

LIBERTY COUNTY NEWS

jointventure

MSU Liberty County Extension Office
— CHESTER, MT

Liberty County
Conservation District

March 2024

Montana State University Liberty County Extension and Liberty County Conservation District are collaborating this newsletter. We will keep you informed on news and events in both offices. As agriculture is a major focus for both offices, we have events that often coincide. Please let us know if you have information on upcoming events and happenings.

Upcoming Events

- LCCD Board Meeting | March 21 @ 7:00 p.m.
- Envirothon | April 22-23, 202 | Great Falls MT
- Ag In The Class | May 16, 2024 | CJI Chester MT
- MACD Convention | November 19-21, 2024, Great Falls

THE LIBERTY COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Board of Supervisors: Lanny Jones, Rodney Oraw, Tyler Streit, Michael Nelson, Megan Hedges, Tyler Jones, Kurt Matkin

Associate Supervisors: Robert Pugsley, Rodney Svenson, Ray Morkrid, Geoff Osterman

Administrator: Diane Roberts

THE NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE

District Conservationist: Misty Vermulm

Technician: Dan Kultgen

Soil Conservationists: Zach Williams, Dan Hodges

Pheasants Forever: Maverick Cady

Liberty County Conservation District

18 Main Street
USDA Building

406-759-5128 ext. 102

Email:

libertycountycd@gmail.com

Website:

libertycountycd.macdnet.org

LCCD holds monthly board meetings on the third Thursday of each month. The meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. in the USDA conference room. Any member of the public is welcome to join.

MSU Extension

111 1st Street E
Liberty County
Courthouse

406-759-5625

**Liberty County
Extension Agent:**

-Jesse Fulbright

**Extension
Administrative
Assistant:**

-Julie Gagnon

liberty@montana.edu

CoCoRaHS February 2024 precipitation report



Warmer and Wetter than Normal during February

February average precipitation at 0.58 inch was slightly more than twice the normal amount for the 21 official NOAA, USBR, USDA, and CoCoRaHS reporting stations across Liberty County. Temperatures averaged 3 to 5 degrees above normal.

Precipitation varied widely ranging from 1.44 inch at Skierka's to just .09 inch at Wolery's east of the old Hill School site. The wettest locations were south of Highway 2, while the drier spots were in the northeast part of the county. Reported snowfall was 5 to 10 inches, but Thompson's measured 12.4 inches for the most. For the water year, which began in October, the county-wide average precipitation stands at 3.22 inches, which is 49 percent higher than the normal of 2.16 inches. At the end of February, the drought rating across Liberty County remained at "abnormally dry."

Temperatures averaged well above normal at the start and end of February. The warmest was 64 degrees on February 1st at the Devries station south of Tiber Dam. The coldest reported was -18 degrees on the 16th at the Fritz Farm, northwest of Tiber.

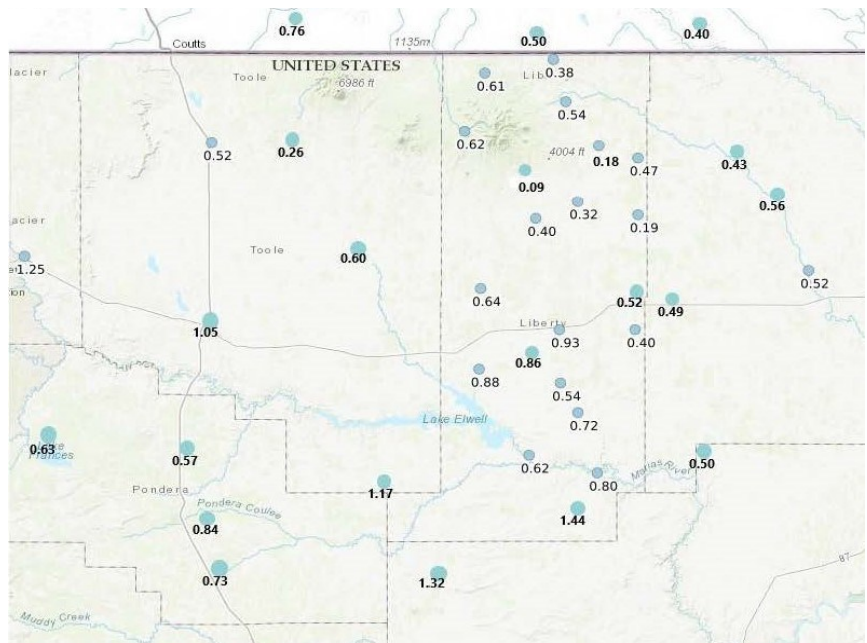
Wind speeds during February were lighter than normal and averaged 4.0 mph at the Courthouse, 5.4 mph at the USDA site southeast of Lothair, and 9.2 mph at the Jeff Mattson farm. The windiest day was February 26th with most farms having a peak gust over 35 mph. Hi-Line Colony, south of Whitlash, had the strongest gust that morning at 62 mph. The Air Quality Index for the month had all days in the good category.

