

SOURCES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Federal Agencies

Farm Services Agency (FSA)

FSA administers cost-sharing programs for farmers implementing conservation measures. It also provides aerial photos for conservation work, assistance for land treatment and development, and natural disaster relief.

Agricultural Research Service (ARS)

ARS researches the production, marketing, use, and improvement of soil, water, air, and agricultural products. ARS research is conducted at numerous field locations throughout the U.S. and its territories and in several foreign countries.

Army Corps of Engineers (Corps)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plans and constructs reservoirs and local measures to control floods and improve navigation. It is active in flood control, hydroelectric power, municipal and industrial water supplies, and recreation, as well as planning for water resource development.

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

PA markets hydroelectric power in the Pacific Northwest.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

BIA is trustee for Native American Indian lands and helps Indian tribes make the most effective use of their natural resources.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Land managed by the BLM is generally non-forested public land used for grazing and recreation. Its Minerals Management Service manages all minerals within the public estate (regardless of who owns or manages the surface).

Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)

BOR locates, constructs, and maintains works to store, divert, and develop water in the western U.S. BOR projects provide for municipal and industrial water supply, hydroelectric power, irrigation, water quality improvement, fish and wildlife, outdoor recreation, flood control, and navigation.

Economic Development Administration (EDA)

EDA helps develop the economies of communities. EDA provides grants, loans, and other forms of assistance for public works and development facilities, industrial and commercial expansion, redevelopment areas, and economic development districts.

Economics Statistics and Crop Service (ENRCS)

ENRCS provides economic information for agencies, farmers, farm industries, and the public. Its research centers on the use, conservation, development, and control of natural resources in both the U.S. and international economies. The findings of ENRCS research are available through research and economic outlook and situation reports.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

EPA carries out federal pollution control laws. It also provides technical assistance to reduce and control air, water, and land pollution. EPA provides funding to develop and install pollution treatment facilities.

Rural Economic and Community Development Services (RECD)

RECD's makes loans for farm ownership, operating expenses, livestock emergencies, soil and water conservation, grazing, Indian tribe land acquisition, recreation, and subsidized and un-subsidized housing.

Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

FWS is responsible for wild birds, mammals (except certain marine mammals), and inland sport fisheries. FWS conducts research activities, conducts environmental impact assessments, and manages wildlife refuges.

Forest Service (USFS)

The Forest Service manages forested public lands for multiple uses and oversees projects on them. It is concerned with timber management, erosion, grazing, weed control, water quality, and other soil and water problems. USFS sponsors cooperative programs through state forestry agencies, the Natural Resources Conservation Services, and conservation districts to control fires, stabilize gullies, improve forest growth, plant trees, and control forest pests.

Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS)

HCRS coordinates government and private interests to promote and develop outdoor recreation programs. HCRS also administers grants to states and their political subdivisions for comprehensive planning, land acquisition, and facility development.

National Park Service (NPS)

NPS administers national parks, monuments, historical sites, and recreation areas for the enjoyment and education of citizens. It also helps states, local governments, and citizen groups develop park areas, protect nature, and preserve historical properties.

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

NRCS has a long, extensive tradition of work with conservation districts. NRCS provides personnel, equipment, office space, and counsel to districts. It also provides free technical assistance with soils, conservation practices, and planning to land users and others.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

USGS conducts studies on public lands as well as research in geology, geophysics, hydrology, cartography, and related sciences. It also studies natural hazards, such as earthquakes and volcanoes, and identifies flood hazard areas.

State Agencies

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)

DNRC oversees numerous programs pertaining to Montana's water, energy, and land resources. The functions of DNRC's Conservation and Resource Development Division (CARDD) are of special interest to CD supervisors. CARDD's Conservation Districts Bureau (CDB) is responsible under state law to assist and supervise Montana's 58 conservation districts and 30 state grazing districts. CDB also administers the HB 223, Administrative Grant Program, 310 Legal and Engineering Programs, Watershed Planning Assistance Grant Program. CARDD's Resource Development Bureau (RDB) assists CD's as they develop reserved water and provides technical and monetary assistance for a variety of resource-related activities and projects. Funding programs administered by RDB include reclamation and development grants, water development grants and loans, renewable resource development grants, and rangeland improvement loans.

Responsibilities of the Water Resources Division include water rights, the state water plan, state-owned water projects, floodplain management, river basin studies, weather modification licensing and permitting, and dam safety. The Forestry Division manages state-owned forested, crop, and grazing lands (most of which were granted to the state by the federal government) in ways that will achieve a maximum sustained return to the school trust funds. The Forestry Division also administers various laws that regulate mining and reclamation on state, private, and federal lands.

