

CONNECTIONS

CONSERVATION DISTRICT, EXTENSION SERVICE, FARM SERVICE AGENCY, & NATURAL RESOURCES & CONSERVATION SERVICE

April, 2007

2007 MAPS AND ACREAGE REPORTS

It is time to certify your planted acres and all acreage reports need to be accurate and filed by the final reporting date of July 16, 2007.

The county office is currently in the process of printing the maps for certification and is hoping to have them available for producers by the first part of May. It was our plan to have all of the corrections made; maps printed; and out to producers by April, but have been forced to admit that we were hoping for too much. There are just too many changes out there. Regrettably, that means that, once again, we are going to have to deal with another year of certifying with maps that aren't the way we would like them to be. We realize that this is later than what producers would like and sincerely apologize for the inconvenience it creates.

Certification is mandatory if any of the following apply:

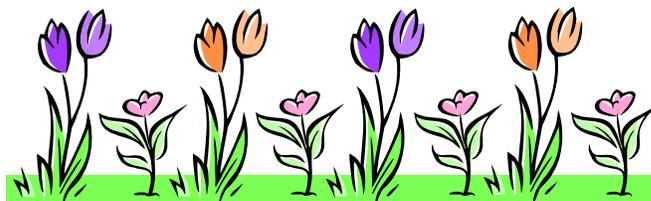
- You receive DCP payments
- You have acres enrolled in CRP
- Loans or LDP's will be requested; including Wool, Mohair and Honey

- Acreage is covered by NAP

All acreage reports need to be filed by the final reporting date of **July 16, 2007**. Failure to report accurately may result in loss of program and price support benefits.

REMINDERS:

- The only changes we are authorized to make on the maps are those that were done in 2005. Any change made AFTER that will have to have a measurement service requested and paid for before being changed on the map. (See page 2 for new fees.)
- We are only authorized to provide ONE copy of the FSA-578 and maps free of charge to the producer. It is the producer's responsibility to provide a copy to their insurance agent. ■



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR AG DAYS

The Toole County Conservation District is looking for volunteers to help with Ag Days in Montana Schools. It will be held in Shelby on Friday, May 4, from 12:00 until 2:30 p.m. at the elementary school and in Sunburst at the elementary school there on Thursday, May 10, from 8:45 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. The district needs adults willing to help out with the various stations. If, you would like to help, please call Sara Shepard at the Toole County Conservation District office 434-5234 ext. 113. ■

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

3	Conservation District's Annual Meeting
5	Wetland Restoration
7	Planting Bare-Root Seedlings
9	Marias River Watershed Survey

NEW MEASUREMENT SERVICE FEES

In order for the Montana State FSA Committee has established new fees for measurement service requests. There is a basic fee of \$30.00 for measurements made at the farm and \$15.00 basic fee for measurements made in the office. Then an additional fee based on the time spent completing the measurement including the time it takes the fieldman to travel from the office to the field. (To calculate time traveled from the county office to the farm site and back, the FSA State Committee has determined that the time logged would be rounded to the nearest half hour and established a travel rate at 1.5 minutes per mile (MPM)).

Examples:

- Joe requests to have 6 bins measured. Joe lives 6 miles from the county office. It takes the FSA employee 1 ½ hours to complete the bin measurements.

Answer:

12 miles X 1.5 (MPM) = 18 minutes.
18 minutes + 1 ½ hrs = 2 hrs x \$16.00 = \$32.00.
Basic Fee - \$30.00
Time Fee - ~~\$32.00~~
Total = \$62.00

- Jim requests a measurement service on a 100 acre field. He lives 30 miles from the county office

Mary requests a measurement service on 2 bins and lives 15 miles from the county office.

The FSA employee's logged time was 1 hour to measure the 100 acres and 27 minutes to measure the bins.

Answer:

Jim's = 60 miles x 1.5 = 90 min. or 1 ½ hours
1 ½ hrs + 1 hr = 2 ½ hrs x \$16.00 = \$40.00
Basic Fee - \$30.00
Time Fee - ~~\$40.00~~
Total = \$70.00

Mary's = 30 miles x 1.5 MPM = 45 minutes
45 min. + 27 min. = 1 hr and 12 min. x \$16.00
\$16.00

Basic Fee - \$30.00
Time Fee - ~~\$16.00~~
Total = \$46.00

- Jason requests a measurement service on all of his wheat. Jason has 5 bins at one site, 3 bins at

another site, and 8 bins at a third site. Jason lives 25 miles from the county office and there are 5 miles between each bin site. The FSA employee's logged time is 1 hour and 15 minutes for the first site; ½ hour at the second site; and 2 hours at the third site.

