



The Explorer

The Official Newsletter of the Lewis & Clark Conservation District

Volume 59, Issue 2

Spring 2020

New Faces on the CD Board

Long-time supervisor Scott Blackman, retired at the February board meeting. Scott started on the Board in 1994, so has certainly put in a lot of volunteer time over the years! Scott's area (Craig south to the North Hills) was always pretty busy with 310 permits. Over the years, he barbecued at a number of CD events and has always participated in the natural resource issues facing landowner in Lewis & Clark County. The Board will certainly miss Scott and appreciates his time over the years.

Also at the February meeting, the board appointed John Baucus as Supervisor in the same area. John brings a lot of experience with stream project permitting, ranching (cattle and sheep) and other pertinent experience to the Board and we greatly look forward to working with him!

USDA Service Centers Open for Business by Phone Appointment Only

U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Centers are encouraging visitors to take proactive protective measures to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.

The Helena, Lewis & Clark County USDA Service Center will continue to be open for business by phone appointment only and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While our program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with our producers by phone, and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency are required to call to schedule a phone appointment.

Conservation District personnel are working remotely, but stop into the office weekly to pick up mail. Please contact us as noted below.

- Farm Service Agency (FSA): (406) 449-5000 extension 2
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): (406) 449-5000 extension 3
- Lewis & Clark Conservation District (LCCD): (406) 449-5000 extension 5

Employees may also be contacted by email at the following email address:

FSA

Kathy Breker: kathy.breker@usda.gov

Nina Fonk: nina.fonk@usda.gov

NRCS

Ryan Mar: ryan.mar@usda.gov (moving to another office April 13.)

Jason Saari: jason.saari@usda.gov (beginning April 13)

Sean Clancy: sean.clancy@usda.gov

Paula Gunderson: paula.gunderson@usda.gov

LCCD

Chris Evans: lccd@mt.net

Online services are available to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the farmers.gov portal where producers can view USDA farm loan information and payments and view and track certain USDA program applications and payments. Online NRCS services are available to customers through the [Conservation Client Gateway](#). Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance, and electronically sign documents. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at farmers.gov/sign-in. For the most current updates on available services and Service Center status visit farmers.gov/coronavirus.

A Story About Moose F403

By Supervisor Sarah Howe-Cobb



Photo credit FWP Jesse Newby

around praying for it not to be a grizzly. A collared moose stood 20 feet from me with her month-old calf.

Being from New Hampshire my thoughts were 'oh, this can be bad'...so everyone was told to stay still and be quiet. The moose and calf sauntered right by us without even a glance. Palpable relief by all and we teased Michaela that she had a blessing moose for her wedding.

Forward to 2016 and another wedding at beautiful Scoutana setting, and the bride relayed another story of this collared moose going through camp with her twin calves in tow. We stretched a long yarn for her over the depth of this blessing which ended with giggles and awe at the sighting.

Fast forward again to the present. A month ago, in 2020, Jesse Newby, an FWP wildlife research technician studying moose, called to see if they could land a helicopter in the Scoutana area to check on the moose there. Naturally, Jesse had to hear these stories of this particular wedding moose. I discovered her official number was F403 in the study. There is a wonderful

We have to go back to June 2015 when our daughter Michaela Howe-Cobb was getting ready to marry Mike Whitmore. We were at Scoutana setting up for the wedding the day prior to the wedding. The tents were up and the gals were helping with the tables/chairs and general organization as the guys had gone to the Buckhorn Bar in Augusta to 'get us lunch'.

I was in front of 8 young women when Michaela's friend Brittany said, "Sarah "pointing behind me...her eyes were huge. I took a deep breath as I turned

article "Solving Montana's Moose Mysteries" by Tom Dickson in the Sept/October 2019 issue of Montana Outdoors which details the moose study that Jesse Newby has been working on. Jesse promised to send pictures of this particular moose to me.