Department of Agriculture (MDA)

The Montana Department of Agriculture administers state laws protecting agricultural producers from diseases, insects, predators, and weeds. MDA regulates fruit, seed, and other agricultural product grading. MDA issues and approves licenses for nursery dealers and pesticide operators and applicators. It issues labeling permits for products used by agricultural producers such as seed, fertilizer, pesticide, etc. The MDA is also involved in water resources, transportation, farm labor, and other matters related to the production, distribution, and sale of agricultural commodities.

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

DEQ is the state's lead agency in charge of implementing state and federal resource protection laws. The agency has both regulatory and non-regulatory functions, and administers the provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act.

DEQ divisions: **The Permitting and Compliance Division** was formed to coordinate permitting activities administered by the Department of Environmental Quality and to ensure timely compliance with permit requirements. Nearly all permits and authorizations issued by DEQ are handled through PCD; **The Enforcement Division**

implements, coordinates and tracks the Department of Environmental Quality enforcement activities. This involves investigating and responding to spills and citizens complaints that allege impacts to human health or the environment; **The Planning, Prevention and Assistance Division** develops integrated water, air, waste management and energy plans to protect Montana's environmental resources. The Division monitors ambient environmental conditions and maintains records and data describing the quality of Montana's environment; **The Remediation Division** is responsible for overseeing investigation and cleanup activities at state and federal Superfund sites; reclaiming abandoned mine lands; regulating, permitting, and licensing underground storage tanks (USTs); implementing corrective actions at sites with leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs); and overseeing groundwater Remediation at sites where agricultural and industrial chemical spills have caused groundwater contamination.

Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (DFWP)

DFWP oversees the state fisheries and wildlife programs and manages state-owned parks. As a member of the 310 inspection team, DFWP provides technical assistance to CD's in regulating nongovernmental projects affecting streams under the Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act. It also regulates governmental stream projects under the Stream Preservation Act.

Department of Public Health & Human Services (DPHHS)

Cooperative Extension Service, Montana State University

The MSU Cooperative Extension Service is a publicly funded educational resource system, with links to the education and research resources and activities of 74 land-grant institutions, 3,150 counties, and the USDA. The goal of the Extension Service is to strengthen the social, economic, and and environmental well-being of families, communities, and agricultural enterprises.

Local Government

County Government

The boundaries of nearly all conservation districts in Montana coincide with county lines, and, while there is no legal relationship between the two, counties can be helpful in several ways. Counties can provide office space, funding, co-sponsorship for watershed projects and responsibility for their operation and maintenance, bridge and culvert replacement, use of county earthmoving equipment, cooperation on county parks and other county-owned land, and funds for soil surveys. County contacts include commissioners, auditor, treasurer, recorder, engineer, assessor, highway superintendent, health officer, planning commission, parks and recreation department, weed district, and others.

Municipal Government

Municipal or city government can also be very helpful. Consider contacting the city mayor, council, planning commission, park board, street and water departments, and others.

Schools

Local schools can apply to your district for Conservation Education Mini-Grants to carry out conservation education. Contact your local school and make them aware of the opportunities available.

Conservation District Associations

Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD)

MACD is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization of the 58 conservation districts in Montana. MACD is made up of six area associations of conservation districts and serves as a state voice for conservation districts on state policy, legislation, communication, and funding for conservation activities. MACD also provides forums to inform, train, and educate supervisors and recognize outstanding district individuals and programs. MACD has standing committees on district operations; finance; legislation; natural environment and wildlife; public relations; range, forestry, and public lands; research; resource conservation and development; and water resources.

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)

NACD is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization representing over 3,000 districts and their state associations in the 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. NACD lobbies for federal conservation legislation and funding in Congress. It also provides brochures, reports, conservation films, training, and education.

Private Organizations and Businesses

Assistance may also be obtained from other sources. Private organizations, such as fishing and hunting clubs and environmental groups, often have a strong interest in promoting conservation.

Examples of helpful organizations include:

- Montana Graingrowers Association
- Montana Stockgrowers Association
- Montana Conservation District Employees Association
- Montana Farm Bureau
- Montana Woolgrowers
- Montana Water Resources
- Montana Wildlife Federation
- Montana Rural Electric Association
- 4-H Clubs
- Boy and Girl Scouts
- Chambers of Commerce
- Future Farmers of America (FFA)

Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS)
National Association of State Conservation Administrators (NASCA)

Private industries are often interested in conservation as a matter of improving their business climate. Don't be afraid to be creative in your search for resources for a quality program.