Answer:

60 miles x 1.5 MPM = 90 min or 1 ½ hours
1 ½ hrs + 3 ¾ hrs = 5 ¼ hrs or 5 ½ x \$16.00 =
\$88.00
Basic Fee = \$30.00
Time Fee = ~~\$88.00~~
Total = \$118.00

Note: If a measurement service can not be completed in one trip, travel time is only charged once.

The In-Office measurements are calculated that same way at the field measurements but with a basic fee of \$15.00 instead of \$30.00. ■

REMINDER TO WOOL AND MOHAIR PRODUCERS!!

To be eligible for a wool loan or LDP, a producer must maintain beneficial interest (title, risk of loss, and control of the commodity) through the date on which the loan is repaid or the LDP is requested.

To ensure eligibility for loans or LDP's, producers should sign a CCC-633 prior to shearing.

Beneficial interest will be considered to be lost upon delivery to the wool pool or may be lost immediately after shearing.

The 2007 crop year wool and mohair loan rates are the same as the 2006 crop loan rates and vary by region. ■

eLDP FOR THE 2007 CROP YEAR WOOL, MOHAIR, AND PELTS

Producers are reminded that FSA is offering a secure online Internet-based service. This service allows producers to request LDPs using the Internet and receive payment by direct deposit.

All participating customers will have an eLDP Customer Profile set up. The 2007 crop year for wool, mohair, and pelts are now available and can be established at the local office. ■

2007 TOOLE COUNTY CONSERVATION ANNUAL MEETING

The Toole County Conservation District held their Annual Meeting on February 5, 2007 at the Griddle. The Board of Supervisors tried something new this year and held the meeting during the lunch hour. Lunch was provided by the district and the Griddle catered a barbequed roast beef sandwich with all the fixings. Speakers for the luncheon were Mike Wallewein with Great Northern Growers and Brett Earl and Logan Fisher on Bio Fuels. Kelsey Tomscheck and Raynee Pace were present again for the second year with their Natural Resources Youth Camp presentation. Conservationists of the Year for 2006 were Butch and Doreen Gillespie. The following is their accomplishments.

Bruce (Butch) and Doreen Gillespie own and operate Revolution Ranch and are also known as Gillespie Show Cattle. The operation consists of 8000 acres of leased and deeded range land and also 1050 acres of farm ground. They run about 225 head of mother cows and 40 yearling replacement heifers. Butch also runs his nutritional business and designs and sells nutritional supplements for the local Swine and Dairy Farms as well as cow calf operations. Doreen is a brand inspector as well as the local ABS Global (American Breeders Service) representative.

As far as the ranch is concerned they concentrate on two main areas of production which is the cattle genetics and their Range Management plans. The cattle genetics are based on an intensive AI operation with the use of clean up bulls with an emphasis on the genetics needed for show steers. They have sold calves that went on to become Champions both live and on the rail into a number of states from Washington all the way to Rhode Island. Since their kids are grown and benefited so much from 4-H they like to stay involved and this is a very rewarding way to do just that. They send all the extra calves that are not sold for club calves or kept for replacements to Darr Feedlot in Cozad, NE. They retain ownership and often sell them on the grid so appreciate the value of cattle that not only excel on the grid but also have the ability to gain and convert feed efficiently.

They are trying to constructively work on the efficiency of their cow herd and how it relates to their Range Management plans. Doreen is concentrating on how to get the most out of the portion of their cows that have the most potential for raising the really outstanding club calves and Butch is focusing on how

to make the rest of the herd more efficient in converting grass to pounds of beef with an emphasis on replacement heifers and feeders that more effectively utilize roughage based diets. It seem probable that if more of their grain goes into ethanol production then they will need to shift to genetics that can survive and thrive on more roughage and grain by products and finish on less grain. Butch says that, "too much of our current genetics is based on cheap grain and may not be very well suited for where the industry could be headed. I guess time will tell on this".

