

# LIBERTY COUNTY NEWS

jointventure

M.S.U. Extension  
Office - Chester, MT

Liberty County  
Conservation District

December 2025

Montana State University 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.

## Liberty County Conservation District

18 Main Street  
USDA Building

406-759-5778 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.

## Upcoming Events

- Montana Salinity Control Association Groundwater Summit: Energy | December 9-10, 2025 | Highplains Outpost Great Falls
- Montana Farmers Union “Know Your CO-OP” | December 12, 2025 | Plains, MT
- LCCD Board Meeting | December 18, 2025 | Chester, MT
- Montana Farmers Union Women’s Conference | Jan 31 - Feb 1st , 2026 | Sidney, MT AND Feb 6-8th | Fairmont Hot Springs
- Soil Health Symposium | February 2-4, 2026 | Billings

## THE LIBERTY COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

**Associate Supervisors:** Robert Pugsley, Geoff Osterman, Diane Roberts

**Administrator:** Patty Bierma

## THE NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE

**Supervisory District Conservationist:** Misty Vermulm

**Technician:** Dan Kultgen

**Soil Conservationist:** Dan Hodges

**Resource Soil Scientist:** Matti Osterman

**Pheasants Forever:** vacant

## 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*



## Healthy Soils for Healthy Cities

Our planet's survival depends on the precious link with soil. Over 95 percent of our food comes from soils. Besides, they supply 15 of the 18 naturally occurring chemical elements essential to plants.

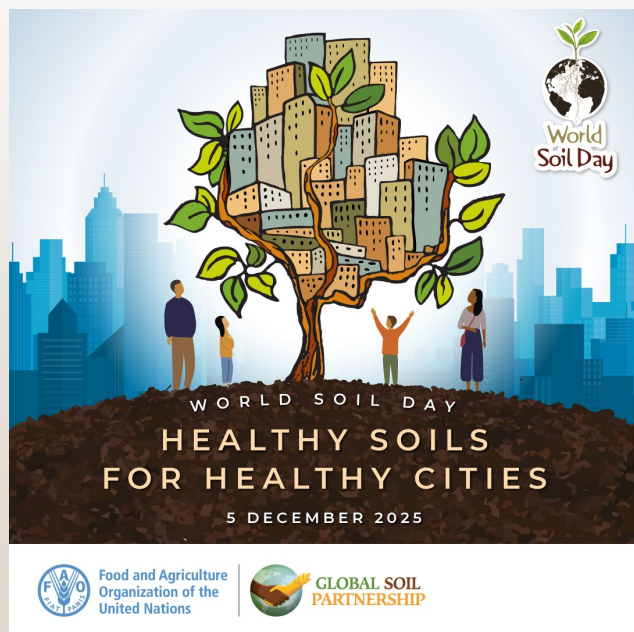
However, in the face of climate change and human activity, our soils are being degraded. Erosion disrupts the natural balance, reducing water infiltration and availability for all forms of life, and decreasing the level of vitamins and nutrients in food.

Sustainable soil management practices, reduce erosion and pollution, and enhance water infiltration and storage. They also preserve soil biodiversity, improve fertility, and contribute to carbon sequestration, playing a crucial role in the fight against climate change.

But when we think about soil, we almost always associate it with the countryside and nature. We rarely stop to consider that urban soil is also fundamental.

This World Soil Day 2025 focuses on urban landscapes with the theme "Healthy Soils for Healthy Cities." Beneath asphalt, buildings, and streets lies soil that, if permeable and vegetated, helps absorb rainwater, regulate temperature, store carbon, and improve air quality. But when it's sealed with cement, it loses these functions, making cities more vulnerable to flooding, overheating, and pollution.

Therefore, this day invites everyone—from policymakers to citizens—to rethink urban spaces from the ground up, to build greener, more resilient, and healthier cities.



## Get the message across!

FAO's website is full of initiatives and materials to raise awareness and spread the message of this observance on different platforms. Find out about a multitude of worldwide events related to the importance of healthy soils.