NOAA's March outlook is calling for temperatures to average near to above normal with near the usual precipitation. During March, temperatures normally rise 12 to 14 degrees from the beginning to end of the month. March precipitation is usually between 1/3 and 2/3 inch, except 3/4 to 1 inch around the Sweetgrass Hills.

CoCoRaHS stands for the Community Collaborative Rain Hail Snow network, comprising over 20,000 active rain gauge volunteers in all 50 states, Canada, the Caribbean, and Guam. More information about CoCoRaHS is available at cocorahs.org

February 2024

Tiber Dam 12SE Skierka	1.44	0.23	622
Chester B. Kammerzell	0.93	0.25	372
Lothair 3SE Violet	0.88	0.23	383
Chester 5SW-K. Kammerzell	0.86	0.34	253
Tiber Dam 11ESE Cole	0.80	0.28	286
Chester 11S Osterman	0.72	0.21	343
Tiber 7NW Fenger	0.64	0.25	256
Whitlash 4SE Thompson	0.62	0.43	144
Tiber Dam 3SE Pugsley	0.62	0.22	282
Whitlash 6NE Engstrom	0.61	0.43	142
Chester 7S Harmon	0.54	0.23	235
Sage Cre Col 1SE Woods	0.54	0.28	193
Joplin Snyder	0.52	0.28	186
Joplin 18N Wood	0.47	0.27	174
Chester 14N Hendrickson	0.40	0.26	154
Joplin 4S Dahinden	0.40	0.21	190
Sage Cr Col 4N Lybeck	0.38	0.28	136
Chester 16N Mattson	0.32	0.27	119
Joplin 11N May	0.19	0.23	83
Sage Cr Col 8SE Tempel	0.18	0.37	49
<u>Hill 4E Wolery</u>	<u>0.09</u>	<u>0.35</u>	<u>26</u>
AVERAGE	0.58	0.28	206



Liberty County Tree Deliveries



LINCOLN OAKS TREES will be shipped on ***April 22, 2024*** with an estimated delivery date of ***April 24 & 25, 2024***. Those who placed an order will be contacted when the trees arrive. They can be picked up at the USDA office between 12:00 noon and 4:00 p.m. on the grass at the back of the building.

MONTANA SEEDLING NURSERY trees will arrive at the ***USDA office in Chester*** on ***April 29th***. Those who placed an order will be contacted when the trees arrive and what time they will be ready for pick up. They can be picked up at the back of the building on the grass at the USDA office.

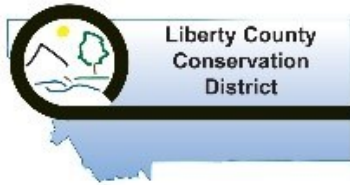
For more information, please contact Diane Roberts at the LCCD office.

Phone: 406-759-5778

Email: libertycountycd@gmail.com

***NEXT SEASONS SEEDLING SALE WITH THE MONTANA CONSERVATION
SEEDLING NUSERY WILL BEGIN***

SEPTEMBER 18, 2024



LCCD Cost Share Program

The Liberty County Conservation District provides cost share assistance to private landowners in Liberty County for a number of different natural resource/conservation projects.

Information About the Conservation Cost Share Program:

Liberty County Conservation District realizes that one of the best opportunities to support and engage local landowners in a meaningful soil and water conservation project is to provide direct funding for those projects through a **Cost Share Program**. To ensure transparency and appropriate use of funds, we have developed a basic application and ranking criteria for interested parties. Liberty CD will consider funding projects up to a maximum amount of \$2500 under the following categories (please see cost share instructions document for more complete list of eligible projects):

1. Stream/Riparian/Irrigation projects
2. Weed Management projects
3. Pasture projects
4. Urban Natural Resources projects
5. Tree projects

Not all projects are eligible to receive \$2500 and the Board of Supervisors will determine awarded amounts. Depending on the project, a land management plan may be required. Applicants will be ranked using several factors. Applicants may be required to participate in an on-site consultation and a completion inspection. Applicants are also required to provide before and after photos. Applicants must reside within Liberty CD's jurisdictional boundary. Applicants are accepted on a rolling basis and must be submitted to the LCCD Board of Supervisors to be approved. Applicants must be turned in by the first Thursday of each month to be on the month's board meeting agenda.