They became certified for the Undaunted Stewardship program in 2003. It is a statewide partnership between Montana Stockgrowers, Montana State University, Bureau of Land Management as well as 16 other agricultural, conservation, and environmental organizations. This public/private partnership works to preserve Montana's history, environment, and rural communities by encouraging sustainable stewardship of agricultural lands.

Besides a grazing plan they have 5 plots located throughout the ranch. Most are in areas that they hope to, over time see improvements in plant health and vigor as well as an increase in the number of desirable species covering the land. They want to acknowledge all the help they have received from Brent Roeder (MSU) in getting the plan set up and then Misty Vermulm (NRCD) and Tyler Lane (Former Extension for Toole County) for helping with the yearly monitoring. The professional team work and advice you receive as the land owner is a real value. Butch says, "we are only here for a period in time and it just seems logical that we need to do as much as we can to leave our little part of Montana in better shape than when we arrived on the scene. We owe this to ourselves and future generations". ■



(Pictured Doreen and Butch Gillespie, Ernie Ratzburg, TCCD Chairman Terry Tomscheck)

SUMMER EMPLOYMENT

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) – Plant Protection and Quarantine division is looking for temporary full time employees to work during the summer months. Two positions are available in Billings and Helena.

Duties may include placing and servicing insect traps; collecting insects with nets and by hand; visually surveying for grasshoppers and other pests; utilizing GPS units and gathering data; and maintaining and submitting accurate records.

Contact Joe Merenz at 406/449-5210 for further information. ■



DNRC SUMMER YOUTH CAMPS

Again this summer, the MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation is hosting summer youth camps. Camp and contact information is as follows:

Montana Envirothon; April 23-24;

Lewistown, MT - The Envirothon offers hands-on instruction and problem solving for environmentally concerned students. Sponsorship is available through your local conservation district.

Montana Range Days; June 18-20; Conrad, MT – Montana Range Days is an annual event that celebrates the importance of rangelands in Montana. Registration before June 1 is \$80/family or \$30/individual. Contact Kody Farkell at 406/278-7611 ext. 101 for further information.

Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp; July 22-27: Lebrecht State Forest - Campers attending the Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp spend one week at the Lubrecht State Forest east of Missoula learning about forestry, water, soils, geology, range, wildlife, recreation and having a lot of fun. Registration is \$175.00. Scholarships are available through your local conservation district.

Montana Youth Range Camp; July 23-27; Roundup, MT - Range Camp is a five-day program open to students ages 12-18. Registration is \$100. Sponsorship may be available through your local conservation district.

For complete camp information log on to www.dnrc.mt.gov/cardd/camps/default.asp or by calling 406/444-6667 ■

MOVING CCC LOAN GRAIN

Producers are reminded, if you have grain under Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loan it cannot be removed or disposed of without prior FSA county office staff authorization or repayment. The county office staff may issue release authorizations based on a telephone or in person request when you are ready to move the grain. A loan violation is subject to monetary and administrative penalties, such as repaying the loan at principal plus interest, liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans and loan deficiency payments.

All commodity loans are subject to spot check. Locking in a market loan repayment rate is not a marketing authorization. If you are planning to move CCC loan grain, contact the county office staff for additional information. ■



2007 CROP LOAN RATES FOR SMALL CHICKPEAS, DRY PEAS AND LENTILS

The 2007-crop dry pea loan rate for Montana is \$6.12 per cwt. The lentil loan rate for Montana is \$10.97 per cwt. USDA determined that there is insufficient reliable market information to establish regional loan rates for small chickpeas. The national rate of \$7.43 cwt applies for all producing areas.

Marketing assistance loans provide producers interim financing after harvest of their crop to meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. A producer who is eligible to obtain a loan, but who agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain a loan deficiency payment (LDP). ■

Attention Customers

\$\$\$ for Wetland Restoration Available

Wetlands benefit the environment by providing fish and wildlife habitat, improving water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals, reducing flooding, and recharging groundwater. The Natural Resources Conservation Service offers the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), which provides an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal land from agriculture. The program offers easements and restoration contracts depending on the goals and objectives of the landowner. Through the easement acquisition, the landowner voluntarily limits future use of the land, but retains private ownership.