<https://www.fao.org/world-soil-day/en/>

## Beavers Celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 310 Law

*Editorial Note: The photos and words for this story come from Radley "Rad" Watkins, Executive Director of the Missoula CD.*

Working for a conservation district in Montana is a little different than in any other state in the country. In Montana conservation districts have regulatory authority, as well as an obligation to educate, provide technical assistance, and enter into cost-sharing agreements with landowners looking to promote conservation features on their land. Here, conservation districts are also in charge of overseeing the Montana Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act of 1975, also known as the 310 Law. The 310 Law requires anyone who is doing work that could impact or alter a stream or its banks, including the riparian buffer (the highly diverse area between a stream and drier upland areas), to get a permit before such work begins. There is one exception: beavers.

Beavers are the original architects of the river. They harvest vegetation in the riparian area, dig into the banks, and dam whole streams—all activities requiring a 310 permit. Landowners who want to have a manicured bank are often frustrated that beavers' work gets done and they don't need a 310 permit.

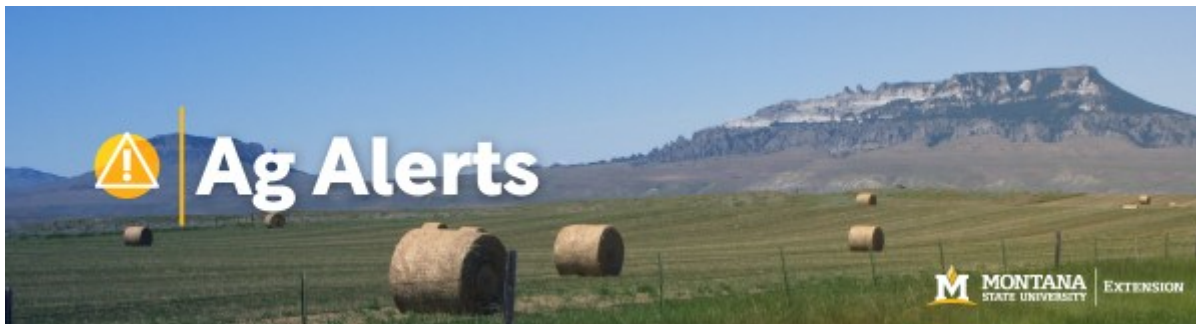
Sometimes I joke with these landowners complaining about beavers and their unpermitted work, and let them know that we take such violations very seriously. In fact, sometimes the beaver activities are punishable by death. Of course, not by the conservation districts; even with landowner violators—where we do have the ability to levy fines up to \$5,000 a day for unpermitted activities—we try to work with people to have them restore nature before we take punitive measures. The poor beavers are not always so lucky.

All that being said, restoration ecologists are emulating the beaver more and more. We are manipulating banks to activate floodplains and allow the ground to get saturated with water, only to release it slowly back to the creek in the hot summer during periods of low water. We are adding woody structures to rivers to create complexity of habitats, providing hiding places for fish and food for the aquatic invertebrates on which they feed. We even have a term for mimicking a beaver dam—BDA (beaver dam analogs)—which not only helps to put water into the soils for storage, but also traps sediment behind them, building up incised stream bottoms and creating splash pools of clean gravel. All of the beaver mimicry does require a 310 permit, even though the work is being done with the best of intentions. The law is regulation, and although the permit is free, it is another step to take for anyone working around a stream. Well, anyone, except beavers.

So this year, the 50th anniversary of the 310 Law, let's celebrate what nature does. Let's stop trying to control the world around us and literally go with the flow and let things rewild a bit. We don't need to clear our riparian areas to make lawns and then spend our weekends mowing those lawns—in fact, that is illegal. Let's enjoy watching the wild around us and learn about the ecosystem services that land provides. It is good to be industrious, but let's leave that riparian grooming to the work of the busy beaver.

