



MISSOURI RIVER Conservation Districts Council

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The River Journal

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Upcoming Events:

- CMR CWG Meeting—
April 17, Circle
- Executive Committee
Conference Call — April
22, 2014

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The New Face of MRCDC

www.missouririvercouncil.info

The Missouri River Conservation Districts Council has a new website, a regular newsletter, and a renewed commitment to helping districts meet the conservation needs along the Missouri River. The River's Journal will be a quarterly newsletter that provides updates from the Council, the latest progress on conservation projects, and relevant news from the state and National level. Feel free to pass

the newsletter along to anyone you think may be interested to receive it and be sure and let me know if you have any suggestions for ways to improve the newsletter. As always, I look forward to hearing from you at mrcdc@macdnet.org or at 406-454-0056. Our new office is located the MACD building at 1101 11th Ave in Helena. We are very pleased to introduce our new website

www.missouririvercouncil.info. The new website features a calendar of events, minutes and reports, and news posts for all things Conservation along the Missouri River and associated uplands. Please send links and news items for inclusion and the website and friend us on facebook at Missouri River Conservation Districts Council.

MRCDC One of Many Organizations Focused on Montana's Mighty MO!



As I traveled back from a Missouri River Headwater's Partnership meeting, the day after an Upper Missouri River Watershed Alliance meeting, I began to wonder how many different groups focused on the Missouri River within Montana? Turns out, there are quite a few. Below is a compilation of the groups, their purpose, and their contact information. Purpose statements were taken directly from the group's website when available. It is my hope that better awareness of existing groups can improve use of limited resources for conservation and avoid duplication of efforts.

- [Missouri River Conservation Districts Council](http://www.missouririvercouncil.info) - It is the goal of the Missouri River Conservation Districts Council to provide leadership, assistance, and guidance to conservation districts along the Missouri River Corridor in order to present a unified front and collective voice when addressing natural resource issues, opportunities, and challenges. *Contact: Rachel Frost, Coordinator; mrcdc@missouririvercouncil.info; 406-454-0056.*

- Missouri River Headwaters Partnership - The purpose of the Missouri Headwaters Partnership is...

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Coordinator Corner



**MRCDC Coordinator
Rachel Frost**

*The future of MRCDC
— A united, visible and
effective council
promoting work driven
by local stakeholders
that are vested in the
River and the
surrounding landscape.*

Hello! I am Rachel Frost, the new Coordinator for the MRCDC. I started the position in July and have been busy traveling to the member CDs and other events around the State meeting people and getting to know the area encompassed by the Missouri River CD Council.

I am very grateful to be a part of this organization and wanted to share with you my vision for the Council in 2014 and beyond.

First, I see a *United Council*, one that provides a unified voice across the wide diversity of interests and landscapes along the Missouri River in Montana where each individual CD ben-

efits from the power of the whole for issues relevant to the River.

Next, I see a *Visible Council* that has a real presence at the local, state and national level. When people think conservation along the Missouri River, they need to think of the MRCDC.

And finally, I see an *Effective Council*, that promotes work directly driven by the local stakeholders that are vested in the River and the surrounding landscape.

For MRCDC to continue to grow as a *United, Visible, and Effective Council*, I need to hear from you, our members and

stakeholders, about your problems and your ideas, so we can work together to keep the Missouri River one of Montana's most valuable assets.

I welcome the opportunity to visit with you at any time and encourage you to stop by and see us at our new office in Helena. We are located at 1101 11th Ave in the MACD office. Or give me a call on my cell phone at 406-454-0056.

Saltcedar - A *Tama*RISK to Montana's Rivers

*A series of scoping
meetings will be held
this Spring to gather
information and
determine sites for
saltcedar projects
along the Missouri and
Musselshell Rivers.*

*For more information:
Call Rachel Frost
406-454-0056
mrcdc@macdnet.org*

Saltcedar, an invasive tree from the Middle East, was first reported in Montana around 1960 in the Yellowstone and Big Horn River Drainages. Currently saltcedar is known to be in 21 counties in Montana, and along stream banks, reservoir shores and other wet areas. The flooding along the Missouri and Musselshell Rivers in 2011 was very conducive to saltcedar establishment and brought the tree to the attention of land managers.