There are three enrollment options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, and restoration cost share agreements.

Permanent Easement: This is a conservation easement in perpetuity. Easement payments for this option equal the lowest of three amounts: the agricultural value of the land, an established payment cap, or an amount offered by the landowner. In addition to paying for the easement, USDA pays 100 percent of the costs of restoring the wetland.

30-Year Easement: Easement payments through this option are 75 percent of what would be paid for a permanent easement. USDA also pays up to 75 percent of restoration costs.

For both permanent and 30-year easements, USDA pays all costs associated with recording the easement in the local land records office, including recording fees, charges for abstracts, survey and appraisal fees, and title insurance.

Restoration Cost-Share Agreement: This is an agreement (generally for a minimum of 10 years) to re-establish degraded or lost wetland habitat. USDA pays up to 75 percent of the cost of the restoration activity. This enrollment option does not place an easement on the property.

Some examples of eligible lands include: Wetlands farmed under natural conditions, farmed wetlands, prior converted cropland, farmed wetland pasture, former or degraded wetlands, and more. Not sure if you have wetlands? NRCS can help.

For more information, please contact your local NRCS office or Matt Walker, area biologist, at 406-453-9641 x143, matt.walker@mt.usda.gov, or visit the web at www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/. ■

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM 2007

Recently, the Shelby NRCS completed the funding allocation for the 2007 EQIP dollar distribution. In Toole County, we had received a total of 72 applications and were able to award 19 contracts from those applications. This will bring \$294,970 to the county in the form of cost share dollars for conservation activities on working farms or ranches.

Some of the conservation practices that were funded include: pasture/hay plantings, animal waste facilities, stock water pipelines and tanks; cross fences; saline seep treatment; proper nutrient management on cropland; and conservation crop rotation.

The current NRCS budget has experienced cuts and as a result, the \$294,970 allocation is down from past years (2006 - \$525,000; 2005 - \$436,000; 2004 - \$324,000). As legislators continue to work on drafting the new farm bill, there is plenty of speculation as to the changes that will be adopted. Ultimately, there is a common objective to increase the funding that is distributed to working agriculture lands, and EQIP is one of the programs that does just that.

While we do not know the exact changes in the farm bill that will impact producers, we do know that anyone considering participating in EQIP for 2008 needs to sign an application by June 1, 2007. This deadline is to provide NRCS with adequate time during our 'field season' to visit the sites where conservation practices are needed. Anyone interested can apply at the local NRCS office

Continued from page 5

before June 1. You will be asked to fill out a self assessment questionnaire and will need to submit the specific resource problems that you are seeking to address and the maps of where they are located.

EQIP is intended to help address natural resource concerns on a working agriculture operation. It may dovetail with the Conservation Security Program (CSP) which is designed to reward producers that have adopted high levels of conservation on their farm or ranch. CSP has been a controversial program and is likely going to see significant changes as part of the new farm bill. One of the recurring comments which is expected to be adopted, is that the watershed approach to opening the CSP for applications will be eliminated. This should enable all operations to apply for the program and funding decisions will be made based on the levels of conservation implemented.

All too often, what is discussed upfront is not what actually gets written into the Farm Bill. In any case, a sound strategy is to strive to improve the land you operate in a diverse, conservation- minded manner. To sign an EQIP application stop by the NRCS or for any other questions, contact 434-5234 ext 3.

Successful Legume Inoculation

Are you experiencing degrading soil tilth, low nitrogen levels, and increased diseases in your fields? Perhaps you have considered adding a legume to your rotation. If so, one of the keys to a successful legume stand is proper seed inoculation.

Legumes are unique in that they can form a symbiotic relationship with living bacteria called rhizobium. This relationship consists of the rhizobia bacteria forming specialized structures referred to as “nodules” on the legume roots. In these nodules, sugar created by the plant is used by the rhizobia as energy to convert nitrogen gas in the atmosphere into ammonia. The ammonia is then released to the plant. This process is called nitrogen fixation.

Nitrogen fixation gives the plant the ability to obtain nitrogen from the atmosphere to provide most of the plant’s N needs. Most soils contain rhizobium bacteria but lack sufficient numbers or the specific rhizobium for a given legume. To correct these deficiencies, the producer needs to properly inoculate on the seed with the right

inoculant.

