

Taking a look inside the 2014 LaMarche Timber Harvest

James S. Rosien
Leader Reporter

A \$200,000 state grant meant 1,550 tons of logs, 4,042 tons of pulp and 2 million feet of material were harvested from the LaMarche Creek area west of Deer Lodge, a half-million more feet than were expected according to the Montana Department of Natural Resource Conservation (DNRC), which hosted a tour of the harvest area late last month.

The 470-acre project, which started in August of 2015 and wrapped up last fall after its approval in 2014, was made possible by a Forests in Focus grant awarded to Sun Mountain Lumber, explained Roger M. Ziesak, forest practices specialist with Montana DNRC. The grant, he said, is "targeted to areas that need it."

The project was undertaken through Montana Correctional Enterprises – a self-funded enterprise that employs correctional inmates – and the harvest itself was on the Montana State Prison Ranch.

"It was a good collaboration," said Sean Steinbach, DNRC forester and foreman on the project. "We couldn't have done it if there weren't a saw mill locally."

Steve Flynn with Sun Mountain Lumber said one of the project's primary goals was to improve the timber stand and reduce fire hazards in the area by cutting trees that weren't usable and clearing out the dead wood.

"I'm really happy we got that dead lodgepole pine out of there," Steinbach said.

Part of the fire hazard



Clockwise from top: Sean Steinbach, second from right, Department of Natural Resource Conservation forester and project foreman for the 2014 LaMarche Timber Harvest outside of Deer Lodge, points to a section of the LaMarche Creek area that was improved by the harvest. The Deer Lodge Valley as seen from within the harvest area. A slash pile sits below young trees in the harvest area. Cattle from Montana State Prison graze along the road in the harvest area, which is part of the prison's ranch. Leader photos by James S. Rosien

reduction included "nutrient recycling," which is done by leaving material that could not be harvested on the ground so its nutrients get absorbed into the soil and so if a fire does come through the area it goes straight to the ground, lessening its severity, Steinbach said.

The diverse ages of the forest – with trees ranging from 20 to 80 years old – also helps reduce the fire hazard and risk from insects, he said.

"The prison has always been really proactive up here, they've done some real good

work. They're really into the management of their land up here," Flynn said.

Other improvements included increasing the water quality of LaMarche Creek, as grass was seeded in the area to reduce sedimentation, as well as road reconstruction.

"They did an exemplary job... The high quality of work helps us tell the story. It's not exciting, it's just straightforward forestry as we practice it today," Ziesak said. "It does make a significant difference. We're doing a lot of this in counties that don't

normally see this kind of work."

Forests in Focus grants are awarded every two years, and in the period the LaMarche Creek project was approved it was one of only 10 out of 33 proposals to get the go-ahead, Ziesak said.

"I was amazed at the quality of the grant proposals," Ziesak said. "Scoring them is hard, that's why we score them individually – it would be too hard to score them against each other."

About 4,000 acres of forestland statewide will be treated by the grant by the time it runs its course, Ziesak said.



Copper Village Museum & Arts Center
invites you to an

Artist Reception
featuring the art of

Deb Zimmerman

Quilt Show

Thursday, September 8
6-8 p.m.

Refreshments Served

Call Copper Village for more info:
(406) 563-2422

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

90th
Birthday Party

HONORING

Avalon Billquist

Saturday, September 10th at 2:00pm
Opportunity Community Club

Justice Court

The honorable Larry Pahut presiding:

- Christopher Mark Surges, 213 Locust St., pleaded guilty on July 11 to a charge of operating without liability insurance in effect, first offense. The defendant was fined \$250 plus \$35 surcharge, sentenced to 10 days in jail suspended and ordered to pay \$2,091.10 restitution to the victim, minus the \$1,000 deductible for a total restitution of \$1,091.10.
- Christopher Lee Scott, 511 E. 5th St. No. 11, pleaded guilty Aug. 5 to a charge of theft – obtaining or exerting unauthorized control over property, first offense. The defendant was fined \$1,000 plus \$85 surcharge, sentenced to six months in jail suspended and ordered to pay \$7.98 restitution to the victim.
- Carla Ann Marshall, 600 Elm St., was found guilty for a bench trial on Aug. 18 for a charge of operating without liability insurance in effect, first offense, and reckless driving, first offense.

Anaconda Leader

Like Us On facebook

6 Months No Interest
OAC

With Purchase of Over \$299

Tire Sale!
Everyday Low Prices
Fast Service

AMERICAN CAR CARE CENTERS

Lisac's Tire of Anaconda

Open Monday thru Sat. 8-5
1100 W. Park 563-6110



Welcome Home Dr. Novack!

TRIPLE CROWN

TOP 100 CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL –HANTAGE HEALTHSTRONG

TOP 100 GREAT COMMUNITY HOSPITAL –BECKER'S HOSPITAL REVIEW

BEST PRACTICE RECIPIENT-QUALITY –NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Community Hospital of Anaconda welcomes of native, Dr. Mallory Novack to the CHA family. Dr. Novack is a member of the American College of Obstetrics & Gynecology and will be seeing patients in both Butte and Anaconda.

For more information or to schedule an appointment with Dr. Novack, please call Pintler Family Medicine at (406) 563-7282.

COMMUNITY HOSPITAL OF ANACONDA
Care for a Lifetime

401 W. Pennsylvania Street | Anaconda | (406) 563-8500
www.communityhospitalofanaconda.org

Dr. Mallory Novack, OB/GYN

See JUSTICE COURT on page 7



Courtesy photo
DNRC Eastern Land Office Area Manager Chris Pileski leads a tour of the Ashland Forest Products Mill in Ashland, which is utilizing Forest in Focus funds.

Forests in Focus funding helps prevent and alleviate the cost of fighting wildfires

By Kelley Hirning,
Communications
Department of Natural
Resources & Conservation

Forest restoration, fuels treatments and wildfire prevention/reduction activities are ongoing in the Southeastern part of Montana. Last month, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) organized a tour of different Southeastern Montana fuel reduction projects to highlight all the work that is being done in the area to reduce wildfire risk and its threat to the public and property.

In addition to DNRC staff, other attendees included a Rosebud County

commissioner, U.S. Forest Service, Northern Cheyenne and Bureau of Indian Affairs staff, local landowners, and members of the Rosebud Conservation District and local forest industry.

DNRC Eastern Land Office Area Manager Chris Pileski showcased some of the projects that were a result of the partnership of those involved, as well as the various state and federal grants that provided funding. Pileski also recognized Bobbi Vannattan of the Rosebud Conservation District for her work in managing most of the projects. She and the Conservation District collaborate to complete these projects.

The group toured the Ashland Forest Products

Mill in Ashland and saw the work the revitalized mill is undertaking. Reopened in the fall of 2014, the mill is producing lumber products out of logs from trees killed in the wildfires of 2012, including logs from projects that were on the tour.

After touring the mill, the group visited projects on state trust land, U.S. Forest Service land and on the property of two private landowners.

Since 2009, DNRC has used state and federal funds to help restore forest land on 30 properties, totaling approximately 4,000 acres of private, tribal, and state lands in the southeast region of Montana. One of the fund-

See FUNDING Page 6

Crow Fair Photo Contest

Submit your entries to the Big Horn County News Office between August 22 - 29.

Judging will be in four categories!

- Best Parade
- Best Powwow
- Best Rodeo
- Best campground

Winning photos will be announced and printed in the Sept. 1 issue of the Big Horn County News.

For complete rules go to www.bighorn-countynews.com

Not open to professional photographers

Sponsored by the Big Horn County News

204 N. Center Ave
Hardin, MT 59034
For additional information call 665-1008 or Email publisher@bighorn-countynews.com

BIG HORN COUNTY COMMUNITY CALENDAR



Photo by Levi C. Flinn

Kristi Dorn's K Bee Honey Farms booth also offers artwork by her daughter Kristin at last Thursday's River Valley Farmer's Market. The market will be open from 5-7:30 p.m. Thursdays on the 200 Block of Center Avenue in Hardin until Sept. 8.

MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Friday, Aug. 12 - Hardin E & R Church will be holding a bake sale in the Little Horn State Bank parking lot starting at 7:30 a.m.

Friday, Aug. 12 - The next Healthy Hardin meeting is scheduled from noon to 1 p.m. in the Big Horn County Memorial Hospital Board Room to talk about the River Valley Farmer's Market and other action plan items. For more information, call Shelly Sutherland at (406) 665-8720.

Monday, Aug. 15 - A community meeting will be held in the Hardin Historic Depot at 7 p.m. to discuss Little Big Horn Days, the Reenactment and the Hardin Chamber of Commerce as a whole. For more information, call (406) 665-1672.

Saturday, Aug. 20 - The annual Lodge Grass potluck picnic will be held at noon at the Big Horn County Historical Museum in Hardin.

Tuesday, Aug. 23 - The Hardin Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office's No-Till Gardening Workshop has been cancelled.

Friday, Aug. 26 through Saturday, Aug. 28 - Gateway Christian Center, located 9.5 miles north of Hardin on Highway 47, will hold their annual Chuckwagon Gathering with

Pastor Mike Morrison at 7 p.m. Friday, all day Saturday and 10 a.m. Sunday. **Saturday, Sept. 3** - The 22nd Annual Chief Plenty Coups Day of Honor starts at 11 a.m. in Chief Plenty Coups State Park in Pryor. Speakers, vendor booths, tours and free barbecue will be available. For more information, call the park at (406) 252-1289.

MONDAYS

- Hardin AA meets at 8 p.m. at 619 Division. For more information, call 679-0681
- The Two Rivers Authority meets at 5:30 p.m. at the Two Rivers Detention Facility in Hardin (1st Monday).
- Pryor Al Anon Family Group meets at 7 p.m. at the St. Charles Mission multi-purpose room.
- The Historical Preservation Commission meets at noon. For more information call 665-2137 (2nd Monday).
- On the third Monday of the month, Debby Warren of First Interstate Bank will teach a budget class at the HRDC building from 1-3 p.m. Call 665-3500 to register.

TUESDAYS

- The Helping Hands Food Bank is open from noon to 4 p.m. for emergency food services. Their flavor of the month is boxed macaroni and cheese. (Tuesday and Thursday).
- Al-Anon Experience

Strength and Hope group meets at 7 p.m. at 619 Division. Alateens are welcome.

• Hardin City Council meets at 7:30 p.m. at the Public Utility Facility across from City Hall (1st and 3rd Tuesday).

• All City Committees are scheduled to meet at 6:30 p.m. every 3rd Tuesday of each month, at the Public Utility Facility (across from the City Offices at 406 N Cheyenne Ave.).

• Jasmine Chapter #65 of Eastern Star meets 7 p.m. at the Masonic Hall (2nd and 4th Tuesday).

• Hardin Chamber of Commerce meets 12, noon at the 3 Brothers Bistro (second Tuesday).

• Weight Watchers: Bullis Family Center at 524 N Cheyenne Ave. Weigh-in, 5 p.m., meeting, 5:30 to 6 p.m.

• Hardin District 17H & 1 School Board meets at 5:30 p.m. in the school administration building (2nd and 4th Tuesday).

WEDNESDAYS

• BHC Library Story Hour at 10:30 a.m. Crafts included; children must be accompanied by an adult.

• Kiwanis meets at noon at Three Brother's Bistro in the back room. All visitors are welcome.

• Hardin AA meets at 8 p.m. at 619 Division. For more information, call 679-0681

• Hardin's Rod and Gun Club meets at the 4-Aces Joker Room at 6 p.m. 665-2712 (2nd Wednesday).

THURSDAYS

• Recovery meetings are being held at 6:30 p.m. at the Spirit of Life Church in Crow Agency. For more information, call 406-459-4371.

• Hardin Hope for Today Al-Anon group will meet at 7 p.m. at 323 N. Crawford Ave. This group includes literature study. Alateens are welcome.

• The Women's AA group meets at 5:30 p.m. For more information, call (406) 679-2954.

• St. John's Lodge #92 meets at 7:30 p.m. at the Masonic Hall (2nd and 4th Thursday).

• Lodge Grass Al-Anon meets at 8 p.m. upstairs in the Our Lady of Loretto Church.

FRIDAYS

• Hardin AA meets at 8 p.m. at 619 Division. For more information, call 679-0681

SATURDAYS

• Welcoming Comfort Al-Anon group meets at 10 a.m. at 323 N. Crawford Ave. Breakfast is served at meetings. Alateens are welcome.

CHOOSE YOUR PROGRAM MARKETING NOW AVAILABLE FULLY ONLINE

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

MSU BILLINGS

THERE'S STILL TIME TO REGISTER!

1-800-565-6782 • msubillings.edu/future

CLASSES BEGIN SEPT. 7!

ARRESTED AND BOOKED

August 1

Richard Shawn Schiedel was arrested on two Big Horn County district warrants and for driving a motor vehicle while the privilege to do so is suspended. Total bond was set for \$15,285.

August 2

Fred Thomas Belly Mule III was arrested for purchase/possession of intoxicating substance by a minor, driving without a valid driver's license and driving under the influence of alcohol. Total bond was set for \$1,105.

Duran Littlelight Sr. was arrested for criminal endangerment of a child and driving a motor vehicle while the privilege to do so is suspended. Total bond was set for \$55,000.

Robert Peter Standish was arrested for theft – pickpocket. Bond was set for \$1,085.

Marion Yvonne Mountain Sheep was arrested for obstructing a peace officer or other public servant. Bond was set for \$585.

Matthew Robert Hill was arrested on two Big Horn County

justice warrants. No bond and \$185 bond was set respectively.

Brandy Rose Old Horn was arrested on a Big Horn County justice warrant. Bond was set for \$1,500.

Zeldine Beatrice Tartsah was arrested for probation violation. No bond was set.

August 3

No arrests made.

August 4

Erlis Jean Hugs-Harold was arrested on a Big Horn County justice warrant. Bond was set for \$100.

Jonathan Wayne Big Lake was arrested on a Big Horn County justice warrant. Bond was set for \$1,500.

Paul Brian Lande was arrested on a Big Horn County justice warrant. Bond was set for \$585.

Samuel Ross Tillman was arrested on a Big Horn County justice warrant. Bond was set for \$1,000.

Elmer Burpee Yarlott Jr. was arrested on a Big Horn County justice warrant. Bond was set for \$585.

Dylan Leigh Rude was arrested

for probation violation. No bond was set.

August 5

Lucrecia Carol Little Nest was arrested for partner or family member assault – non-aggravated and obstructing a peace officer or other public servant. No bond and \$335 bond were set respectively.

Holland Drew Plainfeather was arrested for theft – obtain control over stolen property, third offense. Bond was set for \$2,085.

Elmer Burpee Yarlott Jr. was arrested on a district warrant. Bond was set for \$2,500.

August 6

Delray Lynn Medicine Horse was arrested for partner or family member assault – aggravated. No bond was set.

Nicolette Claire Rogers was arrested on a city warrant. Bond was set for \$1,500.

August 7

Gerald Littlelight Jr. was arrested for disorderly conduct. Bond was set for \$185.

Hiram Vine Armajo was arrested on a city warrant. No bond was set.

FUNDING

ing sources was the Montana Forests in Focus Initiative, which has disbursed \$4 million for projects on tribal, state and private forests and \$2 million to USFS lands for fuel reduction and forest restoration.

Tom Trusler Jr., a fifth generation rancher and grant recipient said, “By uti-

lizing the Forest in Focus money, this advanced us at least 20 years...with the Forests in Focus program, it's here now.”

The Ash Creek fire in 2012 was one of the largest Montana had seen in many decades. It scorched almost 250,000 acres of Southeast Montana in less than two

Continued from pg. 2

weeks. The tour included areas that were affected by this quick-moving and devastating blaze.

Brian and Maggie Dice remember that day like it was yesterday, and just talking about it brings tears to their eyes.

Through the Rosebud Conservation District, they also utilized the Forests in Focus funds. As Maggie stated, “it's just nice after a catastrophic fire to have the resources we need, because we couldn't have done this without them.”

ALONG

ing the river.

BHCN: Have the return ditches started being a problem again? The last time we talked, you said they were doing a better job.

Joe: Yes, they still are. I've got to hand it to them, they are doing a whole lot better than last year.

BHCN: Since the county has closed all their garbage dumps on the reservation, how has that affected the Big-horn River Foundation's

ON THE BEAT

During the week of August 1, a total of 186 calls came in to the Big Horn County Dispatch Center.

August 1

Manager of Taco John's called to report an incident between two employees. Caller said when a female employee came to work a male employee had shaken her and then, later, that same male employee slashed the tires on the female employee's bicycle. The manager has it all on camera. Disposition: Report taken.

Female caller reported a white vehicle hit another vehicle by the post office in Hardin. Disposition: Report taken.