A mature saltcedar plant can produce half a million seeds each year. Each seed has a small tuft of hair that allows it to float on the wind or the waves for long distances. Saltcedar also reproduces vegetatively enabling the plant to spread at alarming rates and increasing the challenges of controlling this plant.

A very effective insect biological control agent, *Diorhabda elongate* has been released, however, it failed to establish in

Montana and current federal restrictions on transport of the beetle has suspended any further efforts. In short, Montana does not have the beetle and will not get it anytime soon.

Nevertheless, a variety of methods have been investigated to control saltcedar and each one can be effective depending on the area, the amount of labor available and the other vegetation present. The key to successful saltcedar control is destroying the subsurface root crown. Herbicides can be quite effective at controlling saltcedar. Most Herbicides used to control saltcedar are non-selective, so basal-bark or cut-stump methods are recommended for areas with mixed vegetation. Changing the level of water can also help control saltcedar through water deprivation or inundation.

The MRCDC is working with a variety of partners in Montana to curb the expansion of this

tree and promote native riparian trees and shrubs. Please contact Rachel Frost for more information or to participate in our saltcedar management project.

Rachel Frost: 406-454-0056
mrcdc@missouririvercouncil.info



**Saltcedar or tamarisk tree.
Photo by Jerry Michels.**

MRCDC Members serve on Basin Advisory Committee for State Water Plan

MRCDC members Jim Beck and Dick Iverson have been actively participating in the DRNC's effort to update the State Water plan for Montana. The purpose of this updated plan is to:

- Provide up-to-date water resource information to better understand existing water supplies and to estimate future water demands, and
- Actively engage citizens in developing an adaptive State Water Plan that identifies options to meet future needs, satisfies existing consumptive

and non-consumptive uses, and protects the state's water resources.

Next steps in the process involve DNRC working with the BACs to develop recommendations for options and strategies to meet future water demands while satisfying existing needs and rights. Ultimately, DNRC will provide a comprehensive report to the 2015 Montana Legislature containing recommendations for meeting Montana's future water needs.

The timeline for the water initiative is:

Phase 1 – Establish BACs, public scoping process – 1/13 – 12/13 *Complete*
 Phase 2 – Data compilation, alternatives development – 12/13 – 2/14 *Complete*
 Phase 3 – Recommendations development – 2/14 0 5/14 *Active*
 Draft Plan – 9/14
 Final Plan – 12/14

For more information contact:

[Ann Schwend](mailto:aschwend@mt.gov) aschwend@mt.gov / (406) 444-1806 (Upper Missouri Basin)
[Michael Downey](mailto:mdowney2@mt.gov) mdowney2@mt.gov / (406) 444-9748 (Lower Missouri Basin)



Gates of the Mountains Lake on the Missouri River, MRCDC File Photo

Charles M. Russell NWR Community Working Group—Monitoring Workshop for Healthy Habitats

The Council continues to be active in the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge Community Working Group (CMR CWG). The working group is comprised of a variety of stakeholders and local residents from the 6-county region surrounding the CMR and focuses on maintaining the ecological, economic and social viability of the region.

The group is comprised of members of the World Wildlife Fund, National Wildlife Federation, CMR Staff, BLM staff, Montana FWP staff, Montana Wilderness Society, conservation district members, grazing permittees, local residents and those representing the interests of recreation, sportsmen, and just a love of Montana's great outdoors and the CMR. After three years of meeting 6 times per year, the group has grown in trust and mutual respect for each other's views. The group provides a place for people to come together and discuss the tough issues facing the region and try to develop solutions born of compromise that work for the region as a

whole. Garfield County rancher, CD Supervisor and MRCDC member Dean Rogge sums up the groups impact in this way, "The lines of communication are much more open between grazing permittees and CMR staff because of this group's efforts."