*\*This was originally published in the National Wildlife Federation's Montana Beaver Working Group May/June 2025 Newsletter.*





## End of Cycle Credit Opportunities Offered to Private Applicators in Northcentral Montana

The Montana State University Extension Pesticide Education Program (MSU PEP) would like to announce multiple private applicator end of cycle credit opportunities for pesticide applicators in need of credits within private applicator training (PAT) District 3. Montana private applicators in PAT District 3 need six credits prior to the deadline of December 31, 2025, to avoid losing their pesticide certification. PAT District 3 includes Glacier, Toole, Pondera, Teton, Cascade, Chouteau, Liberty, Hill and Blaine counties (Fig. 1). Applicators can view their credit information online by entering their last and first name or license number. There are online courses, webinars and on-site trainings available for applicators requiring more private applicator credits.



Figure 1. Montana counties within Private Applicator Training District 3.

### Onsite Opportunities within Private Applicator Training District 3

*Events sponsored by MSU are marked with an \*.*

- \*December 4. Fort Benton. Initial Private Applicator Training. Ag Center, 1205 20th Street. Topics include IPM, pesticide safety, private applicator license, reading the label, calibration, environmental fate, and pesticide laws. **6 PA credits.** No fee. Register in advance by December 3rd by contacting the Chouteau County Extension Office at (406) 622-3751 or [tyler.lane@montana.edu](mailto:tyler.lane@montana.edu)
- December 10. Helena. Fall Recertification. Montana Wild Center, 2668 Broadwater Avenue. Topics include database and regulatory updates, soil health, spill response, weed ID, roadside management, and noxious weed updates. **4 PA credits.** \$30 fee. Contact Beth Thomas to register at (406) 444-3732 or [beth.thomas@mt.gov](mailto:beth.thomas@mt.gov), register online.

Continued on next page.

- \*December 16. Havre. Precision Ag Workshop: Emerging Technologies and On-Farm Experiences. Hill County 4-H Chuckwagon, 1676 US-2. Topics include variable rate application, targeted spray applications, and virtual fencing. **2 PA credits**. No fee. For more information contact Ricardo Pinto (406) 994-6374 or [ricardo.pinto@montana.edu](mailto:ricardo.pinto@montana.edu).

## Webinar Opportunities

An alternative to attending on-site programs are live webinars delivered to individuals attending online from their home or office. You must be present for all attendance checks to obtain pesticide education credits for these events. *Events sponsored by MSU are marked with an \**.

- \*December 4. 12:00 to 1:00 PM (MST). MSU Extension Seminar. The Status of Precision Agriculture in Montana. 1 PA credit. Register [online](#) or contact Amy Bowser (406) 994-5178 or [amy.bowser@montana.edu](mailto:amy.bowser@montana.edu).
- \*December 18. 12:00 - 1:00 PM (MST). MSU Extension Webinar. Pesticide Storage and the Montana Pesticide Disposal and Recycling Program. 1 PA credit. Register [online](#) or contact Amy Bowser at (406) 994-5178 or [amy.bowser@montana.edu](mailto:amy.bowser@montana.edu).

## Online Courses

Online courses consisting of modules and a corresponding quiz can be taken at any time from your office or home for credits. There are many online courses available for private applicator credits (usually 1) over a variety of pesticide education topics.

Navigate to the [mtplants Montana Department of Agriculture \(MDA\) course locator](#) and select 'Online.' Select the course you are interested in and follow the instructions. For more information or questions contact the MDA Pesticide Program at (406) 444-3144 or [agr@mt.gov](mailto:agr@mt.gov).

## End of Cycle Instructions

Each private applicator in District 3 should have received a MDA pesticide license renewal letter by email on November 10th, while the hard copy renewal letters will arrive via US post the third week of November for those not providing emails to MDA. Applicators who have not received a renewal letter by December 7, 2025 should contact their [local MSU Extension PAT Coordinator](#) or the MDA Licensing Program, Kyra Allison-Wright, (406) 444-3691 ([k.allison-wright@mt.gov](mailto:k.allison-wright@mt.gov); (406) 444-3691). Applicators who have accumulated six or more private applicator credits or who passed a closed book exam in the last year of the cycle should sign the renewal letter and return to the MDA with the \$60 license fee.

