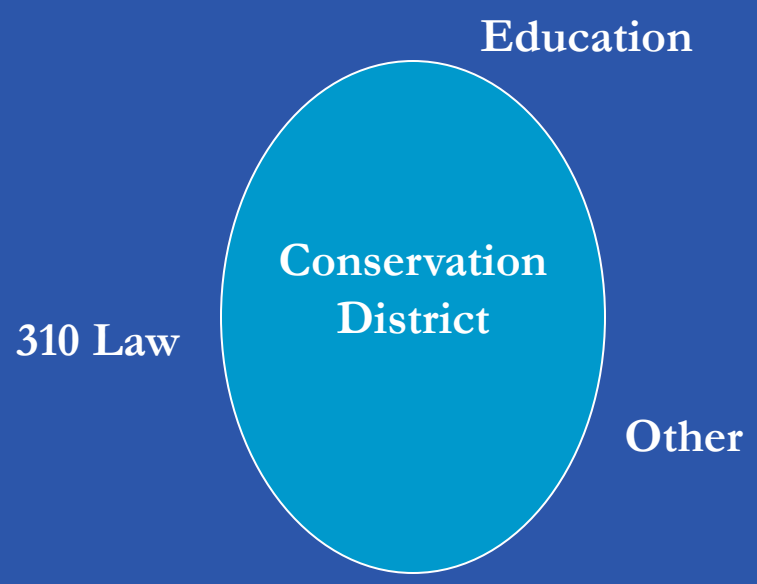
What Conservation Districts do.

In this module, you'll learn the basics of what Conservation Districts do in day to day operations.



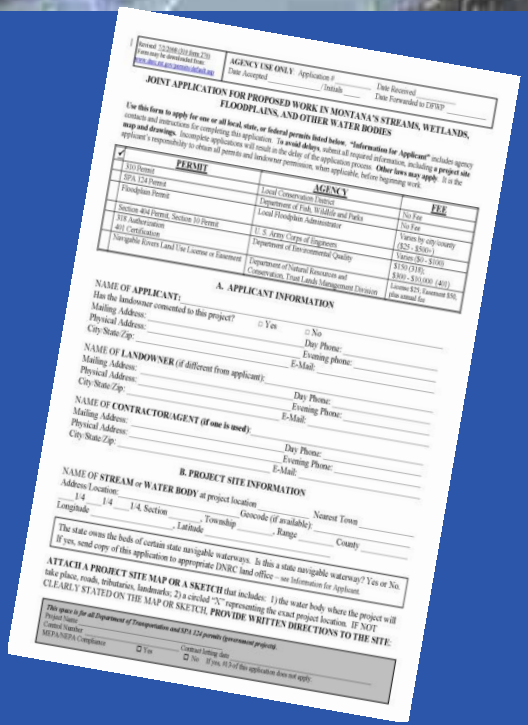
Operation of Conservation Districts

What do CD's do?

The 310 Law (75-7-101)

The Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act, also known as "The 310 Law", is administered by the Conservation Districts.

- Any person proposing a project which is a physical alteration or modification that results in a change in the state of a natural, perennial-flowing stream or river, its bed, or its immediate banks in or near a perennial stream.
    - A district supervisor and representatives from the appropriate agencies inspect the site to make sure the integrity of the stream is maintained.
    - 310 permits are then approved/denied based on the inspection and the scope of the project.



Revised: 7/2/2008 (310 form 2/20)
Forms may be downloaded from:
www.dnrc.mt.gov/conservation/310.htm

AGENCY USE ONLY: Application # ____ Date Accepted ____ Date Received ____ / Initials ____ Date Forwarded to CRWP ____

JOINT APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED WORK IN MONTANA'S STREAMS, WETLANDS, FLOODPLAINS, AND OTHER WATER BODIES

Use this form to apply for one or all local, state, or federal permits listed below. "Information for Applicant" includes agency contacts and instructions for completing this application. **To avoid delays**, submit all required information, including **a project site map and drawings**. Incomplete applications will result in the delay of the application process. **Other laws may apply**. It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all permits and landowner permission, when applicable, before beginning work.