August 2

Caller said there is male on the corner of 5th Street and Lewis Avenue in Hardin. Caller said he is wearing a white shirt and blue or black pants and is just lying there. Disposition: Arrest made.

Caller reported a male and female fighting near Dollie's in Hardin. Caller said the male is wearing shorts and a blue shirt and is riding a bike. Disposition: Arrest made.

August 3

Male caller requested a deputy check on a vehicle that is parked blocking the garage door of Bullis Mortuary in Hardin. Caller said the vehicle is making it impossible for them to get their vehicle out for business. Disposition: Assisted.

BIA called to report a rollover accident on Hwy. 451 mm 6. Caller said the vehicle is on its side, unknown injuries and occupants. A baby was reported still inside the vehicle. Disposition: Assisted.

August 4

A call was received from Flying J in Hardin reporting a male individual sleeping between their doors. A deputy was requested to come move him as they cannot wake him up to move him along. Disposition: Warning (cite/verbal).

Female caller requested deputies to remove a male who is jumping into the back of people's trucks as they leave L&B's Last Stop in Hardin. Disposition: Advised.

August 5

Male called to report a semi on fire on Hwy. 212 mm 2. Disposition: Assisted.

Female called to report a beer theft at Flying J in Hardin. Caller requested the removal of the individual who was with another person sitting outside the entrance flipping customers off and yelling at them. Caller said he has the beer between his feet. Disposition: Arrest made.

August 6

Caller reported a little girl crying on the side of the road near the Lariat in Hardin. Disposition: Checks ok.

Caller reported a male beating another male with a stick at Wilson Park in Hardin. Disposition: Assisted.

August 7

Caller reported his neighbor's dog keeps whining and he can't get any sleep. Caller requested a deputy come to Rangeview Dr. in Hardin and talk to the neighbor as the caller is “ready to put a bullet into the dog.” Disposition: Warning (cite/verbal).

Female caller requested a deputy check on a group of people on the 1200 block of N. Cody Avenue in Hardin who are drinking and being loud. Disposition: Arrest made.

SENIOR

Continued from pg. 4

Hardin Senior Center Menu

Thursday, Aug. 11 – Tater Tot casserole, vegetables, dessert

Friday, Aug. 12 – hot beef sandwich, potatoes, gravy, vegetables, dessert

Monday, Aug. 15 – meatloaf, potatoes, gravy, vegetables, dessert

Tuesday, Aug. 16 – macaroni salad, sandwich, dessert

Wednesday, Aug. 17 – turkey roast, potatoes, gravy, vegetables, salad, cake, ice cream

Thursday, Aug. 18 – biscuits and gravy, eggs, fruit

Lodge Grass Senior Center Menu

Friday, Aug. 12 – coleslaw, corn meal roll, brownie

Monday, Aug. 15 – spaghetti, tossed salad, garlic bread, apple cake

Wednesday, Aug. 17 – Swiss steak

SCHOOL DISTRICTS 17-H & 1 NEW STUDENT ENROLLMENT AUGUST 11-12 & 15-18, 2016

Go to the school where you wish to enroll:

Crow Agency Public School, Grades K-5

Fort Smith Elementary School, Grades K-5

Hardin Primary School, Grades K-2

Hardin Intermediate School, Grades 3-5

Hardin Middle School, Grades 6-8

Hardin High School, Grades 9-12

Parents or legal guardian must be present to enroll student(s)

Bring with you:

Student

Birth Certificate

Current Immunization Record

Social Security Number

May be required to provide proof of residence

EMPLOYMENT

RECRUITMENT BULLETIN

BIG HORN COUNTY P.O. BOX 908 HARDIN, MT 59034

RECRUITMENT NO: 16-10 **OPENING DATE:** AUGUST 11, 2016 **CLOSING DATE:** AUGUST 26, 2106

POSITION: PART-TIME ASSISTANT DEPUTY CLERK OF DISTRICT COURT

LOCATION: BIG HORN COUNTY DISTRICT COURT

SALARY: \$12.60 PER HOUR

DUTY HOURS: 30 HOURS PER WEEK, MONDAY – FRIDAY, 9:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. (ONE HOUR LUNCH BREAK)

MAJOR DUTIES: PERFORMS A VARIETY OF DUTIES IN SUPPORT OF THE DISTRICT COURT OFFICE.

QUALIFICATIONS: ANY COMBINATION OF TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE EQUIVALENT TO GRADUATION FROM HIGH SCHOOL WITH COURSES IN BOOKKEEPING AND OFFICE SKILLS; ONE YEAR EXPERIENCE UTILIZING OFFICE SKILLS AND MEETING WITH THE PUBLIC REQUIRED; COMPUTER EXPERIENCE HELPFUL. MUST POSSESS A VALID MONTANA DRIVERS' LICENSE AND MUST BE AN INSURABLE DRIVER.

TEST: A WRITTEN TEST AND ORAL INTERVIEW WILL BE ADMINISTERED.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTING: THE SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT MUST UNDERGO PRE-EMPLOYMENT DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING

DISTRIBUTION: COUNTYWIDE.

HOW TO APPLY: SUBMIT CURRENT RESUME OR BIG HORN COUNTY APPLICATION TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE, ROOM 302, COURTHOUSE OR TO THE MAILING ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE (ATTN: HUMAN RESOURCES).

DEADLINE: APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED OR POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON THE CLOSING DATE SPECIFIED ABOVE.

BIG HORN COUNTY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER. NOTHING IN THIS RECRUITMENT BULLETIN IS INTENDED TO GUARANTEE CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT. IF YOU ARE CLAIMING PREFERENCE, PLEASE SUBMIT PROOF WITH YOUR APPLICATION.

project of turning the St. Xavier dump into a park?

Joe: Well, we're on hold for a variety of reasons. We're still on it, but it's on hold right now.

BHCN: With with the dump closed, it doesn't seem like it's so important anymore to move the dump away from the river. Are people still dumping garbage at the site, even though it's closed?

Joe: Yeah, there is a canister there now, but there is a big “closed” sign there also. I see some people have dumped their garbage, which looks like the remains of a building they tore down or something. They just dumped it over the edge of the dump area and let it all slide down into the wetlands area. Instead of putting it into the canister that was there, they just decided to dump it over the bank into the wetlands and made a real mess out of it. It looks terrible and is now getting into all the surface water there.

BHCN: My understanding is that the Crow Tribe is signing an agreement with somebody in Billings to start hauling trash. I wonder if that canister is a result of that agreement and that they may be opening up the dumps on the reservation again.

Joe: You know, I haven't heard anything about that, but garbage service is definitely a necessity. We don't realize how much garbage we all make until you have restrictions on dumping it.

BHCN: That's true. Several years ago, when the garbage crews went on strike in New York City, the garbage began to pile up on the sidewalks and alleys. That must have been a really

sweet smell.

Joe: Yes, I do remember that. We're a society that makes a lot of garbage. I think it needs to be researched so we can find a way that we can make as little waste as possible.

Recycling, better ways of packaging things, there has to be a solution.

BHCN: Research has been done on how much garbage we create, but I haven't read anything on finding solutions. Recycling has been around for some time, but doesn't seem to be having much effect, especially if there isn't any money to be made doing it. I don't know of any local place that recycles plastic anymore. So now we have huge areas of the ocean that are dead because of all the floating pieces of plastic and other trash in the water.

Joe: I do believe all the huge ships that travel the oceans also just dump their trash in the ocean.

BHCN: That and all their sewage. It's sad how we don't consider the long-term impact of our actions.

Joe: At the end of the day, we'll all pay for it.

BHCN: So, you were fishing with some friends last week. The fishing you did by yourself, was it just for fun or were you also doing some research and development?

Joe: Well, I was checking out some new hopper patterns I was trying, trying to get something that looks and works better. I've found out that the tried and true old Dave's Hopper and Joe's Hopper work just as effectively as some made out of stuff that seems to have come from tennis shoes. I was trying to tie patterns

Continued from pg. 4

made up of all the synthetic and plastic, and rubber and flash. I went back to my book and read up on the Joe's Hopper and the Dave's Hopper, and tied some up and – guess what? – they worked just fine.

BHCN: Someone's trying to recreate the wheel when it's not needed. Apparently, Dave's and Joe's Hopper patterns are a whole lot easier to tie also.

Joe: Yes, they're simpler patterns and don't take as much synthetic material. They have hopper patterns out there now with lots of rubber, plastic and flash. Actually, they look really good; they even have little parachutes on them to make sure they land just right. That also makes it so you can see it better.

BHCN: I just went out on the web and typed in hopper fly patterns, and see there are a bunch of them. It looks like they have one made out of foam. I see the Dave's Hopper is listed as one of the deadliest fly patterns for trout and bass – lots of choices.

Joe: Yes, there are and you need to make sure you're using the right size; too big or too small, they don't feed as well or don't want to waste their time going after it.

BHCN: I see your muddler minnow and the woolly bugger you've talked about are also flies that are good for mimicking hoppers and crickets.

Joe: Yes, they'll work that way.

BHCN: Joe I hope you have another great fishing week.

Joe: I will, but right now I better get outside and roll up the windows on my truck. It's starting to rain.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Pryor Public Schools has the following openings for the 2016-2017 school year:

- 1/2 Combo Class Elementary Teacher
- 3/4 Combo Class Elementary Teacher
- K-12 Special Education Teacher
- 7-12 Shop/Industrial Arts Teacher
- 7-12 Art (half time with potential full time pending endorsements)

Please call 406-259-7329 or email humanresources@pryor.k12.mt.us for information.

Forest Project is a Win-Win 9/25/2016 – Montana Standard

By Pat Hansen

Hazardous fuel reduction, logs for jobs, stream restoration and improved habitat for fish, wildlife and cattle on the Montana State Prison ranch are the result of a Forests in Focus Initiative (FIFI) project.

The after-effects of the catastrophic mountain pine beetle outbreak has resulted in a forest health crisis throughout Montana and the West, and the availability of timber continues to be challenge for Sun Mountain Lumber and other mills.

FIFI is a \$3 million, state-funded cost-share program designed to increase the rate of forest restoration and/or hazardous fuel reduction, put logs on trucks for jobs, and to improve watersheds and wildlife habitat on non-industrial private, state and tribal lands. Since FIFI was started in 2014, there have been 24 projects across the state completed.

“So far it’s been a good program,” said Roger Ziesak, grant manager and forest practices specialist with the Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). “We’re getting some really nice work done all around the state. This project benefits the MSP ranch and local business.”

Sean Steinbach, DNRC forester and project foreman, explained that in 2009-10 federal stimulus funds were used on the south end of MSP ranch property to jump start harvest and restoration by picking up beetle killed timber that was sent to the pulp mill. He and Steve Flynn, with Sun Mountain Lumber, agreed it was expensive because the steep terrain required 800-1000 feet of cable to bring the timber uphill.

“There was a lot of dead timber lying on the ground, but I’m really happy that is cleaned up in case there is a fire,” Steinbach said.

The \$200,000 grant from the state FIFI Fire Suppression Fund and a collaborative effort by DNRC, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Sun Mountain Lumber and Montana Correctional Enterprises (MCE) made the recently completed commercial forest thinning project possible. The grant was awarded in February 2015 with work starting last summer.

Steinbach said, “Sun Mountain Lumber put in more money than the state; the only grant where more money was contributed by a partner than the grant.”

Rich Lane, of Willis Enterprise that operates the Bonner pulp mill said, “This is state money and we want to invest wisely; that has been done here.”

Recently DNRC representatives, county commissioners, and industry partners toured portions of the completed 470-acre project on the north end of the prison ranch where more than two million board feet of timber was harvested.

Sun Mountain Logging did commercial thinning of Douglas fir and Lodgepole pine at 30-foot spacing for a natural forest look with trees left being a variety of sizes and ages to reduce the potential for insect infestation and the possibility of a forest fire starting. It will also force a crown fire to the ground where firefighters can battle it. The work provided 550 loads of saw logs to Sun Mountain Lumber in Deer Lodge, 60 loads of pulp logs to the pulp mill in Bonner and 200-300 tons of rails to build a fence along LaMarche Creek.

Ziesak said best management practices (BMPs) were used in every aspect of road construction and harvest to ensure minimal soil disturbance, to protect water quality and disturbed areas will be seeded with grass.

FWP was concerned about a pure strain of westslope cutthroat trout in LaMarche Creek that was being affected by sediment flowing into the stream from poorly maintained roads after storms.

The project included road maintenance to prevent sediment, obliteration of a number of unnecessary roads, realignment of the stream that had 'blown out' its banks in places, and installation of culverts. Now a 2.5 mile fence will be built along both sides of the stream to protect the riparian area, with water gaps installed for the cattle to use.

In addition to the logging, sawmill and pulp mill jobs, and watershed restoration, MCE received money from the timber sale that Ross Wagner, MSP ranch manager, said will be used for vocational training of inmates and DNRC trust land on the south end made money for the school trust fund.

Steinbach said, "This project could not have been done if the sawmill were not here."

Side Bar:

Since 1990 more than 30 Montana sawmills have closed and the Montana Wood Products report for 2015 states only 15 mills with more than 10 employees are left in the Montana. In 2013 the manufacturing segment of Montana's economy contributed \$14.1 billion to the state's economy. Of the 22,148 manufacturing jobs in Montana, wood products manufacturing ranked first with about 7,000 workers.

Holiday ENTERTAINING

Holiday Cookie or Sub Sandwich Platters Made Fresh Just for You!

2 1/2 dozen for \$24.99



2 Dozen 3" Subs for \$54.99

Pictures are an illustration and may not depict actual product.

Order Today!



We will be closed Christmas Day!

677-3588 Seeley Lake, Montana

Forest Restoration Creating Jobs in Western Montana

Submitted by The Nature Conservancy

HELENA - A new grant from Montana's Forests in Focus program will make homes safer, create well-paying jobs and improve forest health – all at the same time.

The \$249,534 grant will be used to thin out dense forest to reduce the hazards posed by wildfire. Besides reducing the fuel load for any potential wildfire, the work will open up the forest, allowing more light and moisture in to nurture the trees that are left.

The work will create 17 jobs between this December and November of next year and will supply 3,166 tons of materials to local mills. The operation will take place on The Nature Conservancy's Clearwater-Blackfoot Project and two neighboring properties located in the lower Blackfoot Valley, eight miles east of Bonner.

Jeff Holliday, the owner of Timber Trail and Spur, who will perform the thinning, took the initiative to connect the landowners and put together the successful proposal.

"In the highly contentious world of logging and litigation this is a real gem that should be a model for states around the country. In the end, we are utilizing excess wildfire suppression money to improve Montana forests to the benefit of everyone and everything involved," said Holliday.

The Forests in Focus program is an initiative created by Governor Steve Bullock and is aimed at promoting sustainable forest

management across the state. The program is funded by the Department of Natural Resources' fire suppression fund.

In 2013, the Montana legislature passed a bill that allows some of these funds to be spent on fuels reduction and forest restoration. Key strategies of Forests in Focus are targeted at increasing the scale and pace of restoration on forests in Montana.

"The state's Forests in Focus Program is a wonderful way to bring together multiple landowners to reduce the fuels that feed wildfires that put homes, lives and habitat at risk," says landowner Dave Atkins, whose land will be part of the thinning operation under the grant. "The governor and legislature are to be commended for working together to make this possible."

That's a sentiment echoed by Chris Bryant, Western Montana Land Protection Director for The Nature Conservancy.

"Governor Bullock has continued to demonstrate his commitment to sound forest management and rural economies through the Forest in Focus grant awards," said Bryant. "The Conservancy is happy to have partnered with neighboring landowners and a local forester with the initiative to put this project together."

The ultimate goal of the operation is to restore the open, park-like condition of the fire-dependent ponderosa forests common before a century of fire suppression allowed them to become crowded with young and unhealthy Douglas firs.

Ecosystems • Culture • Economics

A Place for All

Seeley Lake Ranger District Update and News!

by Rachel Feigley
District Ranger, Seeley Lake Ranger District, Lolo National Forest

As District Ranger for the Seeley Lake Ranger District, I've been sharing with you, through the Pathfinder, some of the details of the project work that the Seeley Lake Ranger District (RD) is involved with and what that provides to the community of Seeley Lake and the American public. In this edition, I wanted to share some information about one of the things that makes the Seeley Lake RD unique and successful in its ability to get work done on the ground: its designation as a Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) landscape.

Congress, under Title IV of Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, established the CFLRP (<http://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/CFLRP/overview.shtml>). This law allowed communities engaged in collaborative efforts to obtain funding to implement landscape restoration projects. There is too much information to share everything here but I want to provide a brief synopsis.