One of the most important things to consider when buying inoculant is to buy the right one for the legume being seeded. For example, use of inoculant labeled for alfalfa will not work for peas. There are many kinds of rhizobium for legumes so make sure you get the right kind. Make sure to check the expiration date of the inoculant, because if it is out of date or expired, it will not work. Remember, inoculate is living bacteria and they will not live indefinitely. Heat and direct sunlight is also detrimental to the health of the inoculant.

The inoculant should be stored in cool, dark places like a refrigerator and not in hot places. It is a good idea to inoculate the seed in a shady area. Also inoculant should be used as soon as possible and the seed should be planted within 48 hrs after inoculation. Inoculant should not be mixed with pesticides or fertilizer as they can be lethal to the rhizobium.

The seeds should be coated sparingly with a sticker solution of 1:10 sticker to water. Stickers you could use include powdered milk, corn syrup, pop, or sugar. Calf milk replacer should not be used as contains antibiotics that can kill the rhizobia. Commercial stickers are available and the instructions should be followed for best results.

Pre-inoculated seed for most legumes are available. Recent advances have made pre-inoculated seed less risky, and more of a practical option than it used to be. For example, the rhizobia are now dormant until the seed is placed in the ground. When a producer is looking at buying seed, it would be a good idea to check into pre-inoculated seed. Producers who use their own seed will still have to inoculate their seed.

Growers can check their fields 2 to 4 weeks after emergence for nodules on the roots. Poor nodulation can occur from factors not related to inoculation such as poor seeding conditions. If the seed is planted in dry soil, survival of the rhizobia bacteria will be poor.

If you’ve never utilized legumes in your rotation before, you are eligible to apply for EQIP assistance to try this practice either as a conservation crop rotation or as a green manure crop. Contact your local NRCS field office for more information. ■

PLANTING BARE-ROOT TREE AND SHRUB SEEDLINGS

Transplanting is always a shock to live plants and great care must be taken to protect the seedlings. Seedlings planted incorrectly have little chance of survival.

Always pick up seedlings the day they are dropped off in the county. In Toole County this year, that date is April 24 at 8 am. When transporting seedlings, the best option is to use an enclosed vehicle or cover the seedlings with a tarp. Protecting the seedlings during transportation will keep them from drying out in the wind and will keep them out of direct sunlight, which can quickly heat them up to damaging temperatures. The interval from seedling pick-up to planting should be minimized, ideally 24 to 72 hours. Never allow seedlings to freeze or expose them to temperatures over 60 F. The best place to store seedlings before planting is a cool, humid location.

Site preparation is critical to seedling survival. If possible, cultivation of the site should begin the year before seedlings are to be planted. If replacing only a few trees, scalp a 3' area around where the seedling will be planted with a hoe to remove competing vegetation. When using herbicides to kill weeds or other competing vegetation before planting, glyphosate is an excellent option because it will not remain active in the soil. If other herbicides are used be sure to contact a pesticide specialist to determine if they will harm the trees. Favorable seedling sites have high soil moisture levels, little competing vegetation, some protection from direct sun and wind, and soils with high organic matter, proper PH, good texture, and the ability to catch and hold moisture.

When planting the seedlings, protect the roots from heat and drying by minimizing the time the roots are exposed to the sun and air. In Montana, the best time to plant is early spring to take advantage of high soil moisture levels and cool temperatures. Holes for planting the trees should be six to twelve inches in diameter and at least two inches deeper than the seedling root system. Dig the holes the same day you are planting so they don't dry out. Do not put water or soil amendments in the holes immediately prior to planting; water after the seedling is planted. Place the seedling in the hole spreading the roots downward and horizontally. Do not bunch the

roots at the bottom of the hole or fold them so that the ends of the roots are directed toward the surface. This is a primary cause of seedling mortality, as is incorrect planting depth. For bare-root seedlings the root collar (soil surface line when the seedling was in the nursery beds) must be located at the soil surface when finished. Fill the hole halfway with soil and tamp around the roots with your hand. Then, backfill the rest of the hole checking for correct root collar depth and tamp the soil firmly around the roots to remove any air pockets.

Contact the extension office for more information on this topic.