✓	PERMIT	AGENCY	FEE
	310 Permit	Local Conservation District	No Fee
	SPA 124 Permit	Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks	No Fee
	Floodplain Permit	Local Floodplain Administrator	Varies by city/county
	Section 404 Permit; Section 10 Permit	U. S. Army Corps of Engineers	$25 - $50(a)
	318 Authorization	Department of Environmental Quality	Varies: $0 - $100
	401 Certification	Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Trust Lands Management Division	$150 (318); $300 - $10,000 (401)
	Navigable Rivers Land Use License or Easement		License $25 (minimum $50) plus annual fee

A. APPLICANT INFORMATION

NAME OF **APPLICANT**:
Has the landowner consented to this project? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Mailing Address: Day Phone:
Physical Address: Evening phone:
City/State/Zip: E-Mail:

NAME OF **LANDOWNER** (if different from applicant):
Mailing Address: Day Phone:
Physical Address: Evening Phone:
City/State/Zip: E-Mail:

NAME OF **CONTRACTOR/AGENT (if one is used)**:
Mailing Address: Day Phone:
Physical Address: Evening Phone:
City/State/Zip: E-Mail:

B. PROJECT SITE INFORMATION

NAME OF **STREAM or WATER BODY** at project location
Address/Location: Nearest Town
___ 1/4 ___ 1/4 ___ 1/4, Section ___ Township ___ Range ___ County
Longitude ___, Latitude ___ Geocode (if available):

The state owns the beds of certain state navigable waterways. Is this a state navigable waterway? Yes or No.
If yes, send copy of this application to appropriate DNRC land office—see Information for Applicant.

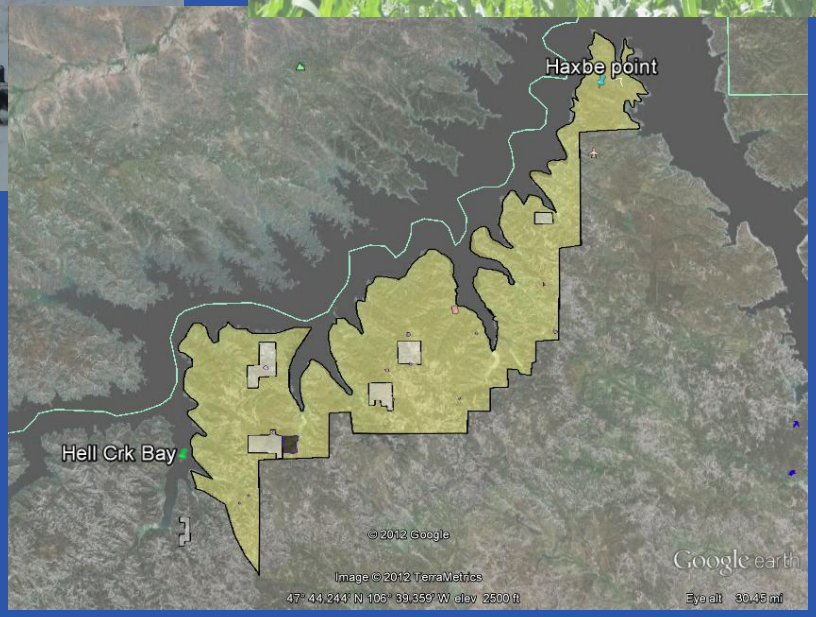
ATTACH A PROJECT SITE MAP OR A SKETCH that includes: 1) the water body where the project will take place, roads, tributaries, landmarks; 2) a circled "X" representing the exact project location. IF NOT CLEARLY STATED ON THE MAP OR SKETCH, **PROVIDE WRITTEN DIRECTIONS TO THE SITE**.

This space is for all Department of Transportation and SPA 124 permits (government projects).
Project Name:
Control Number:
MEPA/NEPA Compliance: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Contract letting date:
If yes, 41-5-2 of this application does not apply.

Demonstration Projects

CD's promote, sponsor and lead Demonstration projects to learn and educate producers, agencies and general public.

- Sponsoring projects such as::
  - Cover Crops
  - Bale Grazing demonstrations
  - Grazing Management Pilot Projects
  - Weed control demonstrations/projects



Conservation Education

CD's address conservation issues to both youth and adult audiences by:

- Sponsoring **kids'** conservation field days and annual camps. Some of these include:
  - Creek & Critters
  - Montana Envirothon
  - Flood awareness
  - Ag Days
  - Ag Appreciation Week

- Sponsoring **adult** education such as
  - Realtor Workshops
  - Governors Range tour
  - Conservation days
  - Spring Crops Tour
  - Irrigation Tour
  - Irrigation Efficiency workshop

Rolling Rivers Trailer Education

Rolling Rivers Trailers are stream tables on wheels that can demonstrate not only stream dynamics but watershed principles as well.