At about this same time the CFLRP Act was enacted, the Southwest Crown (of the Continent) Collaborative (SWCC) was actively engaged in developing a vision, ecological goals and restoration strategy for what has become known as the SWC landscape. It was delineated to be approximately 1.5 million acres in size, consisting of portions of the Blackfoot, Clearwater and Swan River watersheds and home to the small communities of Condon, Seeley Lake, Greenough, Ovando, Helmsville, Potomac and Lincoln.

The SWCC group members represent diverse interests, including community conservation, economic development, wilderness, federal and state management agencies, timber industry, habitat conservation, land trust, restoration, rural development and educational interests. The SWCC submitted a formal proposal to Congress and the SWC landscape encompassing the Seeley Lake RD, along with neighboring Lincoln RD and Swan Lake RD, was selected as a project.

The purpose of the CFLRP is to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes. We are headed into the eighth, of 10 years, provided for CFLRP as outlined in the SWCC restoration strategy. The funding has specific requirements and has enabled the Seeley Lake RD to implement a variety of projects that are specifically aligned with or designed to meet goals that were developed by the SWCC including restoring forest and aquatic ecosystem function, improving landscape-level biodiversity, resiliency and adaptability, enhancing recreational experiences and to reduce risks for those living in the wildland urban interface (WUI).

Of the total funding received, the CFLRP Act requires that 10 percent be spent toward monitoring. Four monitoring subcommittees for vegetation, wildlife, aquatics

and social submit and complete monitoring projects. Examples of monitoring that has occurred in part due to this funding include citizen science stream monitoring conducted by students and partners to look at turbidity, flow and temperatures of local streams; integrated forest vegetation plots to evaluate effectiveness of treatments; seed germination testing to determine efficacy of seed mixes used on disturbed areas; and carnivore monitoring designed to detect forest carnivores through winter track surveys and bait stations.

As in every year since selection as a CFLRP project, the 2016 fiscal year report for all three ranger districts has been summarized and presented to Congress. Accomplishments are tallied to meet quantitatively-measured goals set by the SWCC and also described in a narrative.

Examples of 2016 reported accomplishments include: 1,267 acres of invasive weed management; 30 miles of stream habitat restored; 16 miles of system road maintained; 12,213 CCF volume of timber sold and 2,515 acres of hazardous fuels treated.

To date, we have exceeded our 10-year goal for six of our 18 targets (re-vegetation and reforestation, lake acres restored, miles of stream restored, wildlife security acres, trail improvements and campsites rehabilitated). We are at least 60 percent of the way toward reaching another five targets. We are less than 50 percent of the way toward six of our targets (vegetation restoration outside the WUI, road Best Management Practice (BMP) work and maintenance, road storage or decommissioning, stream crossings improved, trail decommissioning and commercial wood products). However, many of these goals are included in activities that have been identified and proposed in the Center Horse Landscape Restoration project which is scheduled to have a Record of Decision this year.

It is an honor to share the news that this year USDA Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell recognized the SWCC with the 2016 Chief's Award for Sustaining Forest and Grasslands. We sincerely



congratulate and thank the SWCC for their dedication and commitment that has led to successful outcomes. Building on past successful collaborative efforts, the SWCC has solidified working relationships built on trust and a shared commitment to the future of this incredible landscape where we are privileged to complete restoration work.

In addition to the ongoing CFLRP program that we coordinate with Lincoln and Swan Lake Ranger Districts, we also have our regular programs that are also critical to offer the goods and services desired by the local community and our national audience. We continue to sit at the table with the local trails planning group led by Clearwater Resource Council, we are actively engaged in wilderness stewardship management of the Scapegoat Wilderness as part of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, we administer a lands program which permits uses of the National Forest for everything from road use, recreation residences and recreation events.

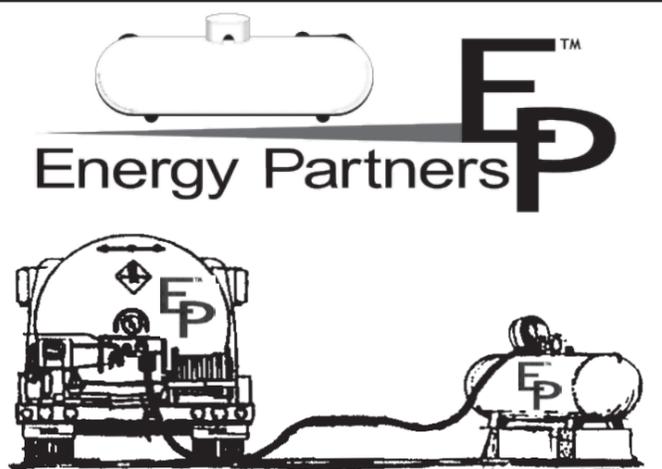
We have been working closely with the Driftriders Snowmobile Club to permit a new grooming shed which will provide better access and use for this maintenance activity which is tied to our agreement with them and Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.

We are working with Camp Paxson on a proposal to utilize this awesome and historic facility year round.

We are responding to the Federal Highway Department on their need to clear trees to facilitate safer travels. We will continue to keep you informed of projects and activities.

The Seeley Lake RD of the Lolo National Forest is looking forward to greeting community members and meeting new faces at our upcoming open house to be held Dec. 15 from 4-6 p.m. Appetizers and beverages will be served - while they last! We will be happy to share information about our past season and upcoming program of work for the winter and coming year. We hope to see you there!

To our health,
Rachel Feigley



Propane Installation & Service
Emergency Phone: 1-888-523-1000

New Hours: Monday-Friday 8am-5pm

Office (406) 677-3656 • Fax (406) 677-3657
3269 Hwy 83 North • Seeley Lake, Montana 59868

Check out the Pathfinder's website:

www.seeleylake.com

Share stories, find archives and subscribe.
Stay in touch with the Valleys!

Forest in Focus Initiative treats lands near Bigfork

Private timber sale benefits F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber mill

By ANNA ARVIDSON
Hungry Horse News

A forest project in Bigfork is helping a mill in Columbia Falls and keeping a homeowner's property safer from wildfires.

Dr. John Christiansen is using grant money from the Forest in Focus Initiative to improve the forest on his land.

Started in 2014, the Forest in Focus initiative, driven by Gov. Steve Bullock, sets aside \$2 million for work on private, state and tribal lands, and another \$1 million for federal lands. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation is tasked with dispersing grants.

The goal of the work being done on Christiansen's 7.3 acres is fuel reduction and restoring the forest's health.

"We're thinning out the trees with the goal to reduce fire hazard and improving the health of the forest," said Jerry Okonski, owner Great Northern Land Services. Okonski spearheaded the Christiansen project, as it is being called, and has also worked on several other projects in the surrounding area. After reaching out to Dr. Christiansen and other landowners, Okonski developed a project proposal and requested the funding being used for this project when Forest in Focus initiative funding first became available in 2014. He was granted



Chris Evans, co-owner of Great Northern Land Services, falls a 100' tree on the Christiansen Project land (Anna Arvidson photo).

\$148,407 for his proposed work on 121 acres of private forest land. The Christiansen Project received \$8,760 of this grant.

F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber Company has been a major purchaser on the project, taking saw logs off of the land.

"It's been a great benefit having this project available," said Chris Damrow, a forester for

Stoltze. "We have the ability to treat stands that ordinarily would be uneconomical."

Damrow said the project, and the wood it provides the mill, has been beneficial to the company.

"It's helped create and sustain jobs, and it produces usable product for many facilities and sustains those jobs as well," he said.

Non-merchantable

trees, including those that are rotten, are being directed to Willis Mill in Bonner to become pulp.

"It's a symbiotic relationship. We're able to do this work and get rid of the product, and it supports the industry," Okonski said.

Maintaining the forest's health is a concern for both parties.

"Maintaining species diversity is important,"

Damrow said.

Okonski listed a dozen species in the area, including birch, mountain maple, cottonwood, lodgepole and ponderosa pine, white pine, Douglas fir, western larch, western red cedar, hemlock, alpine fir, and grand fir.

Okonski's partner and co-owner of Great Northern Land Services, Chris Evans, devises the forest plan for the project.

"I look at what needs to go, what needs to stay, and areas where I can fall everything and minimize impact," Evans said. He added that his goal is to leave green spaces.

"We feel like that really helps with recovery," he said.

Aesthetic also goes into planning.

"Lots is rotten, so I take that out and leave it with a natural flow. I'm trying to create a natural landscape and break up the viewshed," Evans said. "The people we're working for care about the forest and the health of the forest, and Jerry and I do a good job of delivering that."

Wildlife also plays a role in managing the woods.

"If I see a nest in a tree, it stays. There's falcons, hawks, raptors ... the land owners like their birds, and it adds value to the project," he said.

White pine, a once abundant species that has succumbed to blister rust across much of its range, is also benefiting from this project.

"We're finding a lot of white pine, and we're collecting cones from the ones that are resistant to blister rust," said Rick Moore, a Service Forester with the Montana DNRC.

When more grant money became available this year, Okonski was granted another \$50,725 to continue working on 53 additional acres of land in Flathead County.



GLACIER GLOW 5K

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 + 7PM

THE COOP + COLUMBIA FALLS, MT

FUN-RUN FOR ALL AGES

FOOD & DRINK VENDORS

DANCE PARTY! GLOW ZONES!

SPONSORED BY:

DAILY INTER LAKE

MISSOULA Independent

+ \$25 REGISTRATION UNTIL AUG. 11 + \$35 REGULAR REGISTRATION

+ \$50 RACE-DAY REGISTRATION

Register @ glaciertoglow.com

DAILY INTER LAKE

www.dailyinterlake.com

SATURDAY

OCTOBER 22, 2016 | \$1.00 | Serving the Flathead Valley since 1889

Burglars make off with the kitchen sink

By **MEGAN STRICKLAND**
Daily Inter Lake

After a summer of fixing up a house to call home, a Columbia Falls family is reeling after burglars made off with more than \$38,000 worth of loot, leaving hardly anything behind.

John Woody said his family had just started moving boxes into their new home off Montana 206 near the Bad

Rock Fire station last week. The family was working on the home the night of Oct. 14 and locked it up before they left. After Wood went to his son's soccer game the next morning he returned home to find that a lock on the back window had been broken. The house had been completely picked over by a thief.

A gun safe, two guns, ammunition and tools were among the valuables taken. The family's winter clothes

and a filing cabinet that contained important documents like birth certificates were stolen.

"They took my sink," Woody said. "We got a brand new kitchen sink. They even took that ... They left us a few boxes, but not a whole lot."

Woody said the monetary estimate of what was taken does not include the value of a 1968 Mustang that was stolen. The red car has a vinyl top and belonged to Woody's

grandmother.

A couple of weeks prior to the burglary Woody said one of the outbuildings had been rummaged through by someone who left a card saying that he or she had been looking at the property and wondered if it was for sale. Woody called the number but never received a response. Now he thinks that the card

See **BURGLARS**, A8

Water-rights letters flood DNRC with questions

By **SAM WILSON**
Daily Inter Lake

Officials with Montana's Department of Natural Resources and Conservation say a routine round of letters sent to water-rights holders in two Northwest Montana basins are being conflated with concerns over a pair of unrelated — but controversial — issues in the area.

The department recently began sending "statements of claim" asking some water rights claimants to review the state's information as the two basins head toward the adjudication process in the Montana Water Court. The letters pertain to Basin 76L, which covers the Flathead Indian Reservation, and Basin 76LJ, which includes properties in the Flathead River basin north of the reservation.

Included in the statements are abstracts and historical use information for individual water rights, and recipients have an opportunity to either confirm the information is correct or provide additional information to correct the record.

"What seems to have happened, given everything that's going on with the CSKT compact and the Montana Artesian proposal, some people became confused as to why they're getting these letters and they wondered if it has something to do with these proposals," department spokesman John Grassy said, adding that the DNRC has been "inundated with calls."

See **LETTERS**, A8

A boutique approach to forestry



MARK BOARDMAN, a forester for F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber Co., speaks to a group at the Spring Brook Ranch fuels reduction project near Kalispell during the 2016 Flathead Timber Tour on Thursday. (Aaric Bryan/Daily Inter Lake)

Kalispell tree farm highlighted at timber tour

By **SAM WILSON**
Daily Inter Lake

Business leaders from the Flathead Valley took in the scent of fresh-cut pine, the rumblings of a rubber-tired skidder and the buzz of chain-saws during the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce's annual Flathead Timber Tour Thursday afternoon.

Jim Watson, owner of the 1,000-acre Spring Brook Ranch west of Kalispell on which the small logging operation took place, said the 34-acre project is part of a long-term management strategy to improve the health of his tree farm-certified private forest.

"What we're doing is correcting past sins," Watson told a group of attendees during the tour. "The philosophy and the training of the foresters, not too many years ago, was to remove the best trees at the lowest cost."

That resulted in the best genetics getting weeded out, he added, rather than today's focus on "leave trees." At Spring Brook Ranch, that included the ponderosa pines, Western larches and Douglas firs that grow straightest and healthiest, and which Watson



LEE CAMERON, a knot bumper with Jamison General Land Management removes limbs from trees at the Spring Brook Ranch fuel reduction project.

hopes will repopulate his land with the most commercially and ecologically beneficial offspring. The commercial thinning work being undertaken Thursday by Whitefish-based Jamison General Land Management is also geared toward reducing potential fire fuels while leaving a broad spread of tree species and age classes on the landscape.

But that "boutique" approach to forestry isn't cheap. Montana Department of Natural Resources Forest

Practices Program Manager Roger Ziesak explained that the project on Spring Brook Ranch had been made possible with the aid of the state's Forests in Focus Program.

The 2013 Legislature authorized the program, which provides up to \$5 million every two years from the state's wildfire suppression fund to aid projects that meet criteria including hazardous fuel reduction, ecological restoration and commercial timber production.

'The philosophy of the foresters not too many years ago was to remove the best trees at the lowest cost.'

"The idea is to get logs on trucks while we're doing the right thing on the ground," Ziesak said.

The program has been popular with private landowners, who collectively applied for nearly \$7 million worth of grants during the program's first biennium, out of just \$2 million available for work on non-federal forest lands.

But that money isn't intended as a handout, Ziesak added, noting that his department is "looking for projects that need financial assistance to happen."

On Watson's property, a small crew of workers

See **TIMBER**, A8

Producers urge better incentives for niche crops

By **LYNNETTE HINTZE**
Daily Inter Lake

Local specialty crop producers made their case for more flexible grant application processes and enhanced incentives for small growers during a round-table discussion Thursday with Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont.

Tester held his second "Barnstormin' Farm Bill" session at Glacier Hops Ranch near Whitefish to hear from farmers as Congress begins constructing a new Farm Bill. The current Farm Bill expires in 2018 but hearings begin next year.

Sue Snow, co-owner of Tabletree Juice in Bigfork, pointed out how the value-added producer grant application process has too short of a turnaround between the time applications are available and when they're due.

Kathy Hadley, executive director of the Butte-based National Center for Appropriate Technology said she has gotten many comments from small producers about the ill-timed June deadline for specialty-crop grants. That's one of the busiest times of year for farmers. She wondered if a winter time line could be set up.

See **PRODUCERS**, A8

MARCHING TO NEW YORK CITY

Bigfork student to march in Macy's Day Parade
Page A3



Inside

Classified	C3	NW Montana	A3
Comics	B5	Records	A6
Crossword	B4	Sports	B1
Obituaries	A7	Weather	B6
Markets	A8		

RUSSIAN INFLUENCE

States reject requests to monitor elections
Page A7

For home delivery, call 755-7018



© 2016 The Daily Inter Lake

FROM PAGE ONE

Two grizzlies getting into apples captured

By SAM WILSON
Daily Inter Lake

State wildlife managers are asking residents of Northwest Montana to help reduce the number of human conflicts with grizzly bears after they were forced to trap and relocate a pair of grizzly bears found eating apples on private land.

A 5- to 6-year-old, 365-pound male grizzly bear was captured above Lake Blaine on the east side of the Flathead Valley on Wednesday. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks had set a trap several days earlier for a much larger grizzly bear that had been damaging fruit trees.

The bear had no previous history of being captured. It was fitted with a GPS radio collar and an interagency decision was made to release the bear on the east side of

Hungry Horse Reservoir in the Deep Creek drainage on Friday.

In a separate incident, a 2-year-old male grizzly was caught across U.S. 93 from the Flathead County Landfill after eating apples at a residence. The bear, which also had no previous history of capture, was fitted with a GPS satellite collar and released in Whale Creek in the North Fork Flathead drainage.

THE STATE agency has received numerous reports of both black and grizzly bears in the areas around Whitefish, Columbia Falls, Eureka, Bigfork and along the north and east sides of the Flathead Valley.

Fish, Wildlife and Parks officials are asking residents to pick fruit off their trees to prevent damage to the trees, and to pick up all fruit off the

ground to avoid attracting bears.