Montana State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Montana Counties Cooperating-MSU is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution. ■

2007 IS THE FINAL YEAR OF DCP PROGRAM UNDER THE 2002 FARM BILL

The sign-up deadline for the 2007 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program has been extended from June 1 to August 3, 2007.

The decision to extend the deadline was made as a result of earlier computer networking problems that hampered FSA's ability to process DCP enrollments. Enrollment in DCP for the 2007 contract period began on October 1, 2006.

The extension applies only to the enrollment time frame and does not extend the annual DCP contract period beyond September 30, 2007. A late-file fee of \$100 will be assessed for farms that are enrolled after August 3, 2007 but no later than September 30, 2007. Applications filed after September 30, 2007 cannot be approved.

Direct Payments are based on a farm's historical commodity bases and yields. For crop year 2007, an advance payment of 22 percent may be requested with the final payment to be issued in October.

Counter-cyclical payments are made to producers when the effective price for eligible commodities is less than the target price.

We encourage you to sign up early to avoid the \$100 late file fee. ■

USDA SERVICE CENTER

Phone: 406-434-5234

FAX: 406-434-2718

CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS

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Lynda Fretheim-Certification & Maps (Ext 104) *email: lynda.fretheim@mt.usda.gov*

CONSERVATION DISTRICT ELECTIONS COMING UP

There are two supervisor positions available for the Toole County Conservation District. These are elected positions and have a 4 year term. Anyone wishing to sit on the board needs to get a Nominating Petition from the Clerk and Recorders office or the Toole County Conservation District at the U.S.D.A. Building in Shelby. You will need a minimum of 10 registered voter's signatures and must be turned into the Clerk and Recorders office for the June primary. If you are concerned about conservation issues and how it is affecting your county then you need to get involved. Any questions about the elections please call the Toole County Conservation District office at 434-5234 ext. 113 or you can stop by the office. Office days and hours are Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. ■

PROVIDER PALS

Every single person in the US relies upon someone providing the products of food, clothing and shelter from the earth. More than 80 percent of the US population is now living in urban areas, so often the processes of food production and the cultures built upon a heritage of production are often out of the sight and mind of the majority of consumers.

Bruce Vincent, a logger from Libby, has developed an exciting educational program that encourages people to discuss their cultural realities, embrace their differences, and celebrate their similarities. It uses a unique, yet practical approach to natural resource education along with a series of student exchanges to accomplish this worthwhile task.

To learn more about how you can help by providing students scholarships, sponsoring a classroom or school, or becoming the next Provider Pal, logon to the website at <http://www.providerpals.com>. ■

MARIAS RIVER WATERSHED SURVEY

The Marias River Watershed has submitted a survey on the next page of this newsletter. They would very much appreciate it if you would fill it and send it in by July 1st. All you have to do is pull it from the newsletter fill it out and then fold it in thirds, tape the fold to close it and put a stamp on it. The Toole County Conservation District's address is on the other side of the survey make sure to have the address showing with the stamp. We thank you all in advance for participating in our survey. ■



The Marias River Watershed (MRW) is a collection of landowners, conservation districts and tribes with the common purpose of protecting and improving the land, water, and resources of the Marias River Watershed (main stem and tributaries).

To that end, the MRW Executive Board is in the process of developing future goals/projects for the watershed and would welcome input from watershed residents and the public.

Please take a few minutes and complete the questions listed below. The Survey can then be folded in thirds, taped for closure and mailed (the return address is printed on the back of the survey). All that is required is a stamp....Thank you.

SURVEY QUESTIONS – Keep in mind that MRW would look for technical and financial assistance to address the resource concerns submitted:

1. Do you have perennial or intermittent streams on your property? Yes _____ No _____
Are there eroding banks or other weed/vegetation issues found in these waterways? Yes _____ No _____
Briefly describe the situation.

2. What noxious weeds are present on your property?

Would you use financial or informational assistance in dealing with these weeds? Yes _____ No _____

3. If you are a dryland or irrigated producer, are there programs that the Marias River Watershed could help support that would benefit your farming operation (example: funding for precision farming, alternative crop demonstration plots, weed and insect pest information, etc.)?