All questions about Liberty County Conservation District's Cost Share Programs can be directed to Diane Roberts via email (libertycountycd@gmail.com) or phone (406-759-5778 ext.102). Applications and information can be downloaded from the LCCD website at libertycountycd.macdnet.org

All applications and additional required materials for the Cost Share Programs can be emailed to libertycountycd@gmail.com OR mailed to the **Liberty County CD office** P.O. Box 669, CHESTER, MT 59522 OR dropped off at the office located at 18 Main Street, Chester MT.



Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

CRP Program General Signup for 2024

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that agricultural producers and private landowners can begin signing up for the general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) **starting March 4 and running through March 29, 2024**. The announcement was made by Zach Ducheneaux, Administrator of the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) at this year's National Pheasant Fest, in Sioux Falls, SD.

Other CRP Options

This past January FSA began accepting applications for the [Continuous CRP](#) signup. Under this enrollment, producers and landowners can enroll in CRP throughout the year. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and land meet the eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap.

The USDA also offers financial assistance to producers and landowners enrolled in CRP to improve the health of their forests through the [Forest Management Incentive](#) (FMI), which can help participants with forest management practices, such as brush management and prescribed burning.

FSA will announce the dates for [Grassland CRP](#) signup in the near future.

Producers with expiring CRP acres can use the [Transition Incentives Program](#) (TIP), which incentivizes producers who sell or enter a long-term lease with a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher who plans to sustainably farm or ranch the land.

How to Sign Up

Landowners and producers interested in CRP should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) to learn more or to apply for the program before their deadlines.

Third Annual Peer to Peer Workshop



The Third Annual Peer to Peer Workshop was held at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Chester Montana on February 29th hosted by the NRCS and LCCD. Three years ago this meeting had nine producers. This year there were twenty four in attendance.

MARNI THOMPSON started the session with current findings and the most important aspect of getting cover on the soil. Without cover, we can't conserve moisture or feed biology.

JONATHAN LUNDGREN from The 1000 Farms Initiative spoke, via zoom, and shared that science needed to be done differently if we were going to evolve our food system. The Five Farm-Level buckets of regenerative practices are **stop tilling, never leave bare soil, plant diversity, integrate crops and livestock, and eliminate or reduce synthetic chemical use**. When you start using these principles, you don't need all the inputs (the jugs and the drugs).

Jonathan and his team have been on 850 farms over the past few years, and the above 5 principles don't capture all of what needs to be present for a farm to really reach the full potential of a regenerative operation. The new definition is: regenerative agriculture connects humans and nature, family and community.

In conclusions the 1000 Farms results stated:

- Farming smaller is better.
- Have human feet touched every acre of your farm?
- Does your family and community eat food from your farm?
- Regenerative food systems work for longer than industrialized systems.

Modern farming:

- Adopt a system in a small scale
- Stop spraying/seed treatments
- Try intercropping
- Livestock integration
- Perennialism, particularly in small grain systems
 - A. Salish blue
 - B. Kernza

SUSAN MASSAR gave a brief overview of soil test results from 2020-2024.

The general patterns show that soil organic carbon levels are increasing over time. Soil respiration and microbially active carbon values fluctuate with precipitation and time of year. Aggregate stability is increasing across most of the sites. Infiltrating more water, more air space, more nutrient exchange between biology and plants. The PLFA Phospholipid Fatty Acid Levels show soils are bacteria-dominant. Fungi is very sensitive to disturbance (tillage and chemical, seed treat) and you get a big jump in PLFA values the year after a cover crop.

The workshop ended with a question and answer time from a local panel of producers sharing the best tips and tricks of what is working and what to avoid.

Montana Range Tour

An educational field day for ranchers desiring to learn from others who are leaders in implementing innovative on-the-ground grazing and agricultural practices.

June 20, 2024

Stanford, Montana

Cost: \$65/person*

*Includes Leopold Conservation Award breakfast, sack lunch, transportation to tour sites & educational speakers. Participants are responsible for lodging and personal travel costs.

Register here:

<https://svc.mt.gov/doa/opp/MTRangeTour/cart>

Lodging can be reserved in Lewistown, MT at:

Calvert Hotel (406) 535-5411 Judith Mtn Lodge (406) 538-7063

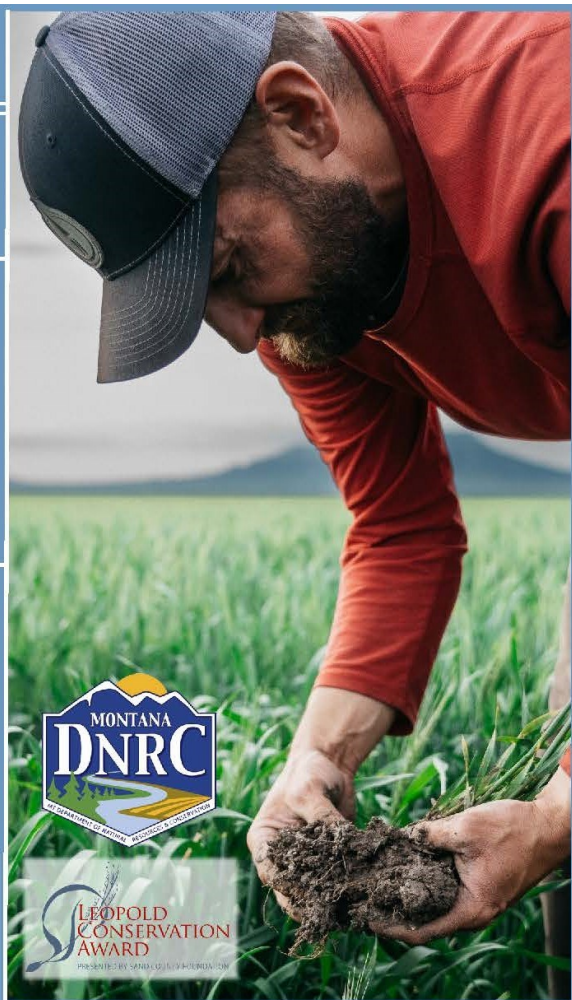
Super 8 (406) 708-4541 Yogo Inn (406) 535-8721

B&B Motel (406) 708-5496

Registration closes 5/27



Register here



406 Grazing Academy

A hands-on workshop for ranchers wanting to sharpen their grazing management skills



Register here

June 11 - 13, 2024

Miles City, Montana

Cost: \$200/person*

*Includes learning materials, range monitoring kit, 3 lunches, 2 dinners and snacks. Participants are responsible for their travel and lodging costs. **Class space is limited!!!**

Register here:

<https://svc.mt.gov/doa/opp/DNR406GrazingAcademyRegistration/cart>

Scholarship opportunities are available to assist with travel, lodging and course costs.

Visit reomontana.org for more details

Hotel Info:

Miles City Hotel & Suites

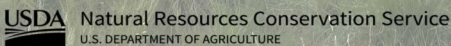
(406) 234-1000

Miles City Hotel

(406) 234-1000

Use code **406 Grazing Academy to receive the discounted group rate**

Registration & hotel block close 4/26/2024





ANNOUNCEMENTS & NOTICES

WHAT IS A 310 PERMIT?

- In 1975, the Legislature enacted the National Streambed and Land Preservation Act, known as the 310 Law. This law is intended to protect and preserve streams and rivers and the lands adjacent to them.
- A 310 permit is required PRIOR to beginning any project that physically alters or modifies the bed or banks of a perennial stream.
- You can find more information on the LCCD website at libertycountycd.macdnet.org or by contacting the LCCD office at 406-759-5778.

The public is always invited to the LCCD Conservation District meetings.

Regular meetings are held each month at the USDA/LCCD office 18 Main Street, CHESTER, MT.

Meeting time is usually the Third Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Look for notices posted at the USDA office and around Chester.

All LCCD and NRCS programs are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, nation of origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.

Items for Purchase or Rent at the LCCD

ITEMS FOR RENT

Tree Planter

(\$50 refundable deposit)
Minimum charge - \$50. per day.

Fabric Layer \$25 per day.

Trimble GPS Unit

(\$500 refundable deposit)
\$12.00 per hour, or \$100 per day.

ITEMS FOR SALE

Ownership Maps

Large Booklet (photo background)	\$35.00
Large Booklet (non-photo background)	\$30.00
Wall Map	\$30.00

Rain Gauges

US Weather Bureau Specs	\$47.00
Tru-Chek Reading	\$29.00

<u>Marking Flags</u> 100/BNDL	\$15.00
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<u>Soil Probes</u>	\$75.00
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Conservation Grade Trees -Inquire at District Office

Weed Barrier Fabric

6 x 300 ft. roll - Price TBD at the time of order.
6 x 500 ft. roll - Price TBD at the time of order.

Cheesy Beef 'n' Rice

Ingredients

- 3 cups cooked long grain rice
- 3 cups frozen chopped broccoli, thawed and drained
- 1/2 pound sliced fresh mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups diced cooked chicken
- 1/2 cup chopped green onions
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese, divided
- 1 can (10-3/4 ounces) condensed cream of chicken soup, undiluted



Directions

- Combine rice and broccoli; spoon into a greased 13x9-in. baking dish.
- In a large skillet, saute mushrooms in butter until tender. Remove from heat. Add chicken and green onions; spoon over rice mixture. Beat eggs, milk, salt and pepper; pour over all. Sprinkle with 1 cup cheese. Spread soup over top.
- Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 30 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining cheese and bake 15 minutes longer.