## For More Information

Contact your [PAT Coordinator](#) for more information regarding other last chance programs in your area, or to assess your private applicator credits. For any other pesticide education question contact Cecil Tharp, Pesticide Education Specialist, at the MSU Extension Pesticide Education Program office (406-994-5067, [ctharp@montana.edu](mailto:ctharp@montana.edu)). Cecil Tharp, PhD [ctharp@montana.edu](mailto:ctharp@montana.edu)

Please reach out to me with any questions. I know there has been some confusion about the issuing of renewal letters and if they are coming by e-mail or mail. I would suggest that people check junk e-mail folders, just in case the MDA sent renewal notices that way, as they have with some people.

Thanks.

*Jesse*

Jesse Fulbright MSU Liberty County Extension Agent

Office-406-759-5625



Glacier Processing Meat Cooperative, Montana Farmers Union & Mission West Community Development Partners present:

# “Know Your CO-OP”

Gather with fellow MFU members, friends and local producers, for lunch, and presentations on the value of cooperatives. Meet the member owners of Glacier Processing Meat Processing Cooperative, and learn about membership that makes a difference.

Friday, December 12, 2025  
Sanders County Pavilion  
12 - 3pm



## MONTANA FARMERS UNION

# 2026

# Women's Conferences

Join us for a day of networking, learning and empowerment at the Women's Conferences!




JAN 31ST-FEB 1ST



FEBRUARY 6TH-8TH

## SAVE THE DATES!

 [montanafarmersunion.com](http://montanafarmersunion.com)

# CoCoRaHS November 2025 precipitation report



## November-Normal Moisture

November moisture averaged out close to normal across Liberty County, but there was wide variation between the wettest and driest areas. The average was 0.59 inch or 7 percent higher than the monthly normal of 0.54 inch. Skierkas reported the most at 1.54 inch while Wolerys and Tempels measured the least at 0.18 inch. For the 2026 water year which started October 1, the county total is 1.01 inch or 74 percent of the normal 1.37 inch. Measurable rain was reported by observers an average of 5 days during the month.

The early season mountain snowpack for the Marias River drainage is at 94 percent of normal. The Drought Monitor worsened during November and currently shows severe drought across Liberty County.

Temperatures averaged 6 degrees above normal in Chester and 3 degrees above normal in Joplin during November. The warmest day was November 1st with many locations getting into the lower 70s. A few subzero mornings ended November, with Chester getting down to 23 degrees below zero on the 30th for the coldest. According to the USBR, at the end of November, Tiber Reservoir was holding 93 percent of normal volume. The reservoir level was nearly steady during the month, but was still nearly 4 feet below normal.

For December, NOAA's Climate Prediction Center is calling for temperatures to average near normal with above normal precipitation. It appears most of December's precipitation could occur during the first half of the month. December precipitation is typically 1/3 to 1/2 inch.