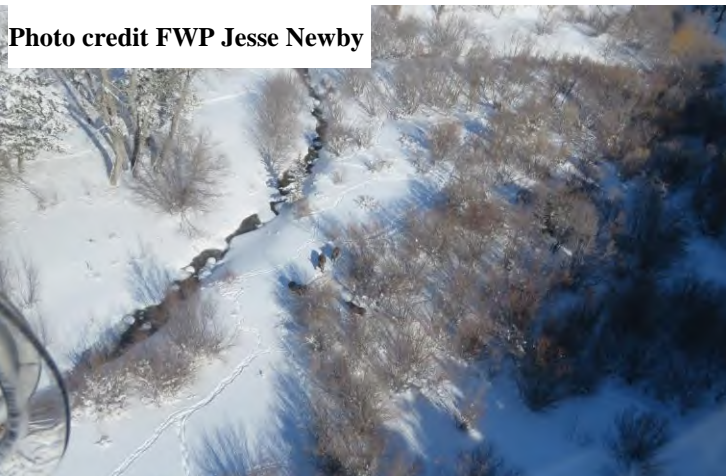


Photo credit FWP Jesse Newby

A few days later Jesse called us back. He confessed he was tired of the numbers associated with the moose he studied and had thought about naming them-and he loved the stories I told of her sighting. So suddenly moose F403 has had a name christening and been renamed as 'Michaela' the Moose. She is officially the first moose named on record in Montana by FWP. (according to Jesse).

How cool is this...a wedding blessing moose at Scoutana named after our daughter. We wrote Michaela about this and did not hear from her for 2 weeks. I told her dad this could be a bad sign but when we finally spoke, she had been super busy at work and had been delighted with the naming. Yes!

As an update, Jesse did collar another moose in the area in 2020 so he will have fun naming all the other moose in his research data. But if you are taking a drive and

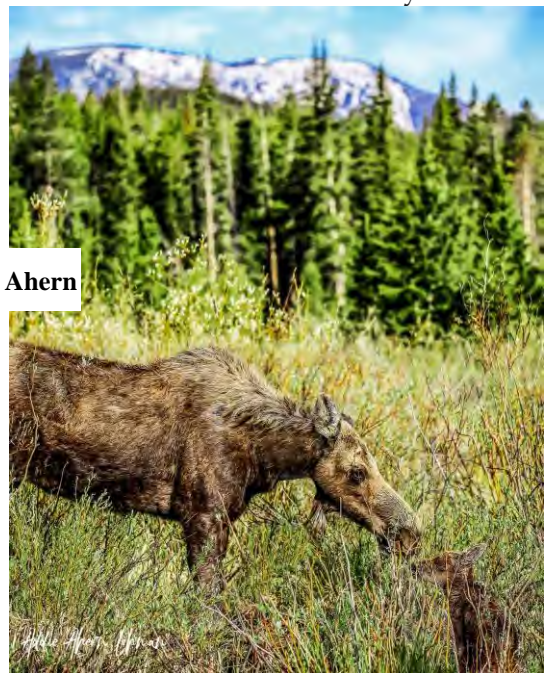


Photo credits Addi Ahern

happen to see a moose in Scoutana vicinity on Beaver/Willow Road, it may be Michaela the Moose with her blessings to bestow.

The saga of 'Michaela the Moose' continues on...I was at the Double Arrow vet clinic in Choteau, MT. and their worker and photographer Addie Ahern told me about her photos of 'Michaela the Moose' and how she has seen her for years up Benchmark.

Addie loves moose too! Addie sent me these photos yesterday taken a few years back-she photoshopped the collar off in one of them. These are marvelous...and I hope they bring a smile to your hearts and renewal of hope for all of us. Thank you Addie Ahern!



Are YOU Living On The Bank???

A new website was recently launched for landowners who live near rivers and streams, or for those who are considering buying property with rivers and streams.