4. If you run livestock, list any livestock water developments or other range/pasture improvements needed.

5. Would you attend workshops on alternative energy development (wind energy, bio-fuels, etc)? Yes ____ No ____ Do you have interest in on-farm energy development?

6. Do you allow public access for hunting, floating and other recreation activities? Yes _____ No _____
What problems does that pose for you?

Would you utilize a brochure that lists reminders that access to private land is a privilege, floating information like river miles and estimated floating times, access points, areas with no cell phone coverage, phones numbers for river conditions and fishing regulations, etc.? Yes _____ No _____

7. Do you have saline soil and/or water problems on your property? Yes _____ No _____
Would you like to be contacted by MT Salinity Control Association and/or the local conservation district for ideas to improve the conditions? (There would not be a cost involved for the initial field review) Yes _____ No _____

8. How might the Marias River Watershed assist with your operation and the community in general?

9. Are you willing to be involved in a particular area of interest with the Marias River Watershed group?
If yes, what would that be?

10. Do you want to receive periodic MRW newsletters? Yes ____ No ____
Electronic format? Yes _____ No _____

Email address for newsletters _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Place
Postage
Stamp
Here

TOOLE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
1125 Oilfield Ave.
Shelby, MT 59474

HIGHLIGHTS OF USDA'S 2007 FARM BILL PROPOSALS

“These proposals represent a reform-minded and fiscally responsible approach to making farm policy more equitable, predictable and protected from challenge.” — Mike Johanns, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

- **Demonstrate fiscal responsibility**
 - Spend approximately \$10 billion dollars less than the 2002 farm bill spent (past five years, excluding ad-hoc disaster aid)
 - Uphold President Bush's plan to eliminate the deficit within five years
- **Support emerging priorities**
 - Increase funding for renewable energy, conservation, research, rural development and trade
 - Authorize approximately \$5 billion more than the projected spending if the 2002 farm bill were extended
- **Tighten payment limits**
 - End commodity program subsidies to producers who are among the top 2.3% of Americans with an Adjusted Gross Income of \$200,000 or higher
 - Eliminate the three entity rule and set the payment limit at \$360,000
- **Ensure a strong safety net for producers**
 - Reduce gaps that currently leave producers without a safety net in low yield years
 - Increase direct payments to provide a more predictable safety net that will withstand challenge
- **Increase conservation funding by \$7.8 billion**
 - Simplify and consolidate programs
 - Create new Environmental Quality Incentives and Regional Water programs
- **Provide \$1.6 billion in new funding for renewable energy research, development and production**
 - Target cellulosic ethanol production
 - Support \$2.1 billion in loan guarantees for cellulosic energy projects
- **Provide \$1.6 billion in loans and \$500 million in grants for rural communities**
 - Rehabilitate more than 1,200 current Rural Critical Access Hospitals
 - Decrease the backlog of rural infrastructure projects
 - Consolidate and simplify rural development programs
- **Dedicate nearly \$400 million to trade efforts**
 - Expand exports
 - Fight trade barriers and expand involvement in world trade standard setting bodies
- **Target nearly \$5 billion in funding to support specialty crop producers**
 - Increase nutrition in food assistance programs by purchasing more fruits and vegetables
 - Fund specialty crop research
 - Fight trade barriers and expand markets
- **Provide \$250 million to increase direct payments for beginning farmers and ranchers**
 - Reserve a portion of conservation funds to support beginning producers
 - Provide more flexibility in loans for down payments, land purchases and operating costs
- **Support socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers**
 - Reserve a portion of conservation assistance funds for socially disadvantaged producers
 - Increase access to down payment, direct operating, and farm operating loans
- **Simplify, modernize, and rename the Food Stamp Program**
 - Improve access for the working poor and better meet the needs of recipients and States
 - Strengthen program integrity
- **Improve disaster relief**
 - Create a revenue-based counter-cyclical program
 - Ensure gap coverage in crop insurance
 - Link crop insurance participation to farm program participation
 - Create a new Emergency Landscape Restoration Program

*****FUNDING REFLECTS TEN YEAR TOTALS*****

Calendar of Events

May 28	Holiday, Office Closed
July 1	Return Watershed Survey
July 4	Holiday, Office Closed
July 16	Deadline for Certification
July 16	NAP '06 Production Deadline
Aug 1	DCP Recon Deadline

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