Electric fencing can also be used to protect fruit trees, poultry and livestock. Pet food and grain should be secured where bears can't get access to it. Bird feeders that contain sunflower seeds, millet and suet will attract bears.

Garbage should not be left outside where bears can get into it. In Montana, it is illegal to feed bears and ungulates; illegal foods include deer blocks and grain.

WITH THE onset of big game season, hunters should be aware that grizzly bears can be encountered almost anywhere throughout western Montana. Hunters should read, understand and follow the food storage orders. Hunters should also make every effort to get their har-

vested game out of the field and processed as soon as possible.

If a harvested animal must be left in the field for any length of time, it is recommended to get the meat as far away from the gut pile as possible and to leave it in an open area that can be observed from a distance. Placing tree branches or sticks over the carcass can also tip off hunters that a bear might have visited the carcass if the branches are moved.

When returning to a carcass, always approach it with the idea that a bear could be in the area.

The agency recommends that hunters and other recreationists carry and know how to use bear pepper spray.

For more information visit fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/livingWithWildlife/beBearAware/default.html.

Flathead County jobless rate improves in September

Daily Inter Lake

Flathead County's unemployment rate improved slightly in September, posting at 4.5 percent compared to 4.7 percent in August.

The county had a workforce of 42,966 people in September, compared to 44,924 the previous month, according to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry.

Neighboring counties also reported improved jobless rates. Lincoln County, which is tied with Glacier County for the highest unemployment in the state, posted a 7 percent rate, compared to 7.9 percent in August. Sanders County reported 6.4 percent unemployment in September, compared to 7 percent in August.

Montana's unemploy-

ment rate remained at 4.3 percent in September. The national unemployment rate increased by 0.1 percentage points up to 5 percent.

"Montana's unemployment rate continues to be in the ideal range, and the state is seeing a growing workforce," said Montana Labor & Industry Commissioner Pam Bucy. "Unemployment in the ideal range provides an even balance between workers having good job opportunities with increasing wages and businesses able to find the workers they need to produce their products."

Payroll employment estimates indicate over-the-month job growth of 2,400 jobs, with increases across nearly all sectors and strong gains in the leisure activities industry.

BURGLARS

from A1

might have been a ruse by someone who was scoping out his home for the crime.

"A lot of stuff I don't even know how they were going to sell," Woody said.

Woody said he couldn't offer ideas on how other people in the area could better protect themselves.

"My house was locked," Woody said.

Anyone with information about the burglary is asked to call the Flathead County Sheriff's Office at 758-5585.

Reporter Megan Strickland can be reached at 758-4459 or mstrickland@dailyinterlake.com.

PRODUCERS

from A1

Tom Britz of Glacier Hops Ranch made a pitch for more flexible grant programs.

"As an entrepreneur you have to plan a year in advance," Britz said. "If you had the ability to have a flexible application process" small producers would be better able to react to market opportunities for their crops.

Other producers said the amount of time it takes to administer the grant, such as completing the required paperwork, makes the process cumbersome.

Pat McGlynn, Montana State University Extension Agent for Flathead County, said she

believes specialty-crop block grants are useful and would like to see an agriculture innovation center with a food scientist sponsored by the university system in Montana. In other states the costs of such programs are picked up by universities.

"At Cornell you could use [the ag innovation center] for free and have access to a food scientist," McGlynn pointed out.

Mike Jopek of Purple Frog Gardens in Whitefish told Tester about the challenges of local vegetable producers competing with vegetables imported from other countries.

"We do compete with growers south of the border," Jopek said. "The cost of labor is so wildly different for domestic producers. It's a real compe-

'The cost of labor is so wildly different for domestic producers. It's a real competition issue.'

Mike Jopek

tition issue."

Andy Sponseller, owner of 10 Spoon Winery in Missoula, echoed Jopek's concern. He pointed to the huge amount of nationally subsidized wine pouring into American markets, and stressed the need for more incentives and help with marketing for small producers.

"How are we going to get the guy down the road to eat our vegetables, drink our wine?" Sponseller asked. Even if local products are superior to others, "being at the

top of your game is not enough," he said.

Bruce Johnson, president of the Flathead Lake Cherry Growers, told Tester the Flathead's cherry industry remains heavily dependent on migrant workers, employing 200 to 300 migrant workers during the harvest season.

"We want to make sure the [new] Farm Bill doesn't have language that would prohibit" access to the migrant workforce, Johnson said.

Tester said it's important for farmers to start

talking now about what works and what doesn't in the current Farm Bill.

"You guys approach agriculture from the standpoint of economic development," Tester said at the round-table discussion. "We need thoughtful discussion rather than reactive" response.

Britz said afterward that local farmers have found that "completely unrelated agriculture segments oftentimes share the same problems and are looking for similar solutions."

A third listening session is planned at 8:30 a.m. Friday, Oct. 28, at the University of Montana in Missoula.

Anyone with input about what changes could be made to the federal Farm Bill can email farmbillcomments@tester.senate.gov.

TIMBER

from A1

used chainsaws to strip limbs from felled trees, then organized the logs by size with a skidder. Forester Mark Boardman with F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Co. explained that site-specific characteristics of such small-scale operations can add complications.

Nestled within the thinning project's boundaries was an apple orchard believed to potentially be the oldest in the Flathead Valley.

"The goal is to log it and kind of mimic a fire,"

Boardman said, pointing to the 50- and 60-year-old ponderosa pines thickly dotting the hill. "This is a spot that would burn very often, maybe every 20 years."

It will also provide some raw materials for the local timber industry, although the logging contractor Jamison Smith noted the project was a small one. Boardman estimated the 6-inch and 10-inch saw logs will yield about 10 truckloads of lumber for Stoltze — which was awarded the Forests in Focus grant to help fund the project — while the less valuable pulp logs will be processed into medi-

um-density fiberboard at Weyerhaeuser's plant in Columbia Falls.

Kalispell Chamber of Commerce President and Chief Executive Joe Unterreiner said he hoped attendees took away a more intimate understanding of the timber industry's importance to Flathead County.

"I wanted people to get on-site in this beautiful place we live in, and have an appreciation for the industry and its contributions to our quality of life," he said.

Reporter Sam Wilson can be reached at 758-4407 or by email at swilson@dailyinterlake.com.

through the adjudication process since it began in the 1980s, according to the department.

They are also independent from water rights related to the Flathead Indian Irrigation Project, Olsen added.

Since they were sent, the Montana Water Court has extended the initial, 30-day deadline for

responses to the letters. Olsen said water rights holders now have several months to respond, and there isn't currently a hard deadline.

Claimants with questions or other concerns can visit the local DNRC office in Kalispell for clarification, or call 406-542-4300.

LETTERS

from A1

Passed last year by the state Legislature, the water rights compact for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes has stirred up significant controversy due to its impacts on state water rights holders both on and off the reservation.

Separately, a proposal by the Montana Artesian Water Co. to construct a water bottling facility near Creston has prompted substantial backlash from residents concerned with a range of potential impacts from the plant, including the availability of well water from the underlying aquifer.

Kathy Olsen, manager of the DNRC regional water office in Kalispell, said the letters would have gone out to water rights holders in the two basins regardless of the other two issues, which she added have no impact on the ongoing adjudication process to close those basins.

"We're just helping the water court through this initial process of getting it ready," Olsen said.

The letters apply to water rights claims filed before July 1, 1973. The two basins for which letters are being sent are the last ones to go



\$25

FOR LIMITED TIME, NO JOINING FEE & ONLY \$25/MO. FOR 24-HOUR ACCESS & 40 AWARD-WINNING CLASSES. THIS IS THE BEST FITNESS DEAL THE FLATHEAD HAS EVER SEEN! DON'T MISS OUT! CALL FOR DETAILS. 752-2438

Flathead health&fitness

300 1st Ave W. Kalispell 752-2438

CARRIERS WANTED

KALISPELL

Routes 103-110-204 / Approx. 1.75 hours per day / Approx. 5 miles per day
Approx. \$525 every four weeks

Routes 222-235 / Approx. 1.75 hours per day / Approx. 6 miles per day
Approx. \$608 every four weeks

Routes 105-127-130-132 / Approx. 2.5 hours per day / Approx. 12 miles per day
Approx. \$787 every four weeks

Routes 135-1400-1410 / Approx. 2.5 hours per day / Approx. 17 miles per day
Approx. \$711 every four weeks

Routes 118-119-123 / Approx. 1.25 hours per day / Approx. 7 miles per day
Approx. \$380 every four weeks

Routes 228-229 / Approx. 1.75 hours per day / Approx. 5 miles per day
Approx. \$617 every four weeks

WHITEFISH

Routes 305-308-311-318 / Approx. 2.5 hours per day / Approx. 16 miles per day
approx. \$1,034 every four weeks

COLUMBIA FALLS

Routes 516 / Approx. 3.75 hours per day / Approx. 90 miles per day
Approx. \$2,268 every four weeks

Routes 357-359-361 / Approx. 2 hours per day / Approx. 10 miles per day
Approx. \$599 every four weeks

All routes are 7 days a week.

Independently Contracted Newspaper Delivery means you can control your profit and your process. We'll help you earn more subscribers and more profit.

Current License & Proof of Insurance Required

In addition to profit indicated Carriers can earn subscriber tips.

Daily Inter Lake Carriers are independent contractors and not employees of the Daily Inter Lake. Must be 18 years of age or over with a valid Montana drivers license & proof of auto insurance.

Call Mike Fugina @ 758-4452 or Katie Furlong @ 758-4454 for more details.



Courtesy photo

The Ashland Forest Products Mill in Ashland was part of the tour. Visitors were able to see all the work the revitalized mill is undertaking. Reopened in the fall of 2014, the mill is producing lumber products out of logs from trees killed in the wildfires of 2012.

Forests in Focus funding helps speed up fire and conservation projects

By **KELLEY HIRNING**

Forest restoration, fuels treatments and wildfire prevention/reduction activities are ongoing in the southeastern part of Montana. Last month, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation organized a tour of different Southeastern Montana fuel reduction projects to highlight all the work that is being done in the area to reduce wildfire risk and its threat to the public and property. In addition to DNRC staff, other attendees included a Rosebud County Commissioner, U.S. Forest Service, Northern Cheyenne and BIA staff, local landowners, Rosebud Conservation District, and members of the local forest industry.

DNRC Eastern Land Office Area Manager Chris Pileski showcased some of the projects that were a result of the partnership of those involved, as well as the various state and federal grants that provided funding. Pileski also recognized Bobbi Vannattan of the Rosebud Con-

servation District for all her great work in managing most of the projects. She and the Conservation District are an important partner in completing these projects.

The group toured the Ashland Forest Products Mill in Ashland and were able to see all the work the revitalized mill is undertaking. Reopened in the fall of 2014, the mill is producing lumber products out of logs from trees killed in the wildfires of 2012, including logs from projects that were on the tour.

After touring the mill, the group visited projects on state trust land, U.S. Forest Service land, and two privately held parcels of lands.

Since 2009, DNRC has used state and federal funds to help restore forest land on 30 properties, totaling approximately 4,000 acres of private, tribal, and state lands in the southeast region of Montana. One of the funding sources was the Montana Forests in Focus Initiative, which has disbursed \$4 million dollars for projects on tribal,

state and private forests and \$2 million dollars to USFS lands for fuel reduction and forest restoration. Tom Trusler Jr, a fifth generation rancher and grant recipient said, "By utilizing the Forests in Focus money, this advanced us at least 20 years... with the Forests in Focus program, it's here now."

The Ash Creek fire in 2012 was one of the largest Montana had seen in many decades. It scorched almost 250,000 acres of Southeast Montana in less than two weeks. The tour included areas that were affected by this quick moving and devastating fire.

Brian and Maggie Dice remember that day like it was yesterday, and just talking about it brings tears to their eyes. Through the Rosebud Conservation District they also utilized the Forests in Focus funds. As Mrs. Dice stated, "it's just nice after a catastrophic fire to have the resources we need, because we couldn't have done this without them."



Business | 2

New owners to open Bon Ton



Outdoors | 10

Rattlesnake wrangler shares snakey secrets

Sports | 13 FHS tennis courts get facelift

COVERING CENTRAL MONTANA LIKE THE STARS

LEWISTOWN NEWS-ARGUS

\$1.00

VOLUME CXXXV NUMBER IV

LEWISTOWNNEWS.COM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2016

It's a bird, it's a plane, it's . . . a museum!

By JENNY GESSAMAN | Reporter

Keen eyes may have spotted a time-traveling anomaly Tuesday: a WWII-era plane circling low, preparing for a landing at Lewistown Municipal Airport.

The Spirit of Freedom is a Douglas C-54, and although the 1945 aircraft traveled on to Great Falls, any Central Montanans who missed its first landing will have a chance at its second. The restored plane will be in Lewistown again tomorrow, and its interior museum will be open to anyone curious about the international event known as the Berlin Airlift.

Owned by the Berlin Airlift Historical Foundation, the Spirit of Freedom, the last plane from the Berlin airlift still flying, contains artifacts, displays and a crew dedicated to remembering the aeronautical event that saved millions of Germans.

After the Soviet Union isolated Berlin in 1948, the three other Allied Powers also rebuilding the city flew in 2.5 million tons of supplies to keep citizens alive. The Foundation website says the roughly yearlong operation involved 200,000 planes landing around the clock.

Douglas C-54s like the Spirit of Freedom were used to support the larger transport planes hauling everything from food and water to clothes and medicine. While the year of flights and supplies sustained a city, it also played a role on the international scene: The Foundation website credits the Berlin Airlift as a major factor in the start of the Cold War.

The Berlin Airlift Veterans Association's annual reunion in Great Falls this week brought the Spirit of Freedom from New Jersey to Central Montana. Foundation President and Flight Crew Aircraft Commander Timothy Chopp encouraged everyone to take advantage of the plane's Lewistown stop Sunday, saying every age would find something to enjoy.

His favorite museum display is the life-sized replica of Vittles the dog, a pup trained to parachute and pull his own ripcord.

"Getting him to pull the ripcord was easy . . . the hardest part was getting him to count to 10," Chopp laughed.

Airport 'big enough' to handle Spirit of Freedom

The Spirit of Freedom flew here from New Jersey to take part in the Berlin Airlift veterans' reunion in Great Falls earlier this week. Pilots trained for the airlift at Great Falls, using what later became Malmstrom Air Force Base, because of the similarity to the layout and physical situation they would find in Berlin.

Lewistown Municipal Airport Manager Jerry Moline said having the plane land in Lewistown, and then return on Sunday, is a huge plus for the community.

"Having a C-54 landing here is fun for locals," Moline said, "but it also benefits the community in other ways."

See Plane | Page 5



The Spirit of Freedom, a restored 1945 aircraft that served in the Berlin Airlift, parks in Lewistown Municipal Airport to pick up fuel and media for its trip to Great Falls Tuesday.

Photos by Jenny Gessaman

This is good for Lewistown.

- Jerry Moline, Airport Manager



The aircraft's museum interior features artifacts and displays from the 1948 Berlin Airlift. The plane museum will be open Sunday at the Lewistown airport.



"Last Best Plates" founder Lynn Donaldson-Vermillion returns to Central Montana. Photo courtesy of Lynn Donaldson-Vermillion

Denton woman finds a home with "Last Best Plates"

By CHARLIE DENISON | Reporter

Denton native and renowned photojournalist Lynn Donaldson-Vermillion is getting back to her Central Montana roots this week.

The fourth-generation Montanan, who has worked for such publications as "Time," "People," "Esquire," the "New York Times" and "Big Sky Journal," tries to make it back every year for the Chokecherry Festival, and this year is no different, as she will bring her 8-year-old twins to Lewistown to take in the excitement.

"I love Central Montana," she said, "and I love the Chokecherry Festival. It's good old family fun. I love that my kids can run around, I love sampling the entries from the culinary contest and I love seeing all the different things people can do. It feels like home."

Passionate about her hometown, the journalist - who now lives in Bozeman - has been writing and photographing the area quite a bit lately, posting about it on her blog, "The Last Best Plates." The blog launched in January of 2015 - although she once wondered whether it'd ever get started.

"I literally talked about it for five years," Vermillion said, "and a lot of my friends who are professional travel writers and travel photogra-

phers really came through. They wanted to help and contribute."

The blog - or regularly updated website written in an informal or conversational style - shares "stories, places and people of Montana... one plate at a time," Vermillion writes on the "about" page. The blog is essentially "a love letter to her home state, inviting friends from every corner to share their local knowledge and help tell its stories."

An abundance of friends help Vermillion with the website, but none more than Elizabeth Barnett, who is Vermillion's partner with the blog.

"She gets stuff done," Vermillion said. "She took the bull by the horns and made a comprehensive plan. She was really instrumental in organizing our editorial calendar and the tone of the blog."