Living on the Bank has been a collaborative project with a number of Conservation Districts, the Yellowstone and Missouri River Conservation District Councils and the DNRC. The site provides information to help landowners protect and enjoy their property and includes guidelines on:

- Buying land and selecting construction sites
- Floods, erosion and fire
- Property improvements
- Protecting the land investment
- Stream dynamics (not as scary as it sounds!)
- Invasive species
- Permitting
- And more!

For more information go to www.livingonthebank.org.

SPONSOR DRIVE FOR 2020

If you or your business would like to be a sponsor for the Conservation District, please contact Chris Evans at 406-449-5000 ext. 5. Sponsor contributions run \$25, \$100, \$250 or \$500+ per year and are tax deductible. Our Sponsors contribute to keep our quarterly newsletter and our education programs running. With the sponsorships come advertising in each of our newsletters as well as on our District Sponsors page on our Website:

<https://lccd.mt.nacdn.net/index.php/district-sponsors/>.

District Report

The past quarter for the Lewis & Clark Conservation was a busy one with starting the new fiscal year. Planning and budgeting activities that were done in late 2019 were approved at the January board meeting. Please see the CD website at <http://lccd.mt.nacdn.net/index.php/ongoing-activities/cd-planning-local-work-group/> to view our 2020 Annual Plan of Operations.

So far in 2020 the 310 permit activity has been pretty quiet. We are anticipating that things will ramp up soon though. Please, as landowners, remember you need permits to do any work that affects the bed or banks of the streams on your property. In the meantime, CD staff has been busy doing “catch-up” work from the last two crazy years. Administrator Chris Evans attended an Area 6 Administrator’s meeting in Bozeman and learned about a Pollinator effort that has been going on in Area 5 (west of the mountains) that Area 6 may be getting on board with. If you are interested in creating a pollinator area, please contact us!

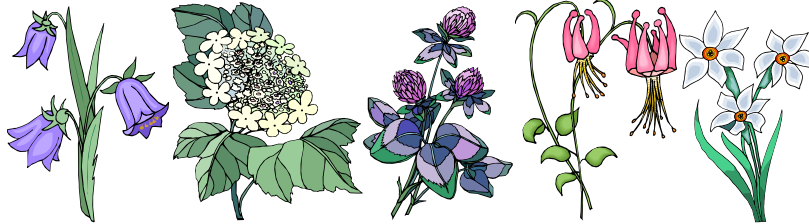
For the upcoming quarter, there are a number of plans that have been put on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Spokane Creek Restoration project near Keir Lane has had some survey work done and most of the permits are in place. Materials were ordered to complete the project this spring, but due to the need for social distancing, the project will be postponed to the fall, after the willows go dormant again.

Plans for Flood Awareness Day for our 13th season are up in the air, dependent upon whether the schools open in time and agency presenters are available to present.

Later in the summer, the CD is planning to host a riparian grazing seminar in late July in the Augusta area and Montana Youth Range Camp in early August in the Dearborn River area.

Wildflower Seed

The Conservation District has wildflower seed available to landowners. It is a mixture of native and non-native seed and costs \$35 per pound. For more information, contact the District office at 449-5000 ext. 5. If you are interested in the mix from Treasure State Seed out of Fairfield, Agri Feeds carries it.



SAVE THE DATE!

Montana
RANGELAND
RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DNRC

LEWIS & CLARK
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

TREASURE STATE
I ♥ RANGE
MONTANA - 20

Montana Youth Range Camp
August 3rd - 6th, 2020
C Bar N Ranch Augusta, MT

Hosted by Lewis & Clark Conservation District



LEWIS & CLARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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OFFICE STAFF

CHRIS EVANS	ADMINISTRATOR
SEAN CLANCY	NRCS AREA ENGINEER

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 If you prefer to get this newsletter via email, sign up at <http://lccd.mt.nacdnet.org/>

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To update your mailing address, contact Chris Evans at 406-449-5000 ext. 5 or email lccd@mt.net. If you would rather receive this via email, let me know!