The latest focus of the group is on rangeland and wildlife habitat monitoring and how that influences the progress of the CMR toward meeting its habitat management goals. Please join us for presentations by experts in the field of grazing management and animal behavior at the next meeting in Circle, MT on April 17th. The group will host a monitoring workshop in early summer where at least 3 different monitoring methods will be demonstrated. The methods will be discussed as to their feasibility for implementation on the CMR and surrounding landscape, their value in providing quantitative data and their relevance to the goals of the CMR. Following this tour, the group may have the opportunity to provide comments to the CMR

staff about preferred monitoring methods to achieve land goals defined by the Habitat Management Plans in the CCP.

I know that everyone is busy, but strong attendance from local landowners, conservation districts and grazing permittees is essential to keep the group grounded and aware of how solutions may affect those living on and economically dependent upon the area adjacent to the CMR.

Join us at the next meeting on April 17th, Circle, MT location TBA, 10:00- 3:00. Lunch available for purchase.

For more information
 Contact Rachel Frost
 406-454-0056
mrcdc@missouririvercouncil.info

"The lines of communication are much more open between grazing permittees and CMR staff because of this group's efforts."



MRCDC member Dean Rogge (Garfield CD) visits with CMR Manager Rick Potts on a field tour of the area in September of 2012. Photo courtesy of Laurie Riley.

Ten different groups focus on the Missouri River in Montana. Most have a similar purpose of protecting or preserving the Missouri River Corridor although their methods and motivations may differ.



MRCDC File Photo:
Missouri River

Continue: Groups Focused on Missouri River in Montana.

to create a regional collaborative organization that promotes economic and ecologic sustainability by supporting the natural resource integrity, water quality, water quantity, and economic and ecologic values of the landscapes and communities of the Missouri River headwaters basin. Contact: Rebecca Ramsey, Chair; rubywatershed@gmail.com 406-842-5741.

- [Friends of the Missouri River Breaks Monument](#) - We protect and preserve the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument by educating the public, advocating for responsible access and environmentally responsible uses, and supporting groups and agencies that protect and restore the monument. Contact: Beth Kampshror, Executive Director; info@missouribreaks.org; 406-502-1334.
- Missouri River Stewards - To protect the private property rights of landowners within and bordering the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. Contact: Matt Knox, President, Winifred, Montana.
- Lower Missouri Coordinated Resource Management - The purpose of the LoMoCRM shall be to present a unified voice on what is known as the Ft. Peck Reach of the Missouri River. Improve management of the land and resources while promoting cooperation among agencies, landowners groups and individuals responsible for or interested in these resources. Contact: 2745 West Holly Street, Sidney, MT 70 406-433-2103 ext 101; julie.goss@mt.nacdn.net
- [Upper Missouri Watershed Alliance](#) - A nonprofit organization which is focused on keeping the mainstem and tributaries of the Upper Missouri River Clean and healthy for future generations. Contact: Pat Hunter; Wolf Creek, Montana, 59648; pat@mcn.net
- [Missouri River Flyfishers](#) - The Missouri River Fly Fishers is a non-profit organization based in Great Falls, Montana who work to further the sport of fly fishing in our community by promoting the education, trout, and conservation of the sport of fly fishing. Contact: PO Box 6885, Great Falls, MT 59405, riverreporter@gmail.com
- [Upper Missouri Waterkeeper](#) - Upper Missouri Waterkeeper, Inc. is the only advocacy organization focused exclusively on protecting and improving the health of Montana's Upper Missouri River Basin. Upper Missouri Waterkeeper, Inc. uses a combination of strong science, community action, and legal expertise to defend the Upper Missouri River, its tributaries, and communities against threats to clean water and healthy rivers. Contact: Guy Alsentzer, Executive Director and Upper Missouri WATERKEEPER, guy@uppermissouriwaterkeeper.org; 406-570-2202.
- [The Missouri River Association of States and Tribes \(MoRAST\)](#) is a regional interstate organization formed by joint resolution of the Governors of Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Kansas and the Mni Sose Intertribal Water Rights Coalition. It was formed to help resolve issues of concern to the basin states and tribes, to serve as a forum to foster communication and information exchange among the member states, tribes and various other governmental units, and to facilitate the management of the natural resources of the Missouri River Basin, including water resources, fish and wildlife while considering the impacts to the economic, historical, cultural, and social resources. Contact: J. Michael Hayden, Executive Director, (785) 840-6229, Mike.hayden@mo-rast.org.
- [Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee \(MRRIC\)](#) Established in the fall of 2008, the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC) serves as a basin-wide collaborative forum to come together and develop a shared vision and comprehensive plan for Missouri River recovery with special attention to endangered species within the Missouri River Corridor. Contact: info@mrric.org.