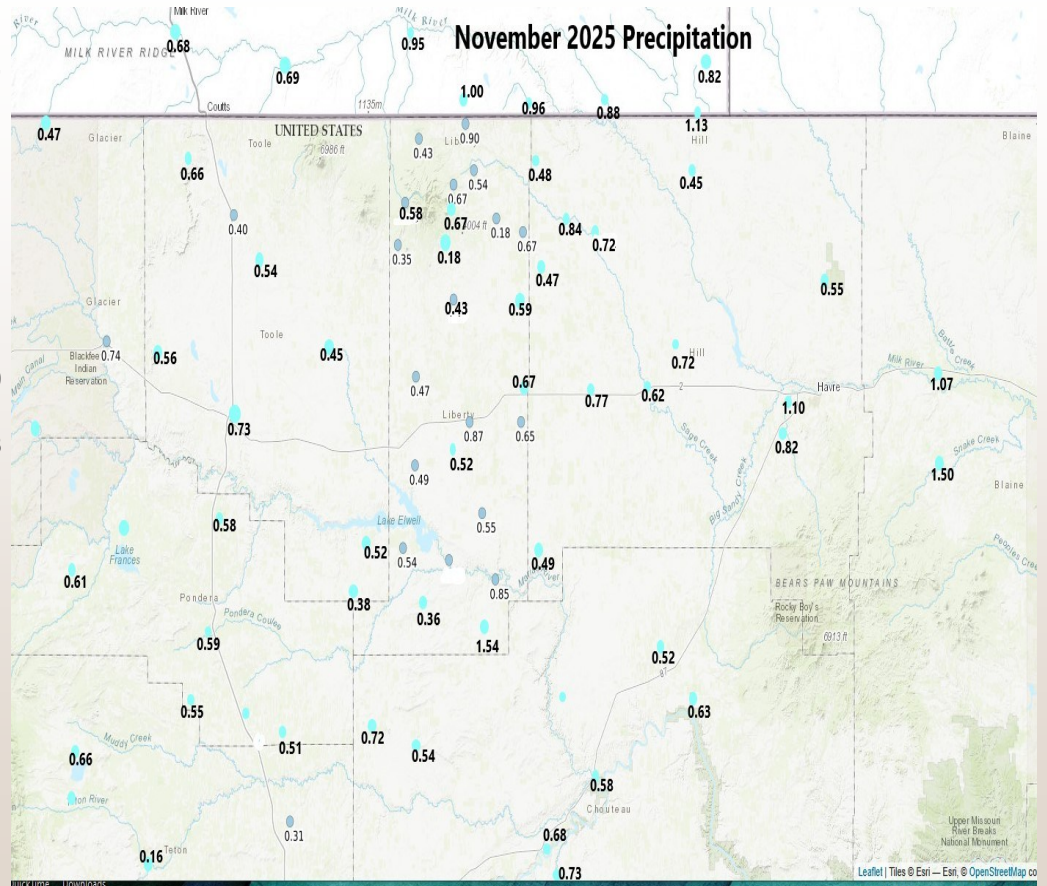
More information about CoCoRaHS is available at [cocorahs.org](http://cocorahs.org) or by calling the Liberty County CoCoRaHS Coordinator at 406-759-9157 or emailing [dennish@agweathermedia.com](mailto:dennish@agweathermedia.com).

Soil data is provided by the Montana Climate Office

(<https://climate.umt.edu/>)

Station	NOV	NORM	PCT
Tiber Dam 12SE Skierka	1.54	0.50	308
Sage Cr Col 4N Lybeck	0.90	0.52	173
Chester B. Kammerzell	0.87	0.52	167
Tiber Dam 11ESE Cole	0.85	0.50	170
Joplin 18N Wood	0.67	0.48	140
Sage Cr Col 4SW Dafoe	0.67	0.58	116
Sage Cr Col 6SW Hawks	0.67	0.67	100
Joplin 4S Dahinden	0.65	0.54	120
Joplin 11N May	0.59	0.49	120
Whitlash 4SE Thompson	0.58	0.66	88
Chester 11S Osterman	0.55	0.51	108
Sage Cr Col 1SE Woods	0.54	0.51	106
Tiber Dam 6W Leach	0.54	0.52	104
Chester 5SW-K.Kammerzell	0.52	0.52	100
Lothair 3SE Violet	0.49	0.52	94
Tiber 7NW Fenger	0.47	0.53	89
Chester 14N Hendrickson	0.43	0.54	80
Whitlash 6NE Engstrom	0.43	0.70	61
Tiber Dam 8S Buffington	0.36	0.50	72
Whitlash 8S Wickum	0.35	0.62	56
Sage Cr Col 8SE Tempel	0.18	0.52	35
Hill 4E Wolery	0.18	0.57	32

**Average 0.59 0.54 107**





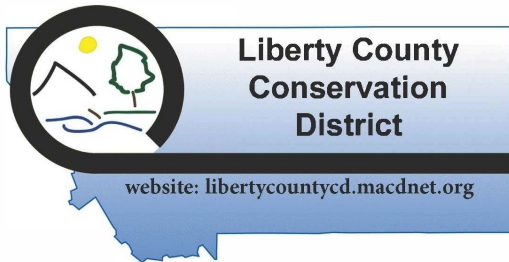
# LCCD Website

The Liberty County Conservation District has a website. This website highlights knowledge of the conservation district and what we can do for you. It includes **monthly meeting minutes**, information about **310 permits** with an online platform for applying for a permit, the **LCCD Cost Share Program** with instructions and a fillable PDF application and Land Management Plan, **Newsletters**, past and present, and pictures of the current board of Supervisors with contact information.

