

MGCC Update

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It is my sincere pleasure to reintroduce you to Grass Country. Some of the folks who have been in the districts for a long time will remember the newsletter sent out by the Montana Grass Conservation Commission. It was before the reorganization of state government in the 70's and when the Grass Commission was decommissioned in favor of DNRC. For me reading the old historical documents these past years have been quite an educa-

tion and an eye opener. It also has been an exciting time knowing that the cataloguing and filming of the districts records will be invaluable for our permittees. We have to keep vigilant, connected and organized in order to keep Federal land grazers on the land. In February I travelled to Denver, Colorado for the Society For Range Management's Annual Meeting. This was a great opportunity to spread the word and educate folks on Federal Land

Grazing and Grazing Districts. I took full advantage of it and visited with folks from not only this great United States but many foreign countries.

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Special points of interest:

- Briefly highlight your point of interest here.
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MASGD & MPLC Update

BY Jay Bodner, Executive Secretary for MASGD & Secretary/Treasurer for PLC

I, for one, am excited to have *Grass Country* back in action. I have read past publications and although many of the issues we deal with today haven't changed,

our organizations have had some real successes in looking out for the interests of family ranchers that hold federal grazing leases. It is evident to me that we have

made great strides in our stewardship on the landscape--

Continued on Pages 4-5

DNRC Conservation Districts Bureau Update

BY Heidi Olbert, Rangeland Resource Program Coordinator

The Conservation Districts Bureau provides technical, legal, financial and educational assistance to Montana's 58 conservation districts. As an example, the Rangeland Resources Program, helps conservation districts with educational activities that promote range management. This program is coordinated through the DNRC with guidance from the Rangeland Resources Executive Committee (RREC). The RREC is comprised of six ranchers from across the state who serve on this committee at the pleasure of the Governor. Here are some of the activities sponsored with conservation districts under this program.

The 2010 Winter Grazing Seminar was a

success with over 100 people in attendance. The event was hosted by the Hill County Conservation District on January 13-14 in Havre, MT. Seminar attendants had the opportunity to hear from many speakers including Darrin Boss of the Northern Agriculture Research Center, Clint Peck with Montana Beef Quality Assurance, private consultant Gene Surber and inspirational speaker and logger, Bruce Vincent. At the banquet held during the seminar, the Rangeland Resources Executive Committee gave out the 2009 Range Leader of the Year Awards. Bob and Debbie Gibbs from Jordan won the award in the producer category and Gene Surber, a consultant from Belgrade, won the professional category.

Applications are now being accepted for 2010 Range Leader of the Year, so nominate your neighbor or your favorite agency personnel today.

The 2010 Governor's Range Tour will be hosted by the Phillips Conservation District and based out of Malta. Planning and coordination is in progress. Dates and details will be posted on the website soon.

The Rangeland Resources Executive Committee recently increased the loan limit amount on the Range Improvement Loan Program. Ranchers can now borrow up to \$75,000 over 10 years at



Gene Surber - 2009 Range Leader of the Year Professional Category, John Hollenback - RREC Vice Chair, Steve Hedstrom -

Youth Events

BY Heidi Olbert, Rangeland Resource Program Coordinator

2010 Montana Envirothon will be held in Lewistown on April 19-20

2010 Montana Range Days will be held in Miles City on June 14-16 and welcomes all ages. Receive a discount if you register before June 1.

2010 Montana Youth Range Camp will be held at the Lion's Sunshine Camp near Elliston on June 28- July 2. This camp welcomes youth ages 12-18. Register by June 18.

2010 Natural Resources Camp will be held at Lubrecht Experimental Forest

near Greenough on July 11-16. This camp welcomes youth ages 14-18. Register by June 19.

For more information on the Rangeland Resources Program or Youth Events please contact Heidi Olbert holbert@mt.gov (406) 444-6619 or visit the

Update from Flatwillow and Grass Range Grazing Districts

BY Johnnie Schultz

Well a lot of livestock operations are in full swing calving and lambing now. Good weather is prevalent in most areas in Central/East anyway. South East is experiencing some tough conditions, according to the "grape-vine". Nice time of the year, a new beginning so to speak. As most of you are aware, the rising prices are starting to reflect on the friendly numbers, let's hope it continues.

There is a looming specter in the Missouri River Monument that is not friendly at all, as many of the permittees are finding out, the Wester Watersheds Project (WWP) has filed two lawsuits naming BLM Resource Management Plan (RMP). It also has the blessing of the local friends of the

Monument. Please don't confuse with the Missouri River Stewards, a group based out of Winifred. I am personally acquainted with Ron Poertner, Matt Knox and Joe DeMars who are all actively involved with the Missouri River Stewards and doing a great job.

There are several "positive" forces involved in this unfolding episode that are good for livestock agriculture. To begin with, Hertha Lund, a capable/experienced attorney has been retained, a receptive group of county commissioners are on board, the Missouri River Conservation Districts, The Montana Public Lands Council and the Montana Association of State Grazing Districts. Note: All county Commissioners in other states do not always give agriculture the support that we enjoy in

this area.

It also doesn't hurt anything to have the Karen Budd-Falen law firm doing recent research into just how nonprofit organizations (environmental), groups get their fees paid by American Taxpayers. If you have access to the Western Ag Reporter, November 12th the issue, that explains this flaw in our legal system.

The last RAC meeting in Lewistown was well attended with the following testifying: Matt Knox, Joe DeMars and Kurt Donsbach. Thank you for taking time to testify!