Work Plan Updates

Work Plan	Activities Updates
Council Outreach	New Website launched, Find us on facebook!
Weeds/AIS	Coordinating saltcedar project along Missouri and Musselshell Rivers. Districts interested in participating should contact Rachel for project meeting dates and times.
Wild/Free-Roaming Bison	FWP Bison Discussion Group will meet on April 15 or 16th in Lewistown.
CMR Community Working Group	Rangeland and Habitat Monitoring on the CMR landscape. Next meeting April, 17 in Circle, MT. Monitoring field day held in June with date and location TBD.
Native Riparian Task Force	Planning process underway for saltcedar project and for exploring flow modifications to enhance cottonwood establishment. Meeting times will be posted when scheduled.
Montana Water Supply Initiative	Public meetings will be held to gather comments on recommendations sent to DNRC. Dates and locations of meetings will be announced.
Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC)	The MRRIC met in Kansas City on February 10-13th. They continue to define human considerations for inclusion in the management plan being developed by the Corp of Engineers for the Missouri River from Fort Peck Dam to the confluence with the Mississippi.
Monument Designations	MRCDC has inquired with Congressmen Daines about possible monument designations in Montana. MRCDC is drafting a letter to Secretary Jewell requesting no new monument designations in the State given the significant local opposition such designations face.

Schedule of Events

- **April 15-16 FWP Bison Discussion Group Meeting** Lewistown.
- **April 17 — CMR Community Working Group meeting.** Circle, MT. 10:00 to 3:00, location TBA.
- **April 28-29 — Montana Envirothon,** Lewistown, MT
-

MRCDC Elects New Executive Committee



Chairman - Dean Rogge, Garfield County CD

Vice-Chair - Jim Beck, Broadwater CD

Past Chair - Nick Shultz, Petroleum County CD

Agency Partners:

DNRC - Karl Christians

MACD - Elena Evans

NRCS - Joe Little

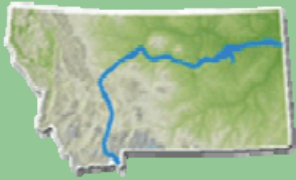
Upper Reach - John Chase, Cascade CD

Middle Reach - Bruce Anderson, Blaine County CD

Reservoir Reach - Ron Garwood, Valley County CD

Lower Reach - Dick Iverson, Richland County CD

**Executive Committee Calls are held each month on
the 3rd Tuesday at 7:30 AM**



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CONSERVATION
DISTRICTS
COUNCIL**

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Prefer to receive this email
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Sign up at:
MissouriRiverCouncil.info

Name
Address
City, State ZIP

Member Conservation Districts

Upper Reach

Broadwater Conservation District
Cascade Conservation District
Gallatin Conservation District
Lewis and Clark Conservation District

Lower Reach

Big Sandy Conservation District
McCone County Conservation District
Richland Conservation District
Roosevelt County Conservation District

Middle Reach

Blaine County Conservation District
Chouteau County Conservation District
Fergus County Conservation District

Reservoir Reach

Garfield County Conservation District
Petroleum
County Conservation District
Phillips County Conservation District
Valley County Conservation District