Below is the link and we hope you will check out the website.

[libertycountycd.macdnet.org](http://libertycountycd.macdnet.org)

\*\*\*\*\*



## ***Did you know that LCCD has a Cost Share program?***

Liberty County CD will consider funding projects up to a maximum amount of \$2500 under the

Following categories:

- Stream/Riparian/Irrigation
- Weed Management
- Pasture Improvement
- Urban Natural Resources
- Tree Plantings

Please see the cost share instructions document on our website, for a more complete list of eligible projects.

The Cost Share instructions on the website have a more complete list of eligible projects.

Applicants must reside within Liberty County CD's jurisdictional boundary.

Applicants are accepted on a rolling basis and must be submitted to the LCCD Board of Supervisors to be approved.

All questions about the Liberty County Conservation District's Cost Share Program can be directed to Patty via email - [libertycountycd@gmail.com](mailto:libertycountycd@gmail.com) or phone 406-759-5778 ext. 102.

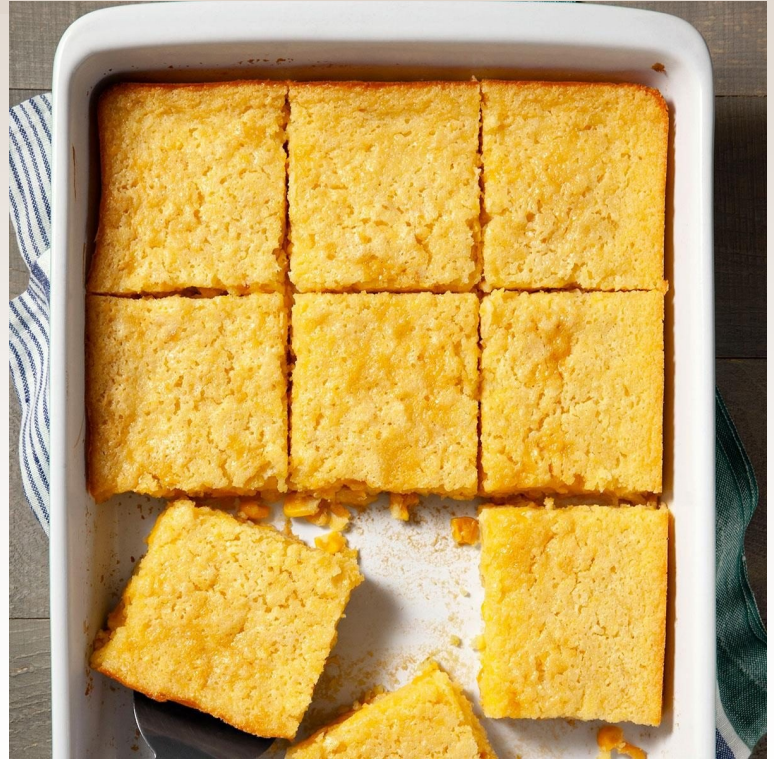
Applications and information can be downloaded from the LCCD website at

**[libertycountycd.macdnet.org](http://libertycountycd.macdnet.org)**

# Corn Pudding

## Ingredients:

- **1/2 cup butter, softened**
- **1/2 cup sugar**
- **2 large eggs, room temperature**
- **1 cup sour cream**
- **1 package (8-1/2 ounces) cornbread/ muffin mix**
- **1/2 cup 2% milk**
- **1 can (15-1/4 ounces) whole kernel corn, drained**
- **1 Can 014-3/4 ounces) cream-style corn**



**Preheat oven to 325°.**

**In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes.**

**Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in sour cream.**

**Gradually add muffin mix alternately with milk.**

**Fold in corn.**

**Pour into a greased 3-qt. baking dish or 13x9-in. baking pan.**

**Bake, uncovered, until set and lightly browned, 45-50 minutes.**

**Happy Eating!!**