Vermillion said she couldn't be happier with her team. Not even two years into the blog, there is already so much she has learned about Montana, and she hopes that goes for others who visit her site.

"The subject matter has been terrific," Vermillion said, "from food to inns to events. There is so much to discover in Montana and so much hidden off-the-beaten path stuff."

See Plates | Page 5

Grant funds improve local forest health

By JENNY GESSAMAN | Reporter

Over \$400,000 in grant money was awarded for logging projects on two Central Montana private properties, all in the hopes of sustaining local forests, creating fire-resistant areas and strengthening Montana's lumber industry.

Tom McMillan's and David Snapp's projects each received over \$200,000 as part of Montana's Forest in Focus Initiative. Created by Governor Steve Bullock in 2014, the program uses up to \$1 million from the state's fire suppression fund to help finance logging projects on private, tribal and state lands.

Clive Rooney, a Department of Natural Resources and Conservation resource conservation manager, summarized the program's motivation.

"You need to manage your timber, and you can do that through logging or through firefighting," he said.

DNRC Forest Practices Program Manager Roger Ziesak, also the grant manager for Forest in Focus, explained how logging leads to the initiative's goals. Tree removal eliminates overcrowding in forests,

reducing wildfire fuel while also opening room for new growth and improving forest health. Ziesak said the logs produced helped the state's timber industry.

Gordy Sanders, resource manager for Pyramid Lumber, agrees. McMillan hired his Seeley Lake company to thin the forest on almost 400 acres near Cottonwood Creek Road. When Sanders saw a call for Forest in Focus grant proposals, he submitted the Central Montana project. The money was awarded in February, and the grant is helping both landowner and logger.

"We can actually get commercial saw logs delivered to the mill at a reasonable price," he said.

A mix of international and local factors have lowered the demand for finished timber, but saw mills are also hurting from a lack of an affordable source of raw logs. The grant awarded to Sander's Lewistown project helped reverse that problem.

"It was an opportunity to reduce the cost of trucking in this [Central Montana] country," Sanders said. "It's overall reduced the cost of delivering logs."

He explained that could be a big cost: The drive from Lewistown to Seeley Lake is 252 miles.

"Getting some logs on trucks was another big goal of the project," Ziesak said.

Grant applications that met the requirements and also generated products to saw mills got a plus during the review process, Ziesak said.

The two current projects came from the Forest in Focus' second round of grants, and Ziesak was excited to announce the opening of a third round. Due Sept. 30, he encourages everyone to look at the application.

"It's open to virtually anybody, anyone except for federal lands basically," Ziesak said. "Speaking towards the private lands, it could be the land owners, the saw mill companies, the consulting foresters: Everyone in the project just has to agree to a partnership in order to submit a complete proposal."

For a description of the Forest in Focus Initiative, as well as the grant requirements, visit <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/forestry/forestry-assistance/forest-in-focus>.



Several members involved with the Pyramid Lumber logging project 20 miles south of Lewistown stand in front of stripped logs Wednesday afternoon. From left to right, Gordy Sanders, Tom McMillan, John Nesselhuf, Clive Rooney and Roger Ziesak.

Photo by Jenny Gessaman



USPS 311-120

OBITUARIES: M. GOODWIN • G. KUCHYNKA • F. PETERSEN • T. DEMARS • J. DREW • K. FRANK

Ballots
 State official offers advice **B1**

Grizzly Game Day
 DE Johnson a dangerous defender **INSIDE**



Fort Missoula
 'CCC Worker' statue guards the gate **B1**

SHOWERS LIKELY 54 • 35 FORECAST, B6 | **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2016** | missoulian.com

NATIONAL FOREST PRODUCTS WEEK



TOMMY MARTINO, MISSOULIAN

Members of the Missoula Chamber of Commerce look over the thinning operation in Pattee Canyon on Friday afternoon. The group observed the state funded logging operation to help prevent fires and keep the forest healthy.

Celebrating, contemplating Montana's forestry industry

Timber tour in Missoula highlights woody economy

ROB CHANEY
 rchaney@missoulian.com

Although a campus-wide rummage sale takes place this Saturday, don't get the wrong idea about the green price tags on many trees shading the University of Montana.

Student members of the Society of American Foresters hung

tags as part of National Forest Products Week, demonstrating the value of urban forest species. For example, a Douglas fir tree by Stone Hall noted its size (83 feet, diameter (35 inches), potential products (plywood, tea for rheumatism cure) and value in environmental benefits (\$13,954, based on storm water absorption, improved air quality and property value).

The week of celebrating and contemplating the state of Montana's forestry industry wrapped up with visit to an active logging

project tucked into the side of Mount Sentinel.

Although work in the woods has been in decline for the past three decades, Montana remains one of the few states in the West with everything from loggers to lumber yards still in operation. According to Department of Natural Resources and Conservation figures, 7,749 people earn \$319 million in annual wages from the forest products industry.

National Forest Products Week even generated a proclamation

from President Barack Obama. In it, Obama noted benefits of fresh air, clean water, wildlife habitat, recreational activity and essential products such as paper, wood and packaging material. He also observed the increasing risks of wildfire, erosion, drought and climate change.

"(W)e are exploring ways to

Please see **TOUR**, Page A4

■ **INSIDE:** Daines, Tester back push to renew softwood import agreement. **Page A4**

TRAPPING

Poll: Initiative lacks support

DAVID ERICKSON
 david.erickson@missoulian.com

A ballot initiative that would ban the trapping of animals on public lands in Montana appears headed for failure, according to a recent poll commissioned by Lee Newspapers.

The Mason-Dixon poll of more than 1,000 registered voters, conducted Oct. 10-12, found that 63 percent of Montanans who responded said they would vote "no" to reject I-177. Of those polled, 24 percent said they would vote "yes" on the measure and 13 percent were undecided.

The numbers are much different when gender is taken into account. A total of 73 percent of men said they intend to vote no, while only 18 percent said they would vote yes and 9 percent remain undecided. Of women, 53 percent say they'll vote the initiative down compared with 31 who will support it, with 16 percent undecided.

Trapping also appears to be a partisan issue. For Democrats, 45 percent say they'll support I-177, with 40 percent saying they'll vote no and 15 percent undecided. Among Republicans, 77 percent say they'll vote against it, 10 percent say they'll vote for it and 12 percent are undecided.

The question in the poll was phrased: "Ballot initiative I-177 would ban trapping on public lands. If you were voting today, would you vote yes, no or undecided?"

■ **A group called Montanans for Trap-Free Public Lands** gathered enough signatures to get the

Please see **POLL**, Page A4

INCEST CASE

Judge sparks outrage with no prison time

AMY BETH HANSON
 Associated Press

HELENA - A judge's decision not to order prison time for a man who raped his 12-year-old daughter has sparked outrage from afar and calls closer to home to toughen Montana's law, which allows such lenience in certain circumstances.

Enacted in a wave of similar legislation around the country after the killing of a 9-year-old Florida girl in 2005, the Montana statute requires a minimum sentence of 25 years in prison for anyone convicted of rape, incest or sexual abuse of a child 12 or younger.

But unlike many of those other laws, Montana's also allows judges to dole out far less severe punishment in a case where a court-appointed evaluator determines that ordering treatment outside prison "affords a better opportunity for rehabilitation of

Please see **INCEST**, Page A4

SECRETARIAL ORDER FROM SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR SALLY JEWELL

Mow: Glacier Park already collaborates

VINCE DEVLIN
 vdevlin@missoulian.com

WEST GLACIER - A Secretarial Order from Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell encouraging cooperative management opportunities between public land and water managers, and federally recognized Indian tribes, will have little effect on Glacier National Park, its superintendent says.

"Quite honestly, I believe it will boil down to reporting requirements on what we've already got in place," Jeff Mow said Friday, the day the order

was announced.

The park has conferred with local tribes on a range of issues for years, Mow said, including fisheries, grizzly bears and plant species.

Glacier is even working with its closest Native American neighbors, the Blackfeet, on that tribe's efforts to reintroduce a wild bison herd that would likely roam inside and outside Glacier's borders.

"The restoration of free-range wild bison is of huge mutual interest for agencies and tribes," Mow said. Between that and

tribes' and park's involvement with Crown of the Continent groups, there is collaboration on a variety of issues, the superintendent said.

"We've got a lot going," Mow said.

■ **Jewell announced the order** Friday in Fairbanks, Alaska, at the annual Alaska Federation of Natives Conference.

It sets out a framework to ensure that Native communities have the opportunity to assume "meaningful and substantive roles in managing public lands

that have special geographical, historical and cultural connections to the tribes," according to the Interior Department.

The order covers far more than national parks. In addition to the National Park Service, it applies to the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation.

"This Secretarial Order reflects the Obama administration's deep commitment to

Please see **GLACIER**, Page A5

Zinke suggested voter fraud during 2013 interview

Republican says he'd 'heard' of election troubles

MATT HUDSON
 mhudson@billingsgazette.com

BILLINGS - Before becoming a congressman, Ryan Zinke said there was widespread voter fraud in both national and Montana elections, including a claim that the dead cast ballots.

While election officials deny that voter fraud happens in Montana, Zinke's comments are in step with Republican Presidential nominee Donald Trump, who has made claims of rigged elections and raised the profile of fraud concerns leading up to the 2016 election.

Zinke has been a supporter of Trump throughout the election year. In 2013, Zinke appeared on an online radio show, The Hagmann

and Hagmann Report. At the time, he was a former state senator who had served two terms in the Legislature.

The conversation turned to voter fraud midway through the show, and Zinke said that voter confidence in the system is important. He then made his claim.

"I think there was a lot of tomfoolery in this last election. I just came back from Santa Barbara with the Republican women there that went down to

a local university and witnessed, you know, a lot of voter fraud," Zinke said. "And I have to believe that's probably the case across the country. I know in my home state, during the senatorial election, there was a lot of voter fraud. And there was people that

Please see **ZINKE**, Page A4

■ **INSIDE:** McCulloch: Don't give your ballot to a stranger. **Page B1**

DISCOVER DIGITAL



■ Missing Washington-Grizzly Stadium on game day? Check out photos from when the venue was under construction. **AT MISSOULIAN.COM**

CLASSIFIED	C2	OBITUARIES	B3	SPORTS	D1
COMICS	D5	PUZZLES	C9	TV LISTINGS	A9
MARKETS	A6	RELIGION	B4	WHEELS	C1



Senators push to renew softwood import agreement

ROB CHANEY
rchaney@missoulian.com

Montana's Senate delegation co-signed a letter to President Barack Obama asking for continued pressure to get a new Softwood Lumber Agreement with Canada.

"We are disappointed that Canada appears reluctant to follow through on this commitment, which has significantly under-

mined (the U.S. Trade Representative's) efforts to reach a final agreement," Sens. Steve Daines and Jon Tester wrote on Friday, in a bipartisan message joined by 24 fellow senators.

The Softwood Lumber Agreement was originally signed in 2006 and set limits for Canadian lumber imports to the United States. It expired in 2015, but had a one-year "stand-still" clause

allowing time to negotiate a new deal. That expired on Oct. 13.

The United States has proposed that Canadian imports be limited to an agreed share of the U.S. lumber market. Canadian counter-proposals have suggested setting a duty charge on imports crossing the border, but not a quota for how much wood can be sent over.

"Hundreds of thousands of U.S.

jobs and thousands of U.S. rural communities depend on fairness in trade in softwood lumber," the senators wrote. "That is why we will continue to urge you, and any future Administration, to seek a fair, effective, and sustainable agreement with Canada on softwood lumber trade, and in the absence of such an agreement, to fully enforce U.S. trade laws."

U.S. negotiators maintain the

Canadian timber industry benefits from government subsidies that give an uncompetitive advantage to cutting trees on Canadian provincial and federal land. The Canadians have successfully argued in international trade court that the U.S. import limits violate free-trade agreements.

Senators Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, and Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, authored the letter.



TOMMY MARTINO, MISSOULIAN

Neil Simpson of the Department of Natural Resources shows off the new view after a hillside was cleared of hazardous trees during a Missoula Chamber of Commerce timber tour.

Tour

From A1

help forestland owners respond to climate change," Obama wrote. "Earlier this year, we released a roadmap for implementing key building blocks to achieve this goal, such as private forest growth and retention, stewardship of Federal forests, and promotion of wood products."

For Missoulians, the week culminated with a trip to the top of Pattee Canyon, where Kathy and Gary Kahl hosted a tour of a hazardous fuels reduction project on their property. A long driveway beyond the popular public trailhead, the Kahls overlooked a dense grove of trees on the steep slopes above Deer Creek Road.

"We feel totally privileged to live up here, but we're compromised by the fire danger," Kathy Kahl said. "We don't want anybody dying

trying to save us."

That was a real concern in 1985, when the Hellgate fire raced around Mount Sentinel and sent flames up the canyon in sight of the Kahl's home. In the 33 years they've lived there, Kathy said saplings she planted when they moved in are now blocking the view out her windows.

Thanks to a grant from the DNRC Forests in Focus program, the Kahls and two neighbors were able to hire a professional logging crew. The goal was to take most of the trees off the hillside, leaving old healthy Douglas fir, larch and pine trees about 20 feet apart. That's the prescribed distance that keeps a wildfire from jumping from treetop to treetop in what's known as a crown fire.

Gary Kahl said the results mean more sunlight in the mornings and a view of the mountains to the east that he hadn't seen for years. It also means considerably less risk of a fire

starting from the Deer Creek Road racing up the hillside to his home.

Because the properties bordered Deer Creek at the bottom of the canyon, the crew had to set up a high-line skidding machine to pull the cut trees to the top of the hill. That proved a challenge to maneuver a 110,000-pound line skidder to the top of Pattee Canyon.

Intermountain Forestry owner Ben Smith said that was actually easier on the landscape than more common ground-level skidding with bulldozers. His team expected to need about three weeks to remove 80,000 board-feet of logs and 40 tons of pulp from the six-acre parcel. The commercial value of the logs would pay for about half of the cost of the project. The Forests in Focus program of state dollars pays for the other half.

"It's cool to see landowners wanting to manage their timber," Smith said. "And a site like this is a lot of fun to work with."

Poll

From A1

measure on the Nov. 8 ballot. The ban, if it were passed, would include exceptions for protecting livestock, property and public health. It would not affect trapping on private land, which takes up more than two-thirds of Montana.

According to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, around 6,000 trappers harvest roughly 50,000 furbearing animals in the state every year. Most of those are muskrats and coyotes, but thousands of raccoons, beavers, red fox, bobcats, skunks, badgers, martens and mink are taken annually.

The Montana Trappers Association has come out strongly against the ballot initiative. State campaign finance records show that organization has received \$47,530.13 from the end of June to late September in political contributions, including \$5,000 each from the Alaska, Pennsylvania, Utah and Vermont trapping associations. Many individual contributions came in, both from out of state and from within Montana.

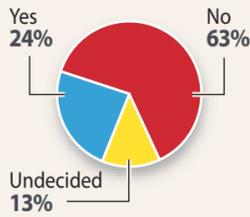
The MTA sent well over \$12,000 to a political committee called Montanans For Wildlife and Public Lands Access, which is financing advertisements and flyers against I-177. That organization has received roughly \$137,862 from late July to late September. The Ohio State Trappers Association gave \$10,000, Republican gubernatorial candidate Greg Gianforte gave \$10,000 and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation gave \$25,000.

Montanans For Effective Wildlife Management, which lists the same treasurer as Montanans For Wildlife and Public Lands Access, also got \$7,420 from the MTA.

A political committee that supports the initiative called Montanans for Trap Free Public Lands - Safe Public Lands For All Users, received more than \$108,422 in contributions since May. Almost

Trapping on public land

Ballot Initiative I-177 would ban trapping on public lands. If you were voting today, would you vote: "Yes" to approve the initiative, or "No" to reject the initiative?



Source: Mason-Dixon Polling & Research

LEE MONTANA NEWSPAPERS

About the poll

The Mason-Dixon statewide poll included calls to landlines and cell phones between Monday and Wednesday, Oct. 10-12. Respondents were 1,003 Montanans who said they were registered and likely to vote. The number of people polled in each county is proportionate to historical voter turnout. The margin of error for statewide figures is 3.2 percentage points.

all of those came in the form of individual contributions, many of which appear to be from Montana residents. Alan Applebury, a veterinarian in Hamilton, donated \$20,000, the largest contribution. The group spent large sums of money on hiring people for signature gathering.

Clare Beelman, a volunteer who is supporting I-177, accused political opponents of spreading misinformation and lies.

"I would say to people who are undecided, I would urge them to go to our website yeson177.com and read the initiative," she said. "Because if you spend a few minutes reading it, you will realize

Please see **POLL**, Page A5

Zinke

From A1

voted that were not alive."

Montana Secretary of State Linda McCulloch, a Democrat, said Friday that she's seen no evidence of voter fraud and that claims about voting under the names of the deceased are unfounded.

