rosebudtreasure@montana.edu)

## Save the Date

# TREE BOARD RETREAT

## Growing Greener Communities

*The Montana Urban and Community Forestry Program invites you to learn more about urban forestry and the Tree City USA program for small towns. Meet your DNRC area representative and brainstorm on improving the urban forest in your own community!*

**Date: March 15-16, 2018**  
**Time: 12:00 PM—12:00 PM**  
**Location: Yogo INN, Lewistown Montana**

**Lunch Provided!**

For more information or to register for this NO COST workshop contact DNRC Forester Josh Stoychoff  
Contact info: [JStoychoff@mt.gov](mailto:JStoychoff@mt.gov)  
Or (406) 538-7789




**SAVE THE DATE**



**MONTANA WATER SUMMIT**

**Water in a Changing West**

**March 6-8, 2018 | Helena, MT**

## SOIL ACIDITY AND SOIL HEALTH WORKSHOP

Hosted by: Chouteau County & Big Sandy Conservation Districts, NRCS & MSU Extension

Do you have a Soil Acidity / Aluminum Toxicity Problem? Come learn more about this newly identified issue.

<b>WHEN:</b> Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2018	<b>TOPICS &amp; SPEAKERS</b> <b>IDENTIFYING SOIL ACIDITY IN THE FIELD</b> KENT THOMPSON - NRCS RESOURCE CONSERVATIONIST <b>IDENTIFYING SOIL ACIDITY WITH SOIL TESTING</b> MARRI THOMPSON - NRCS RESOURCE CONSERVATIONIST <b>CCCR COVER CROP PROJECT</b> DALE HARVEY - AG CONSULTANT / CCA <b>PREVENTING ACIDIFICATION</b> CLAY JONES - MSU EXTENSION SOIL FERTILITY SPECIALIST <b>SOIL ACIDITY TOLERANCE IN CEREAL GRAIN VARIETIES</b> JASON CREW - MSU PLANT SCIENCES AND PATHOLOGY	<b>PLEASE RSVP BY FEB. 23<sup>RD</sup></b> <b>LUNCH PROVIDED WITH RSVP</b> <b>EMAIL:</b> <a href="mailto:tyler.jones@montana.edu">tyler.jones@montana.edu</a> <b>CALL:</b> (406) 622-3751
<b>REGISTRATION:</b> 9:30 a.m.	<b>RESTORING SOIL HEALTH TO ADDRESS SOIL ACIDITY</b> JON STIKA - SOIL SCIENTIST / SOIL SCIENTIST, BIRMINGHAM, AL <b>LIME MATERIALS AND APPLICATION</b> DR. DALE BOSSING, Ph.D. - USDA-ARS, PULLMAN, WA <b>MANAGING SOIL ACIDITY IN NO-TILL SYSTEMS</b> DR. DAVID FRANKER, Ph.D. - PROFESSOR OF SOIL SCIENCE	<b>DRAWING FOR:</b> "A SOIL OWNER'S MANUAL" BY JON STIKA
<b>START:</b> 10:00 a.m.	<b>WHERE:</b> Montana Agricultural Center 1205 20 <sup>th</sup> St., Fort Benton, MT	
<b>END:</b> 3:30 p.m.		





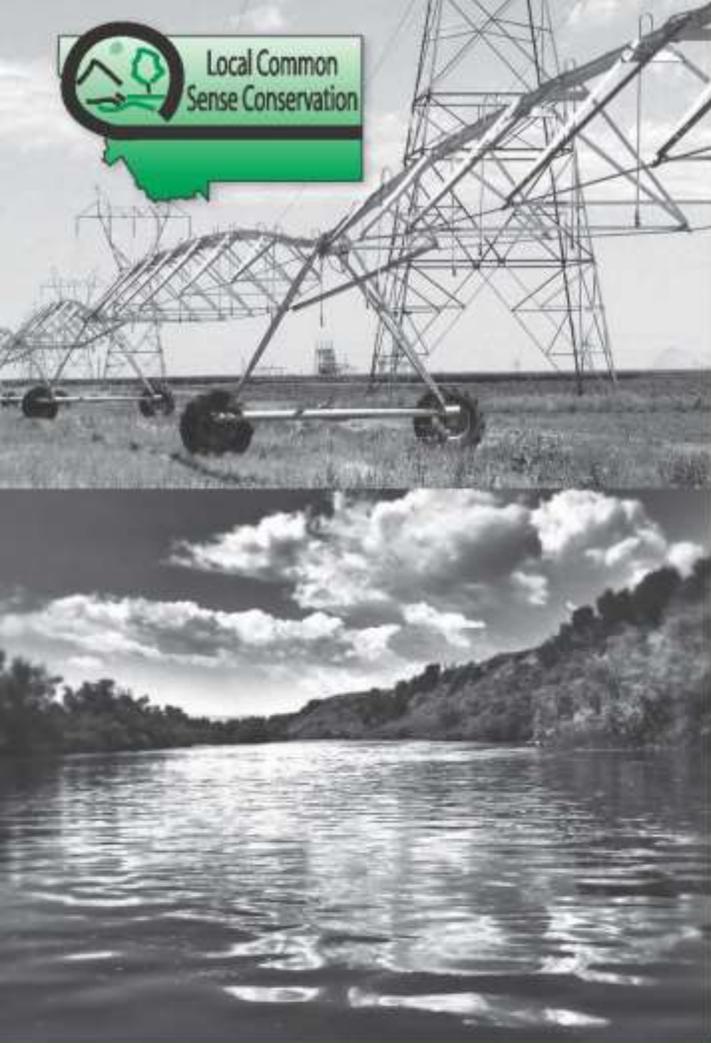
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## ~Summer Youth Camps and Activities~

- \*Montana Envirothon: April 23-24, 2018 - Lewistown, MT
- \*Montana Range Days: June 18 -20, 2018, Red Lodge, MT
- \*Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp: July 15 - 20, 2018
- \*Montana Youth Range Camp: July 9-12, 2018 Eastern Montana Bible Camp, Savage MT

\*For more information on any of these camps or activities, please contact your local conservation district\*