Also appreciated Ron Poertner and Nick Schultz for serving on the RAC Committee.

Take care everyone, there aren't many of us left.

Update from the Valley County Grazing Districts

BY Diane Dirksen, Secretary

The four Valley County Grazing Districts (Badland, Buggy Creek, North Valley County and Willow Creek) each held their annual meetings in February. They also held a joint meeting at the Glasgow Elk's Club on February 19th. Updates were given by the BLM, FW&P, NRCS, Stockgrowers, Extension Service, DNRC Land Trust, DNRC Water Resources, County Commissioners, MASGD and Wildlife Services. Leo Barthelmess gave a power point presentation on the

Rancher's Stewardship Alliance in Phillips County. There was a good audience and a complimentary Prime Rib supper was served after the meeting for members and guests.

The BLM is concerned about grasshoppers in certain areas. They were bad last year and they think this year will be worse. We have been having LOTS of fog (does that mean rain in 60 days???) If so, we will all be using boats around here. We still have quite a bit of snow so if it ever warms up, the grass and reservoirs

should be in fairly good shape to start the grazing season off.

Update from Wayne Creek Grazing District

BY Susan J. Billmeyer

For the past several years members of the grazing district have joined efforts with the Blaine County Weed District and the Bureau of land management in Havre to address the issue of the leafy spurge control on Savoy Creek in north central Montana. We set aside one day in June and one day in the fall to all get together and spray the spurge.

The land owners, weed district and BLM all contribute equipment and labor. When we first started it was acres of solid yellow with leafy spurge, but now has been reduced considerably over the years. We plan to continue with our Spray Day in June and also in the fall as we feel this program has been a success

Update for the C&B Grazing District

BY The Board of Directors for the C&B Grazing District



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It has been a cold winter in Carter County, with lots of snow. It is hard to check the grass, but we're pretty sure we have as much as we did on December 1st. Now would be a good time to check to see if all gates are open on federal land – that should be – for the benefit of antelope migration.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the MASGD annual meeting in Ekalaka on August 26th.

MGCC Update Continued

"To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here."

As the current Chair of the Northern Great Plains Section of SRM I chaired the meeting for the folks in the NGPS of SRM. I also passed the gavel to the new Chair Mike Shellenberg from Swift Creek, Canada. One encouraging thing that was very apparent throughout the

meetings that I attended was the dedication to the land and the working landscapes of this country and the reverence the ranching community is held in by many folks. We have many challenges ahead of us and I am confident we can ride out to meet them. Thank You to all

who contributed to this newsletter I appreciate the time you took out of your busy schedules to contribute. Please keep in touch and as always it is a privilege to serve you.

Sandra K. Brown

MASGD and MPLC Update Continued



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the challenge is now to communicate those successes to a wider audience.

One of the events we utilize to carry our message is the National Pub-

lic Lands Council Spring Conference. Chairman of the PLC, George Trischman, Vice-Chair, Johnnie Schultz and I hit the halls of the Capitol on March 22-24. Trying

to make to most out of our trip, we met with Bob Abbey, Director of the Bureau of Land Management, Dave White, Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation

MASGD & MPLC Update Continued

and MASGD were improvement to the Equal Access To Justice Act, impacts to grazing in proposed wilderness bills in Montana, the Department of Interior's internal monument document and repeal of the Death Tax. This was a great opportunity to forge new partnerships and make sure the interests of Montana ranching families

are addressed. I am also working on ways to improve the delivery of our message in other forms of social media. In addition to this newsletter, we will be utilizing video clips to upload on the Grass Commission and other websites and build on the great work that has been started. My goal will be to provide more information, more quickly, in ways that are more useful to our members

and the general public. With so many new ways to inform



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MASGD & MPLC Update Continued

Service, Bert Frost of the National Park Service, Joel Holtrop, Deputy Chief of the National Forest System and the Montana Congressional delegation. Some of the priority topics for PLC

people of the benefits of federal land grazing, it is incumbent on us all to take advantage. As you read articles in print or online, please take a few minutes to comment or write a letter that tells the true story of federal land grazing.

"To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here."

Inside Story Headline



Caption describing picture or graphic.

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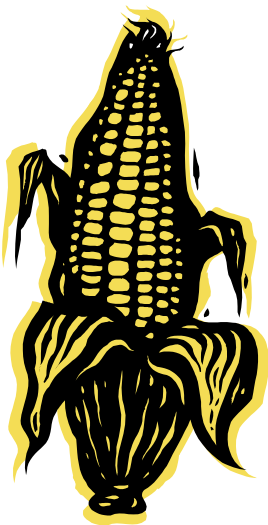
We're on the Web!

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Your business tag line here.



Back Page Story Headline



Caption describing picture or graphic.

This story can fit 175-225 words.

If your newsletter is folded and mailed, this story will appear on the back. So, it's a good idea to make it easy to read at a glance.

A question and answer session is a good way to quickly capture the attention of readers. You can either compile questions that you've received since the last edition or you can summarize some generic questions that are frequently asked about your organization.

A listing of names and titles of managers in your organization is a good way to give your newsletter a personal touch. If your organization is small, you may want to list the names of all employees.

If you have any prices of standard products or services, you can include a listing of those here. You may want to refer your readers to any other forms of communication that you've created for your organization.

You can also use this space to remind readers to mark their

calendars for a regular event, such as a breakfast meeting for vendors every third Tuesday of the month, or a biannual charity auction.

If space is available, this is a good place to insert a clip art image or some other graphic.