"There is no history of that," she said. "In fact, county election officials take people off when they appear in the obituaries. They take them off the (voter) rolls."

Yellowstone County Election Administrator Bret Rutherford said he also hadn't seen issues with fraud and deceased voters. He said that in addition to monitoring obituaries, his office gets reports from the state health department to keep the voter rolls current.

In response to questions about the radio show, Zinke campaign spokeswoman Heather Swift said on Friday that Zinke was asked about voter fraud and "simply re-

laid concerns he heard in various precincts."

"The Congressman does not believe voter fraud is a big problem in Montana but does acknowledge that every few years there are ballot integrity incidents here and there that pop up," Swift said via email.

She cited two stories from the 2012 election about a voting machine delay and the use of stickers to correct ballots.

Concerns about voter fraud have also crept into Montana elections after reports that volunteers offered to deliver some absentee ballots for voters. Police in Livingston determined one of the volunteers to be part of the Montana Democratic Party.

The story spurred Montana Republican Party Chairman Jeff Essmann to call on McCulloch to issue a public service announcement to encourage absentee voters to hand-deliver the ballots or send them by mail.

McCulloch said on Friday that

the volunteer delivery has happened for years, but she added that the best practice is what Essmann suggested.

"We advise people - voters - to not give their ballot to someone other than the county election office or put a stamp on it and put it in the mail," she said.

As of Friday, 313,995 absentee ballots had been mailed.

McCulloch said that there are safeguards in place, mostly at the county level, to protect against voter fraud. She said that signatures on absentee ballots are verified against a voter's registration card and that in-person voters must show identification or proof of residence.

"We look at every single signature," Rutherford said. "For some reason, nobody believes me when I say this."

In Montana, voters can show an ID for an in-person vote. They can also present a bank statement, utility bill, paycheck or other document that includes a name and

address.

Those who don't have identification materials can cast a provisional ballot. Then voters have a day to provide an identifying document.

After the election, a hand-counted audit checks the voting machine count. McCulloch said there has never been a discrepancy with the machine count.

Both Rutherford and McCulloch said that the issue of voter fraud has reared its head throughout their tenures as election officials. And it appeared during Zinke's time in the state Senate, when multiple election bills appeared in the Legislature.

A measure requiring post-election audits of voting machines became law in 2009, unanimously passing the Senate and surviving a split House vote. That process remains in effect today.

During the same session, a bill for absentee voter confirmation mailers was also signed into law. Zinke voted against the

mailers bill.

During the 2011 session, a bill to expand voting by mail died in the House amid concerns over voter fraud. A stricter voter ID law passed both chambers but was vetoed by Gov. Brian Schweitzer.

The mail-in ballot bill never made it to the Senate, but Zinke did cast a no vote for the voter ID measure.

In the 2013 Hagmann show, Zinke called himself a "huge advocate for voter ID," adding that the cards would need to be widely accessible and at no cost.

Concerns of voter fraud in the 2011 legislative session prompted McCulloch to pen a series of guest columns prior to the 2012 election. She wrote in 2011 that "irresponsible" allegations of voter fraud threatened to reduce voter turnout.

She maintained that position Friday.

"There has been no voter fraud in Montana," McCulloch said. "It doesn't exist."

Incest

From A1

the offender and for the ultimate protection of the victim and society."

District Judge John McKeon, who oversees a three-county area of eastern Montana, cited that exception this month when he gave the father a 30-year suspended sentence after his guilty plea to incest and ordered him to spend 60 days in jail over the next six months, giving him credit for the 17 days already served. His sentence requires him to undergo sex offender treatment and includes many other restrictions.

Court records show that the mother walked in on the father raping the child. The Associated Press is not identifying the man to avoid

identifying the victim of a sexual assault.

McKeon took the rare step of issuing a statement a day after news of the Oct. 4 sentencing was widely published. In that statement and in his sentencing order, issued Monday, the longtime judge listed the factors that weighed into sparing the man prison time, including that:

- an evaluator found the defendant could be treated and supervised in the community;

- the man did not have a felony record, had a job and community support;

- the victim's mother and grandmother wrote letters to the court supporting community-based treatment, saying it would keep the man in the lives of his two sons and offered the family the opportunity to

heal.

- prosecutors did not challenge the results of the man's psychosexual evaluation;

- there was a "lack of input directly from the victim" or from an advocate for the victim.

"The sentence may not be a popular decision by certain members of the general public, but it is a just and proper decision given the record before the Court and the law the Court is sworn to uphold," McKeon wrote in the sentencing order.

An online petition arguing McKeon should be impeached has gathered more than 82,000 signatures in just over a week, from Montana, outside the state, Canada and elsewhere. McKeon had previously announced his intention to retire next month after 22 years as a

state judge.

District Judge Blair Jones, the chairman of the Montana Judicial Standards Commission, said Friday that he could not disclose whether any complaints had been made against McKeon. Such complaints aren't made public until the commission decides whether they have merit.

Nearly every state has enacted mandatory prison terms for child sex offenders, commonly referred to as "Jessica's laws" after Jessica Lunsford, the Florida girl kidnapped and killed by a neighbor with a history of crimes against children who had failed to register as a sex offender. Many of the measures also severely restrict where such offenders can live and work, impose GPS monitoring and other conditions once they are released.

It's not clear whether any of those laws contains an exception along the lines of Montana's, which itself may not be on the books much longer. This week, a commission studying Montana's sentencing laws recommended that lawmakers eliminate the exception to the 25-year minimum term, in the interest of more consistent sentencing.

Assistant Attorney General Dan Guzynski contrasted the case McKeon handled with that of a man he prosecuted last year, who received the mandatory minimum after being convicted of raping his 10-year-old daughter.

"Both (sex offender) evaluators said (the fathers) were treatable in their community, both were sentenced under the very same law, both raped their children,"

Guzynski told members of the Commission on Sentencing on Wednesday. "One is going to spend the next 25 years in prison and one is out on probation."

AP writer Matt Volz contributed to this report.

GRIZ WIRELESS

HIRING-CUSTOMER SERVICE REP

Qualifications: Proficient w/ a computer; cell phone sales experience; reliable transportation; offer friendly customer service.

Duties: Cell phone sales; updating customer accounts; handling credit cards & cash; selling customers minutes/data; learn pinks available; other duties assigned.

Hours/Days: Mon - Fri 2 - 6pm / Sat 10am - 2pm
Flexible sched. w/ alternate Sat Pay DOE, benefits provided.

Email resume to: HR@grizwireless.com to apply.

DNRC organizes tour to show fuel reduction projects; work done to reduce wildfire threats

By Kelley Hirming
Forest restoration, fuels treatments and wildfire prevention/reduction activities are ongoing in the Southeastern part of Montana. Last month, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) organized a tour of different Southeastern Montana fuel reduction projects to highlight all the work that is being done in the area to reduce wildfire risk and its threat to the public and property. In addition to DNRC staff, other attendees included a Rosebud County Commissioner, U.S. Forest Service, Northern Cheyenne and BIA staff, local landowners, Rosebud Conservation District, and members of the local forest industry.

here now.”
The Ash Creek fire in 2012 was one of the largest Montana had seen in many decades. It scorched almost 250,000 acres of Southeast Montana in less than 2 weeks. The tour included areas that were affected by this quick moving and devastating fire.
Brian and Maggie Dice remember that day like it was yesterday, and just talking about it brings tears to their eyes.
Through the Rosebud Conservation District they also utilized the Forests in Focus funds. As Mrs. Dice stated, “it’s just nice after a catastrophic fire to have the resources we need, because we couldn’t have done this without them.”



TOUR---The DNRC group toured the Ashland Forest Products Mill and were able to see the first hand the work the revitalized mill is undertaking. Below right, the Mill is producing lumber products out of logs killed in the devastating fires of 2012 which scorched hundreds of thousands of acres in Southeastern Montana.

DNRC Eastern Land Office Area Manager Chris Pileski showcased some of the projects that were a result of the partnership of those involved, as well as the various state and federal grants that provided funding. Pileski also recognized Bobbi Vannattan of the Rosebud Conservation District for all her great work in managing most of the projects. She and the Conservation District are an important partner in completing these projects.

The group toured the Ashland Forest Products Mill in Ashland and were able to see all the work the revitalized mill is undertaking. Reopened in the fall of 2014, the mill is producing lumber products out of logs from trees killed in the wildfires of 2012, including logs from projects that were on the tour.

After touring the mill, the group visited projects on state trust land, U.S. Forest Service land, and two private landowners.

Since 2009, DNRC has used state and federal funds to help restore forest land on 30 properties, totaling approximately 4,000 acres of private, tribal, and state lands in the southeast region of Montana. One of the funding sources was the Montana Forests in Focus Initiative, which has disbursed four million dollars for projects on tribal, state and private forests and two million dollars to USFS lands for fuel reduction and forest restoration.

Tom Trusler Jr, a 5th generation rancher and grant recipient said, “By utilizing the Forest in Focus money, this advanced us at least 20 years...with the Forests in Focus program it’s



AWARD---DNRC Eastern Land Office Area Manager Chris Pileski recognized Bobbi Vannattan of the Rosebud Conservation District for “all her great work in managing most of the projects.”



Buy or sell at our next public equipment auction

And get better results with Ritchie Bros.

Our next unreserved public auction is:

Williston – Aug 18
650+ items and counting

Call 701.774.9640 or visit rbauction.com

Street Dance!!!

To the Live Music of:

Sponsored Powder River
Stockman’s And Montana Bar



When: Aug 12th, 9PM

**Where: Powder River County Fair
Grounds, Broadus, Mt**

Following the Tri-State Bronco
Match



Tri State Match Bronc Ride

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, 2016 • BROADUS, MT
CALCUTTA - 6PM • RODEO - 7PM

Cowboy Autographs at the Big Sky Bar immediately following the rodeo

Stock from Burch Rodeo!

NEW this year! Ranch Bronc Riding!!

Concessions Available

ADMISSION:
\$10.00 Adults
\$5.00 Youth (7-17 yrs)
FREE 6 & Under

Dance At The Park (By Fairgrounds) 9pm

Questions? Louise Wilson 406-767-5626

Photo Credit: Lyle Bachman

Invitational Youth Calf Roping

Slow Down Travel Fast

Vacation time is priceless. Don't waste two precious days driving to other airports. Jet Gillette and spend more time ON vacation.

Jet Gillette

iFlyGillette.com

UNITED DELTA

Operated by SkyWest Airlines

Gillette-Capitol County Airport

Community

Local church celebrates a century mark of service



Above, parishioners of Sacred Heart Catholic Church celebrated its 100th anniversary last Sunday with a special Mass conducted by Bishop Michael Warfel of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings and a delicious lunch after services. Over 100 people were in attendance. (Photo by Bill Ross)

State grant facilitates forest, range health stewardship

By Shannon Ruckman and Kelley Hirning

DENTON, Montana — A joint stewardship project between the timber and ranching communities is improving forest and range health in central Montana.

Local rancher David Snapp is partnering with Shawn Nicholls of Prairie Logging (Moore, MT) for a project on his property by using grant money from the Montana Forests in Focus Initiative to improve his forest. At the direction of Governor Bullock, since 2014, this initiative has disbursed \$7.5 million of state funds to help private, state, federal and tribal landowners restore forests and reduce wildfire hazards. \$1 million has also been used to develop new wildland fire engines for use by local government fire departments across the state.

Nicholls has Ed Moore of Moore Logging (Moore, MT) and Tony Miller of Miller's Trucking (Judith Gap, MT) aiding him to thin the forest on the Snapp Ranch.

Before the logging project began in September, Snapp said the trees were so thick he had difficulty moving his farming equipment, the grass was sparse in the forested pastures and the roads were iced over all winter because the sun couldn't shine through the thick tree canopy.

"I couldn't move my combine down the road because there were trees sticking out that would catch my header," said Snapp. "Now, they've taken most of those trees out. They

have also cleared the trees along the road so the sun can shine on the road and melt the ice."

Snapp said he hopes the tree thinning will also improve the range growth and wheat yields.

"I saw how the grass came back on a project logged down the road two years ago; I couldn't believe how much grass grew back," he said. "I am hoping the wheat will grow better in the fields along the areas where they cut the trees. Those trees drink a lot of water."

Most of the trees harvested from the Snapp Ranch are considered less desirable because they have too many branches, are too small in diameter and have forks in the tops. These trees are marketed as pulp trees and sold to the mill in Bonner, Montana, said Nicholls.

"We are taking a lot of the smaller, less desirable trees," he explained, "and leaving the more marketable trees to mature and reseed. We will let them grow so they can be harvested later as saw logs."

Saw logs are more valuable than pulp logs and harder to find in central Montana. "Saw log trees grow straight and have less branches," explained Nicholls. "The saw logs in this job are nominal; we are hauling those to Seeley Lake and to Roundup."

In addition to harvesting trees, the three logging partners have been developing roads, clearing trees along fences and helping with erosion control by leaving

slash and organic matter as fertilizer.

"I think this logging project will help improve everything on the ranch," said Snapp. "They have done a great job."

Logging projects like this would not be possible without the Forests in Focus grant to help offset costs such as fuel and marketing less desirable trees, said Nicholls.

"The grant allows for a complete management plan to be implemented— a prescription for a healthier forest," he said. "With the decline in the market, the project at the Snapp Ranch may not have been completed without it."

The Forests in Focus grant provides financial assistance to harvest less desirable trees. It also boosts the state's timber in-



Clearing and managing a small forest on the Snapp Ranch has improved operations significantly. (Courtesy photo)



It took many hands to make the 100-year celebration a wonderful event, one that will be treasured for years to come. Above from left, Donna Hayes and Margi Ross with Bishop Michael Warfel. Among the many attendees was Jeff Carlile whose ranching family has been in the area for over 100 years. They have been members of Sacred Heart for several decades. Below is one of 18 bird houses constructed by Teresa Harkness for table centerpieces. These were raffled during the meal. The design



was based on the original church building, which was constructed in 1916.

In addition, eight members of the Knights of Columbus Honor Guard, Council 9395, assisted the Bishop and the organizers of the meal too.

Currently Father Dave Wilkins serves the parish as well as St. Ann's in Fort Shaw, St. Peter's Mission and the University of Great Falls.

There are about 150 active members at Sacred Heart. (Courier photos)

**Community
Christmas Tree
Lighting**
Sunday, December 4th
@ 5:30 pm
**Atkinson Park in
Cascade**
**Chili feed by donation
afterwards at
The Homestead!**

dustry, promotes healthy forest stewardship and contributes to wildfire suppression by removing ground cover and increasing the spacing between trees, said Josh Stoychoff, a Forester with the DNRC Northeastern Land Office based in Lewistown.

Check out <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/forestry/forestry-assistance/forest-in-focus> for more information on the Forests in Focus grant process.



Gifts for Bird Lovers

Give a little sunshine to the bird lover in your life. Consider these bird-themed items: coloring books, T-shirts, wall calendars, pocket planners, journals, sketch books, note cards, coffee mugs, jewelry, fun plastic plates, tote bags, field guides, binoculars and on and on. Be creative. Enjoy the holiday season!

E-mail: birdingbits@cjl.rr.com
© 2016 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

State grant facilitates forest, range health stewardship

A joint stewardship project between the timber and ranching communities is improving forest and range health in Central Montana.

Local rancher David Snapp is partnering with Shawn Nicholls of Prairie Logging (Moore) for a project on his property by using grant money from the Montana Forests in Focus Initiative to improve his forest. At the direction of Governor Bullock, since 2014 this initiative has disbursed \$7.5 million of state funds to help private, state, federal and tribal landowners restore forests and reduce wildfire hazards. \$1 million has also been used to develop new wildland fire engines for use by local government fire departments across the state.

Nicholls has Ed Moore of Moore Logging (Moore) and Tony Miller of Miller's Trucking (Judith Gap) aiding him to thin the forest on the Snapp Ranch.

Before the logging project began in September, Snapp said the trees were so thick he had difficulty moving his farming equipment, the grass was sparse in the forested pastures and the roads were iced over all winter because the sun couldn't shine through the thick tree canopy.

"I couldn't move my combine down the road because there were trees sticking out that would catch my header," said Snapp. "Now, they've taken most of those trees out. They have also cleared the trees along the road so the sun can shine on the road and melt the ice."

Snapp said he hopes the tree thinning will also improve the range growth and wheat yields.

"I saw how the grass came back on a project logged down the road two years ago; I couldn't believe how much grass grew back," he said. "I am hoping the wheat will grow better in the fields along the areas where they cut the trees. Those trees drink a lot of water."

Most of the trees harvested from the Snapp Ranch are considered less desirable because they have too many branches, are too small in diameter and have forks in the tops. These trees are marketed as pulp trees and sold to the mill in Bonner, Mont., said Nicholls.