The Rolling River is a five by ten foot utility trailer with a six-inch deep trailer bed that is filled with sand (actually recycled plastic granules). A meandering river or two is scooped out running from one end to the other. Trees, foliage and a few rocks line the riverbank. When water is turned on at the top of the watershed, it flows through the river and can be used to demonstrate a variety of water lessons including:

- River energy:
- Riparian areas:
  - -Turn the water on full force as in a flood situation and the riverbank begins to break down and collapses even faster. This demonstrates the principles of healthy versus unhealthy riparian areas.
- Floodplains
- Non-point pollution:.
- Effects of diversion:

Sponsored by MACD!

Urban Conservation & Small Acreage

With the rapid increase in subdivided acreages, and the resource issues associated with these small tracts, districts have recently taken on a new role. Below are some examples:

- Hosting workshops and producing educational materials for new landowners;

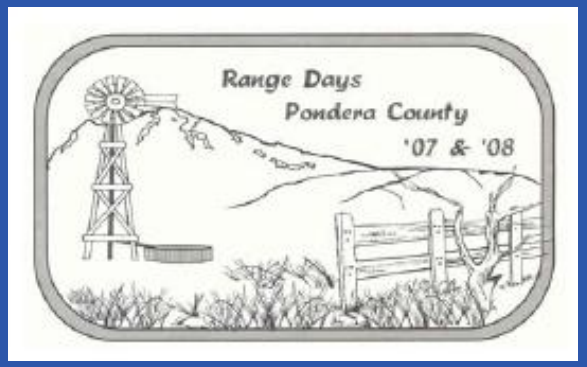
- Operating recycling programs; and,

- Pooling of technical expertise from various agencies to provide services like soil surveys and water disposal information to planning commissioners, municipal officers, and others.

Rangeland Resource Executive Committee (RREC)

Governor Appointed to provide .

Approximately two-thirds of Montana's land is utilized as rangeland. Many conservation districts appoint a county range leader, and work to assist ranchers, sportsmen, recreationists, and other users of rangeland to become more aware of each other's needs.



Range Committees & programs such as:

- Montana Youth Range Camp
- Montana Range Days
- Governors Range Tour
- Winter Grazing Seminar
- Range Loan Program

Education

Resource Conservation Advisory Council (RCAC)

- Governor-appointed council of conservation district supervisors
- Has served the Conservation Districts Bureau since 1980
- Main focus of the council has been to review grants and advise
- DNRC how to best manage the funding provided to CD's
    - Reviews programs & grants such as:
    - 223 Grant program
    - CD Administration grants
    - 310 and Legal assistance funds

Saline Seep Reclamation

What is a saline seep? You may have seen white, powdery-looking spots in the low areas of fields. These spots are seeps, and they have adverse effects on water quality, wildlife, and other resources, not to mention agricultural production.

Conservation district supervisors in 33 counties make up the membership of the Montana Salinity Control Association. This internationally recognized organization headquartered in Conrad, Montana provides expert technical assistance in the reclamation and control of saline seeps in agricultural areas.

Other

Water Quality

Districts:

- Are the local contact for the control of non-point source (NPS) pollution.
- Conduct projects demonstrating NPS pollution control practices.
- Prefer voluntary, education, and incentive-based approaches to regulatory approaches.
- Work with state and federal agencies (for the most part, the DEQ & EPA) to identify problem areas and prioritize treatment.

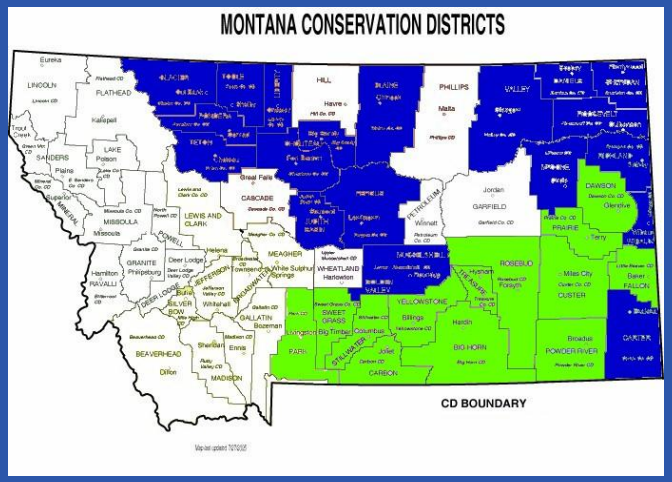
Recently, the manner in which these problems are addressed has become the development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL's) for impaired streams in Montana.