"We are taking a lot of the smaller, less desirable trees," he explained, "and leaving the more marketable trees to mature and reseed. We will let them grow so they can be harvested later as saw logs."

Saw logs are more valuable than pulp logs and harder to



Tony Miller (left) from Miller Trucking and Shawn Nicholls (right) of Prairie Logging have partnered with rancher David Snapp to thin the trees on the Snapp ranch.

find in Central Montana. "Saw log trees grow straight and have less branches," explained Nicholls. "The saw logs in this job are nominal; we are hauling those to Seeley Lake and to Roundup."

In addition to harvesting trees, the three logging partners have been developing roads, clearing trees along fences and helping with erosion control by leaving slash and organic matter as fertilizer.

"I think this logging project will help improve everything on the ranch," said Snapp. "They have done a great job."

Logging projects like this would not be possible without the Forests in Focus grant to help offset costs such as fuel and marketing less desirable trees, said Nicholls.

"The grant allows for a complete management plan to be implemented - a prescription for a healthier forest," he said. "With the decline in the market, the project at the Snapp Ranch may not have been completed without it."

The Forests in Focus grant provides financial assistance to harvest less desirable trees. It also boosts the state's timber industry, promotes healthy forest stewardship and contributes to wildfire suppression by removing ground cover and increasing the spacing between trees, said Josh Stoychoff, a Forester with the DNRC Northeastern Land Office based in Lewistown.

Check out <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/forestry/forestry-assistance/forest-in-focus> for more information on the Forests in Focus grant process.



A Miller Trucking semi out of Judith Gap stands loaded and ready to make the trip from the Snapp Ranch to a mill in Bonner.

Photos courtesy of Kelley Hirling

NEWS BRIEFS

Fibre Arts Guild to have Christmas potluck

Central Montana Fibre Arts Guild will have a potluck Christmas party at Kitty Hagemann's home on Thursday, Dec. 8 at 6 p.m., at 712 West Broadway in Lewistown. There will be a Christmas tree ornament exchange.

Come discuss Lewistown's historic resources on Dec. 1

The Lewistown Historic Resources Commission will hold its monthly meeting on Thursday, Dec. 1 at 7 a.m. at Six 18 Coffee, 618 West Main Street. Agenda items include discussion and action on the Minuteman Missile interpretative signage, the status of National Register nominations, the status of the Reed and Bowles Trading Post restoration and the ongoing ini-

tiative to establish a Western Heritage Interpretive Site.

The commission is also working with the American Prairie Reserve on preserving the Judith Landing historic structures located on the PN Ranch. The public is invited to the meeting.

Information about the historic commission and Lewistown's historic resource program can be obtained by calling the Lewistown Preservation Office at 535-1775 or contacting planning@ci.lewistown.mt.us.

Youth hockey sign-up set for Nov. 30

Registration for youth hockey will be at 6 p.m. tonight (Wednesday) at the Lewistown Civic Center.

Kids of all ages are welcome and new skaters are encouraged to play. There will be a fee to play this year. For more information call 366-0755 or 366-1364.

Scripts, venues and equipment on tap for JMP meetings

The Judith Mountain Players script reading group will meet Tuesday, Dec. 6 at 5:30 p.m. in the Lewistown Public Library upstairs meeting room. The purpose of the group is to consider plays for possible future productions. The public is invited to participate.

The JMP Board will meet Tuesday, Dec. 13 at 5:15 p.m. in the library's upstairs meeting room. Possible venues for a future production

will be considered along with equipment purchases. The public is invited.

For more information about the meetings, please contact Edie Leavengood at 462-5432.

Wrestling Clubs signups

Sign-up for the Central Montana Wrestling Club and the Lewistown Free-Style Club will be on Monday, Dec. 5 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Fergus High School lobby. The programs are for ages 4 and up.

CENTRAL MONTANA VARIETY

315 W. Broadway Lewistown
535-7652

Great Selection of Gift Bags, Boxes, Wrapping Paper, Bows, Cards and all the decorating supplies you need!

Unique & Rustic Gifts for Anyone...

Nancy Glazier

2017 Calendars

Pottery

Kid's Toys

Chris Owen

Recycled Glassware

Yogo Sapphires

LIBERTY PUZZLES
Please Mention Argus Buyer

Denali Blankets & Stuffed Animals

Wooden Toys

MOCCASIN MOUNTAIN ART & GIFTS

406 West Main Street • 538-5125
www.moccasinmountainart.com

2nd & Janeaux
538-9408 ~ 1-800-879-8194
www.dons-store.com

25 days to Christmas

Make your own sale with Santa Bucks

Smith & Wesson
Victory 22 LR Pistol
Reg \$369 NOW \$329
Comes with a free 222 count of Winchester ammo

STORE HOURS:
Monday ~ Saturday
9 a.m. ~ 6 p.m.
Sunday, 11 a.m. ~ 4 p.m.

FREE Layaway!
FREE Gift Wrap!
Don's will match any advertised price!*

* Excludes Clearance & Close Out pricing.

\$5.00

Good thru Dec. 24, 2016

This coupon good for \$5.00 off any purchase of \$50.00 or more.

Good for one purchase only. May not combine coupons and/or sale discounts. Not to be used for firearms, ammunition, sapphires or gift certificates.

\$5.00

Good thru Dec. 24, 2016

This coupon good for \$10.00 off any purchase of \$100.00 or more.

Good for one purchase only. May not combine coupons and/or sale discounts. Not to be used for firearms, ammunition, sapphires or gift certificates.

\$10.00

Good thru Dec. 24, 2016

This coupon good for \$15.00 off any purchase of \$150.00 or more.

Good for one purchase only. May not combine coupons and/or sale discounts. Not to be used for firearms, ammunition, sapphires or gift certificates.

\$15.00

Good thru Dec. 24, 2016

This coupon good for \$20.00 off any purchase of \$200.00 or more.

Good for one purchase only. May not combine coupons and/or sale discounts. Not to be used for firearms, ammunition, sapphires or gift certificates.

\$20.00

Good thru Dec. 24, 2016

This coupon good for \$25.00 off any purchase of \$250.00 or more.

Good for one purchase only. May not combine coupons and/or sale discounts. Not to be used for firearms, ammunition, sapphires or gift certificates.

\$25.00

Good thru Dec. 24, 2016

This coupon good for \$30.00 off any purchase of \$300.00 or more.

Good for one purchase only. May not combine coupons and/or sale discounts. Not to be used for firearms, ammunition, sapphires or gift certificates.

\$30.00

Good thru Dec. 24, 2016

This coupon good for \$30.00 off any purchase of \$300.00 or more.

Good for one purchase only. May not combine coupons and/or sale discounts. Not to be used for firearms, ammunition, sapphires or gift certificates.

Forests in Focus Funding Helps Speed Up the Process

By Kelley Hirning

Forest restoration, fuels treatments and wildfire prevention/reduction activities are ongoing in the Southeastern part of Montana. Last month, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) organized a tour of different Southeastern Montana fuel reduction projects to highlight all the work that is being done in the area to reduce wildfire risk and its threat to the public and property. In addition to DNRC staff, other attendees included a Rosebud County Commissioner, U.S. Forest Service, Northern Cheyenne and BIA staff, local landowners, Rosebud Conservation District, and members of the local forest industry.



DNRC Eastern Land Office Area Manager Chris Pileski showcased some of the projects that were a result of the partnership of those involved, as well as the various state and federal grants that provided funding. Pileski also recognized Bobbi Vannattan of the Rosebud Conservation District for all her great work in managing most of the projects. She and the Conservation District are an important partner in completing these projects.

The group toured the Ashland Forest Products Mill in Ashland and were able to see all the work the revitalized mill is undertaking. Reopened in the fall of 2014, the mill is producing lumber products out of logs from trees killed in the wildfires of 2012, including logs from projects that were on the tour.

After touring the mill, the group visited projects on state trust land, U.S. Forest Service land, and two private landowners.



Since 2009, DNRC has used state and federal funds to help restore forest land on 30 properties, totaling approximately 4,000 acres of private, tribal, and state lands in the southeast region of Montana. One of the funding sources was the Montana Forests in Focus Initiative, which has disbursed four million dollars for projects on tribal, state and private forests and two million dollars to USFS lands for fuel reduction and forest restoration. Tom Trusler Jr, a 5th generation rancher and grant recipient said, *“By utilizing the Forest in Focus money, this advanced us at least 20 years...with the Forests in Focus program it’s here now.”*

The Ash Creek fire in 2012 was one of the largest Montana had seen in many decades. It scorched almost 250,000 acres of Southeast Montana in less than 2 weeks. The tour included areas that were affected by this quick moving and devastating fire.

Brian and Maggie Dice remember that day like it was yesterday, and just talking about it brings tears to their eyes. Through the Rosebud Conservation District they also utilized the Forests in Focus funds. As Mrs. Dice stated, *“it’s just nice after a catastrophic fire to have the resources we need, because we couldn’t have done this without them.”*

Forest in Focus – Doing More than Restoration

Story & photos by
Andi Bourne
Pathfinder

OVANDO – The Blackfoot Community Conservation Area (BCCA) has been the recipient of two Forest in Focus (FIF) grants totaling nearly \$315,000. Of the 5,600 total acres within the BCCA core, 863 acres have been treated with FIF grants generating around 6,600 tons of saw logs and pulp.

The BCCA is located in the mid-reaches of the Blackfoot watershed near Ovando Mountain. It combines community forest ownership and management within the Core 5,609 acres with cooperative ecosystem management for multiple-use across public and private lands for 41,000 acres in the Blackfoot Watershed.

Established in 2005, the community vision for the BCCA is to develop a working landscape that balances ecological diversity with local economic sustainability for the future benefit of the Blackfoot watershed community. This strategy of management and collaboration is one of the earliest examples of a community forest in the nation.

BCCA Chair Ben Slaght said the main revenue stream for the BCCA maintenance and projects comes from timber sales, block management and grazing leases.

The Forest in Focus initiative was started in the 2013 legislative session. That authorized up to \$5 million per biennium, or two-year period, for the state to request out of the fire suppression fund if it was above \$20 million. The primary goal in the legislation was fuels reduction, forest restoration and stewardship treatments. The secondary goal was putting logs on trucks.

Montana Governor Steve Bullock made the initial request from the federal government in late 2014. The first Forest in Focus grant was for \$2 million. Montana received another \$2 million following the second request. And the state is anticipating a third grant for \$1.5 million. They have given \$2 million



Blackfoot Challenge Land Steward Brad Weltzien explaining the treatment to members of the Forest in Focus Tour of the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area, Sept. 29.

total to US Forest Service projects.

“What’s exciting is getting treatments out on lands that normally don’t get treated. This includes projects in the wildland urban interface but the emphasis is on projects that are basically unaffordable and lands that really need treatment,” said DNRC Program Manager Roger Ziesak.

In addition to funding projects on nine of the 11 National Forests in the state, there have been 24 projects on private, state and tribal lands with the Forest in Focus grants. Projects range from Lincoln County to south of Miles City with the vast majority of the projects on private lands. Ziesak said these projects have sustained approximately 160 direct jobs.

The proposals must meet the current voluntary best management practices and follow the streamside management zone laws. “We know that we are getting good forestry out there because of that,” said Ziesak.

The main goals for the projects on the BCCA were to bring the forest back into balance and make the forest more resilient to fire, insects and disease. Projects were designed to shift species composition away from the Douglas fir and instead favoring ponderosa pine and larch. Through mechanical treatments, projects mimic fire taking out the ladder fuels and implementing sustainable harvest. Large snags are left for wildlife and there is

experimentation with how much dead and down fuels to leave on the forest floor. Projects manage for timber production in the future by creating an uneven aged stand.

“We keep the best of the best so in the future we will have really good genetics in here,” said Blackfoot Challenge Land Steward Brad Weltzien. “We are trying to balance everything; it’s not just timber ground, not just grazing ground and not just a wildlife area.”

Ziesak estimates 7,500 acres have been treated, 7-18 million board feet of timber have been generated along with 30,000 pounds of pulp.

“The industry is hurting. That is one of the reasons this program was developed. What we are telling folks is give us projects that [they] can’t afford to do without financial help,” said Ziesak. “Log supply was a critical issue for the mills and the infrastructure. As far as the DNRC is concerned we need to have a timber industry in the state. If we can’t supply them with logs, they are not going to hang around and wait.”

Rich Lane purchases the logs for the Bonner Chip Plant. He feels the difference in the Forest in Focus grants, compared to other federal grants, is that it is Montanans’ tax dollars at work.

“I think the Governor took a great leap of faith when he decided to tackle forest management in this state. This Forest in Focus

program is one of the things that has been accomplished from it. Our [state] tax dollars go towards good forestry, not just logs to mills but to all the other good things it does like improve wildlife habitat, reduce fuel loading and stream restoration.”

Pyramid Mountain Lumber, Inc. Resource Manager Gordy Sanders said

Don't Get Caught with the Flu This Season!

Flu Shots Available
Tuesday, Oct. 18 from 9am-1pm

Seeley-Swan Medical Center

*** Bring insurance card if you have one but not required**

Glen's Automotive SERVICE

Glen's has the perfect tires for your Cars, Trucks & Trailers

Free Rotations with purchase!

Mastercraft • Goodyear
Continental • General
Ironman • Kumho
Michelin • Hankook

Tune Ups • Oil Changes • Custom Exhausts
Tires & Alignments • Brakes • Batteries

Glen's does it all! Call 677-2141



Don and Barb McNally are local ranchers, grazing leaseholders on the BCCA and members of the BCCA Council. They attended the tour sharing the benefits they have seen from the treatments for grazing and the general benefits they have seen as a result of the Forest in Focus projects.

Pyramid Mountain Lumber enjoys the opportunity to participate in the Forest in Focus projects.

“If there is the right work done on the ground for the right reasons, everyone benefits. It produces a better log for the remaining mills around the state at a price that we can afford to run during these depressed lumber markets,” said Sanders. “The more work that [happens] on the ground, regardless of where it is, the more all the industry benefits across the state.”

Ziesak said Montana used to produce 300-400 million board feet per year, now only 60 million board feet per year are produced. What grows in Montana is around 900 million to one billion feet which would be the annual allowable cut. Sanders added that amounts to 900-1,000 truckloads per day accumulating fiber on the ground.

“It’s better to log that stuff than have it die and burn, I think,” said Ziesak. “As far as the state is concerned it has been a real win, win for us. We get to have

those treatments out there, we get to feed mills and we get to have people understand proper forest management.”



Montana Department of Natural Resource and Conservation Program Manager and Forest in Focus grant administrator Roger Ziesak pointing out the vibrant shrub component on this unit that was thinned and logged. He said the shrubs had responded very well to the reduced competition and increased light following the thinning, generating good cover and food for wildlife.

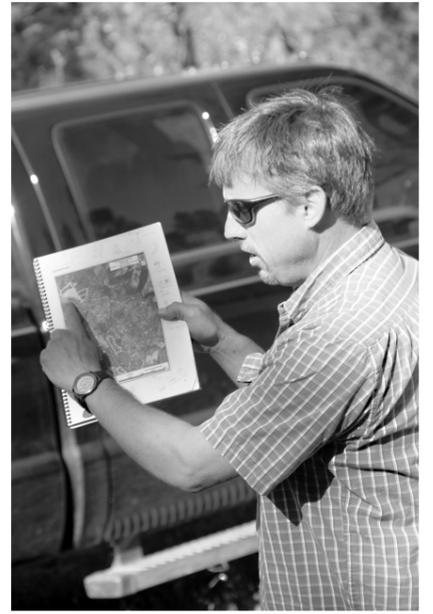
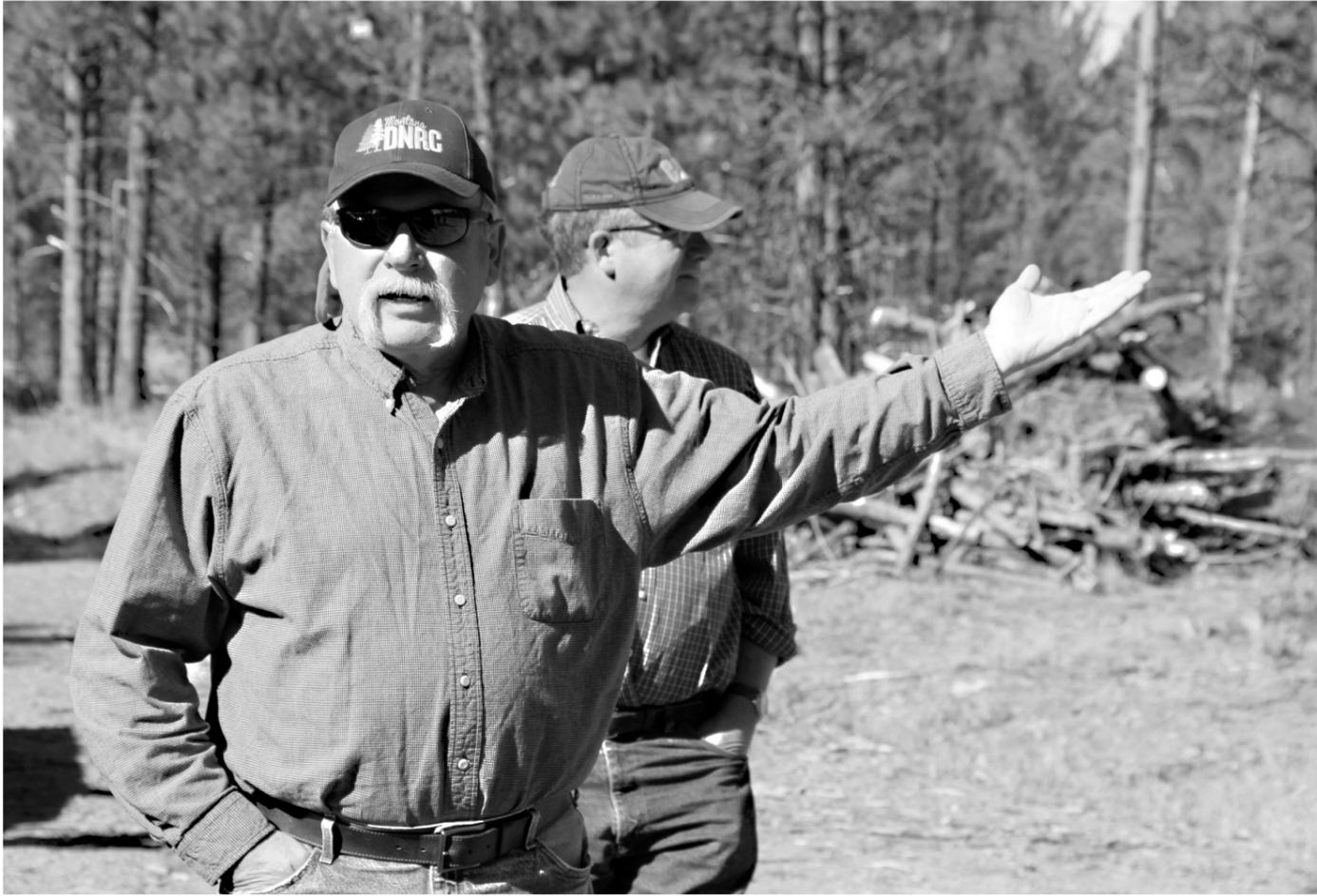
Junior *Journal*

BROADEN YOUR AUDIENCE!

4th-12th grade students in the Blackfoot, Clearwater and Swan Valleys...
Let your voice be heard!

Submit your writings to
juniorjournal406@gmail.com

SPONSORED BY THE LODGES ON SEELEY LAKE



Clockwise from left: DNR Program Manager Roger Ziesak explains the work that was done as Rich Lane, Log Buyer for Willis Enterprises, looks on. Blackfoot Challenge Land Steward Brad Weltzien explains the different locations that were treated. Gordy Sanders with Pyramid Lumber and local property owner Ben Slaght listen to the presentation.

Preventing fires and getting logs on trucks

by Michael Stafford

Many areas of the Blackfoot Community Conservation Area (BCCA) just north of Ovando have seen heavy growth over the years. In fact, some of the growth is so thick with ladder fuels that should a forest fire strike the area, the result could be disastrous.

But through the Forest in Focus Initiative and funds provided through that program, hundreds of acres in six different locations on the BCCA have undergone treatment which has limited and reduced the impact that could be caused by a wildfire.

"We would not have been able to do it without financial support," said Brad Weltzien, Blackfoot Challenge Land Steward.

In addition, the project help put logs on trucks to mills and bring material to the pulp mill in Bonner. It also has helped the landscape of the forest in those areas to grow healthier in the future.

"We're getting treatment done out there where it wouldn't otherwise get treated," said Roger Ziesak, DNR Program Manager.

On Sept. 29, a number of different people gathered in Ovando to hear how the Forests in Focus Initiative has helped with a project recently completed in the area and saw firsthand how fuels have been reduced and the timber industry helped. Recently, 450 acres worth of the BCCA were treated resulting in 5,452 tons worth of material to Pyramid Mountain Lumber in Seeley Lake and 4,158 tons worth of other wood to the pulp mill in Bonner.

That was made possible through a \$140,925 grant through the initiative.

The BCCA consists of 41,000 acres of state, federal and private land with a core 5,600 acre area that was purchased by the Blackfoot Challenge in 2009. The land is managed by a council made up of representatives from different ownerships and members of the community.

Historically, the land was timbered by a number of different companies over the years and the result of that has left many stands in poor condition with various stages of regeneration. The current condition also poses a risk for stand-replacing wildfires which would annihilate the existing forest.

George Hirschenberger, a member of the Blackfoot Challenge Board, explained some of the history behind the area and the Blackfoot Challenge as a whole which has been around for 23 years. He said the Challenge has worked with land owners to secure conservation easements and improve water quality among other projects.

As to the BCCA area, he said that the Blackfoot Challenge works to try to treat about 500 acres per year and that through programs like Forests in Focus, they are able to work towards that goal, one small piece at a time. Treatment makes those areas more resistant to wildfires.

As the work has progressed, he said the Blackfoot Challenge is keeping an eye on how the different areas being treated will contribute overall to the health of the entire area.

"We're still after that big picture question," said Hirschenberger, "there are still areas we want to target."

Before the group of attendees, including representatives from the Blackfoot Challenge, private landowners, representatives from the DNR, a Powell County Commissioner and members of the press, toured the area, Ziesak gave an overview of the Initiative and what it is designed to do. Started in 2014, the Forest in Focus Initiative allows for up to \$5 million per biennium to be used from wildfire funds to be directed towards projects which will reduce the risk of wildfires and at the same time stimulate the forestry industry in operations that would not otherwise be possible without financial help.

In the past, funds have been

used both for private timber sales as well as helping with Forest Service proposals. Ziesak said the extra funding has helped to expedite the process of getting the Forest Service sales going sooner.

"The idea being to get those into the market sooner," he said.

More recently the funds have gone primarily to forestry on private lands and Ziesak said that thus far 24 projects around the state have been done through the past \$4 million that has been spent.

"We've managed to cover a vast majority of the forests," he said, "give us a project you can't do without financial help."

The Initiative is slated to continue for some bienniums to come and Ziesak said that many very well written proposals were received within the first two years.

Overall, he said that the program is designed to provide extra funding to get treatment done in areas where the risk of wildfire could be reduced. At the same time, those projects are also geared towards getting material to mills and at times, such as projects in the eastern part of the state, help defray the cost of transportation which would otherwise make projects financial unfeasible.

"The industry is hurting and that's why this started," he said.

Rich Lane, log buyer with Willis Enterprises which operates the pulp mill in Bonner lauded the program noting that not only is it mitigating wildfire fuels, but helping to keep the timber industry alive.

"We're seeing state money get good work done on the ground," he said, "I think this is a unique program that is just starting to get attention."

As the groups toured a few of the different sites that were treated, Weltzien explained a little bit further about what work had been done. He said that in the past the land had been harvested pretty hard by companies such as Anaconda, Champion and Plum

Creek. That resulted in heavy regeneration, but also in the thickness of ladder fuels.

"A big part of this project was to bring our forest back into balance," he said.

Some of that was achieved by leaving a diversity of different tree species in place during the operation. Thinning was done, but Weltzien said that some thick stands were also left on the landscape. Brush was left on the ground to replace nutrients in the soils and the trees displaying the best genetics were left in place so as to proliferate those good qualities into future trees that would grow in the area.

"We're trying to leave the best of the best," he said.

He also noted that by increasing the space between trees, the possibility of crown fires is reduced should a wildfire strike, the trees are able to grow more healthy and if a bug infestation should occur, the forest would be in a better condition to resist the effects.

"Really it's pretty straightforward," he said about what was done in the six different areas treated.

In addition to the project which has been completed, the BCCA is also the recipient of an

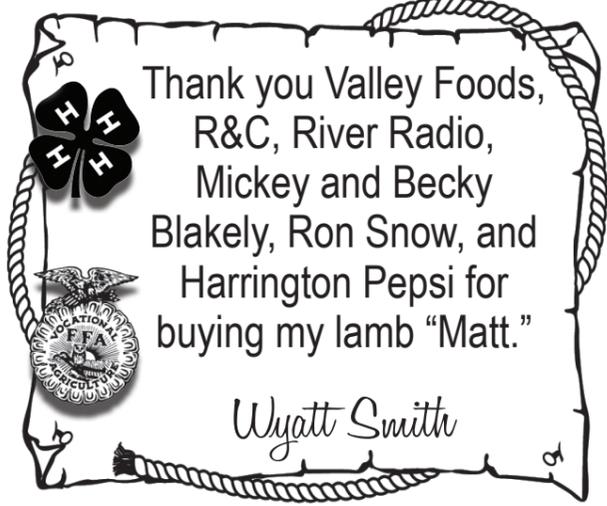
other Forest in Focus grant which is providing \$173,585 to treat 413 acres. The project is in process and is proposed to bring 5,452 tons of logs to sawmills and 4,158 tons to the pulp mill.

In information provided by the Blackfoot Challenge they lauded the Forest in Focus Initiative as well as Governor Steve Bullock's support of the program to create healthy landscapes and support the timber industry.

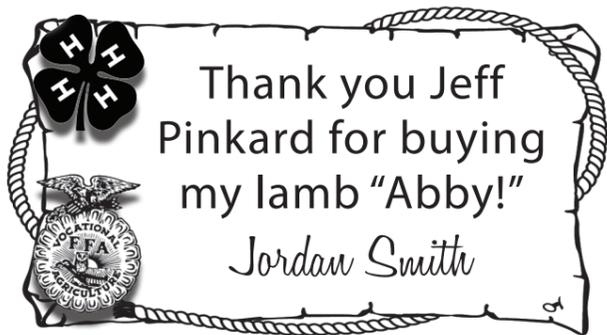
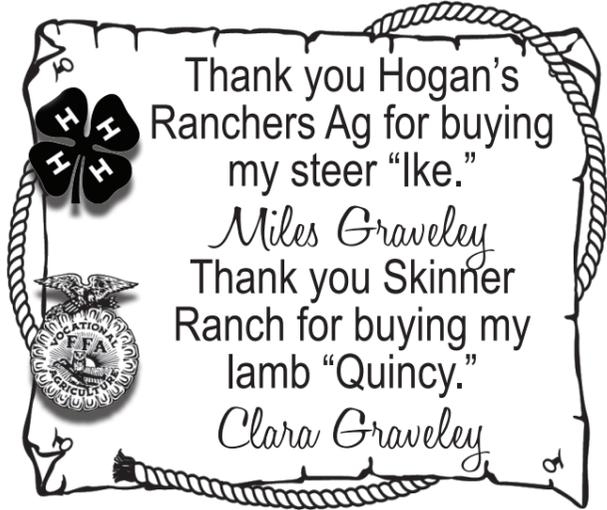
"This program relies on a local market for the forest products removed during treatments. Access to these local markets reduces the net cost of treatments, allowing us to increase the number of private landowners participating in the program and the number of acres treated. The Governor's Forest in Focus Initiative is helping to retain access to these markets," stated the information, "for us, successful management of forests and rangelands in the Blackfoot Watershed means resilient and sustainable use of forest and rangeland resources, increased pace and scale of management, working forests, healthy rangelands and soils and local benefits like fire safe communities, grazing leases, forest stand diversity and forest jobs."



Gordy Sanders, Resource Manager with Pyramid Lumber, and Powell County Commissioner Dan Sager chat about the treatment that was done.



Clockwise from right: Sean Steinbach, DNRC Forester and Project Foreman explained the work that had been done on the prison ranch. Roger Ziesak, Forest Practices Specialist with the DNRC tells of the benefits the harvest not only brought to the forest, but also to the local mill. Commissioner Doug Crachy and Steve Flynn with Sun Mountain Logging look at the results of the project.



The forests are in their focus

by Michael Stafford

It was easy to tell that those who spoke about and toured the recently thinned and harvested areas of the Montana State Prison were proud of the work that was done there. Timber was harvested that otherwise would not have been and in the event of a wildfire, fuels were reduced.

However, none of that would have been possible without the grant funds from the Forests in Focus Initiative.

"We're getting some really nice work done all around the state," said Roger Ziesak, Forest Practices Specialist with the DNRC.

On August 25, a number of different people including DNRC staff, Montana Correctional Enterprises (MCE) staff, local government officials and reporters toured the recently thinned areas. During the tour, the Forests in Focus Initiative was explained.

"So far it's been a good program," said Ziesak.

He told the group that the initiative was created through the state to provide grant money towards harvesting timber and thinning dense areas of forests. In particular, the money goes to projects that might not otherwise be done due to their remote location away from a sawmill or other facility or projects that would not be financially feasible given the amount of timber in those locations. He also said that the initiative is to help out the timber industry in the state and to get logs on trucks headed to mills.

"This grant program was developed as one of the ways to address that," said Ziesak.

The grant program was set up for five bienniums and is in its fourth year. So far, it has been able to help with 24 projects around the state.

One of those, the LaMarche Timber Harvest was at the prison ranch.

Sean Steinbach, DNRC Forester and Project Foreman explained a little bit about the thinning projects that have occurred in the forested areas of the prison property. He said that the prison has done a good job in the past of thinning timber and that the grant program allowed that effort

to be carried forward.

In 2009 and 2010, Steinbach said federal grant money became available for some harvest projects at the ranch. However, the recent grant of \$200,000 for the timber sale of 470 acres for saw logs and pulp was state money.

The grant was awarded in February 2015 and work started in the summer of 2015, recently finishing up.

Rich Lane with Willis Enterprises that operates the pulp mill in Bonner said that he believes the state money is well spent on projects like this one.

"Our state money we want to invest very wisely and I think that's being done here," he said.

On the way up to one of the sites thinned, Ziesak explained that like the other projects that have received grant money, this one was slightly unusual in that the grantee, Sun Mountain Logging, provided more funds to the project than the grant did.

"They were able to do a much larger area that way," he said.

The LaMarche timber harvest consisted of different sites including one that was on a sharp slope and needed to be line logged using cables and hauling the timber back up. Both Ziesak and Steve Flynn with Sun Mountain Logging said that was a more expensive part of the operation and would not have been possible without the grant funds.

At the other sites, Steinbach explained that the forest was thinned with about 30 feet in between trees and those left being a variety of sizes and ages.

"I really like having a mosaic of age classes," he said.

It was also noted that with the different ages and sizes, the potential for an insect infestation through the area is lessened.

Flynn agreed and said that with the forest thinned in the area, it helps reduce the possibility of a forest fire starting and serves as a break should one start on adjacent Forest Service land. While a forest fire would not stop at the area, if it were a crown fire which cannot be controlled, it would

be forced down to a ground fire which crews could battle.

"Timber stand improvement and fire reduction were two of the major points," he said.

As for the timber removed, Flynn said that 550 loads of saw logs were taken to Sun Mountain Lumber and 50 to 60 loads of pulp were taken to the mill at Bonner.

"A little over two million board feet," he said.

Flynn elaborated that the prison has been proactive about managing their forests and in the past have had their crews thin and timber different areas as well. He also spoke highly of the crew from Sun Mountain Lumber of the job they did at the different sites.

"Our operators are really experienced," he said.

Yet another benefit to the thinning is that much more sunlight can shine through the canopies, allowing in time more grass to grow. Ziesak said that will be good for the cows on the ranch.

"This is going to give them a lot more grass in this area," he said.

There were also some additional parts of the timber sale that the grant funds helped allow to be done. Some of the timber roads used to haul were later obliterated, returning the area to regrow.

Another part of the project included rebuilding part of LaMarche Creek which had blown out. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks had wanted restoration to the creek as it is habitat for a pure strain of cutthroat trout and with the extra money available through the grant program, not only were part of the creek able to be restored, but two to three miles of it will be fenced to keep it protected from cattle on the ranch. Work was also done in other areas to prevent sedimentation into drainages.

As for the ranch and MCE, Steinbach said that they were compensated for the sale of the timber. The money will be used for training programs through MCE.

"It was a good project from a collaboration standpoint," he said.



Don't miss your opportunity!

Advertising deadlines are Fridays at 5 p.m.

Call 846-2424 or email ads@pburgmail.com for more information.

SILVER STATE POST

312 Missouri Avenue ♦ P.O. Box 111
www.sspmt.com ♦ (406) 846-2424