Whitmore Ravine, Cascade Co.

Water Reservations

Conservation districts in Montana are able to reserve water for future beneficial use. Currently, 31conservation districts hold water reservations throughout the Yellowstone, Little Missouri, and Missouri River basins. Each of these districts administers its reservation for use by individuals within the district. Applications for reserved water use can be obtained from the applicable conservation district.

Big Horn	Basin	Blaine	Carbon	Carter	Chouteau
Custer	Daniels	Dawson	Fallon	Fergus	Glacier
Judith	Liberty	McCone	Musselshell		Park
Pondera	Powder River		Prairie		Richland
Roosevelt	Rosebud	Sheridan	Stillwater	Sweet Grass	
Teton	Toole	Treasure	Valley	Wibaux	Yellowstone



Other

Conservation Equipment

In order to promote conservation practices, districts demonstrate and rent out a wide array of equipment to land users, including:

- Tree Planters;
- Fabric Layers;
- Weed Sprayers;
- Weed Bagers;
- Conservation Tillage Drills;
- Grass Seeders; and,
- Tree Chippers

Tree planter

Grass Seeder

Other

Watershed Planning

- Locally led groups tackling local and regional natural resource management issues on a watershed basis. Districts are often instrumental on drawing people and resources together to assist the development of these groups.
    - Big Timber & Swamp Creek Watershed
    - Marias River Watershed
    - Teton Watershed Group
    - Madison River watershed

Local Watershed Councils, and Coordinated Resource Management Efforts

They all mean the same thing--local folks getting together in a collaborative, consensus-based process to tackle local and regional natural resource management issues on a river basin or watershed basis.

Conservation districts often draw people and resources together to catalyze or assist in the development of these efforts.

A prime example of one of these groups is Montana Watershed, Inc. Also, see the Montana Watershed Coordination Council site for more information about watershed groups and activities in Montana.

Missouri River Conservation Districts Council

MRWA

Life Line of the Hi-Line

Yellowstone River Conservation District Council

Federal Conservation Programs

Conservation districts work very closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service) to provide local direction for the administration of federal conservation programs. Some of these programs are:

- The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP);
- The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP);
- The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP); and,
- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

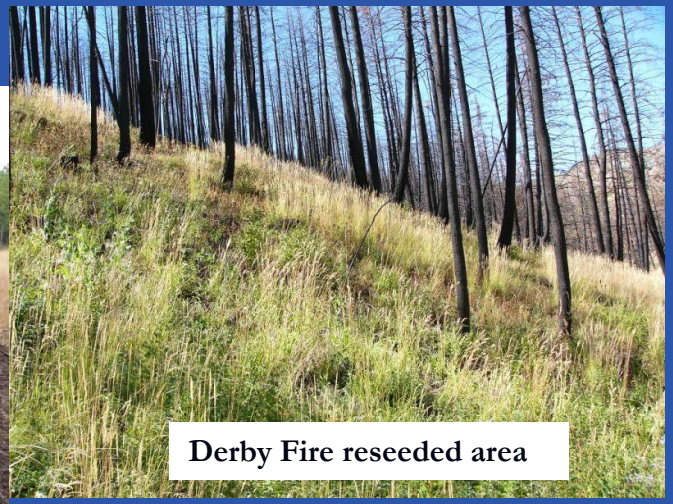
NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

Fire rehabilitation Efforts/Coordination

Conservation districts in areas of Fires become involved and are the liason between the fire fighting agencies/crews and the landowners. CD's also coordinate reseeding efforts, become the local source of information, and seed distribution to landowners.

Bundy Fire damage

Suppression line rehabilitation



Derby Fire reseeded area

Other

Forest Practices

Conservation districts in the western part of the state participate in cooperative Best Management Practices education programs and promote sustainable forest management as a means of maintaining stable rural economies.

- Tree thinning projects
- Fire reduction and preparation