



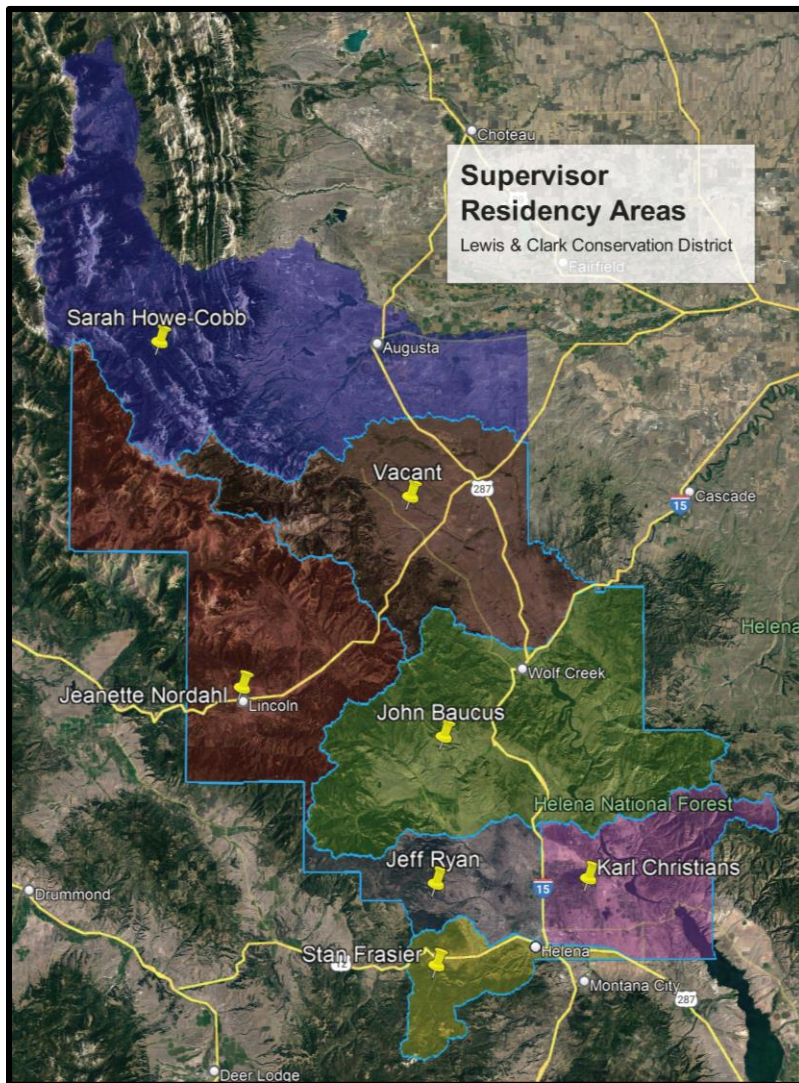
The Explorer

The Official Newsletter of the Lewis & Clark Conservation District

Volume 61, Issue 2

Spring 2022

CD Seeks New Supervisor for the Dearborn Watershed area!



The Lewis and Clark Conservation District is seeking a new Supervisor for the Board for the Dearborn River Watershed area. See map—the area marked “vacant”, in brown, is the position that we are recruiting for.

Lewis and Clark Conservation District has a residency ordinance, so Supervisors have to live within the area that they represent. If the appointed person is interested in continuing, they would run for election in the January to March 2024 time period and would run for a 2- or 4-year term.

General responsibilities of a Conservation District Supervisor:

- Identify local conservation needs
- Assist in developing programs to meet those needs
- Educate and inform landowners and operators, as well

- as the general public, local, state and federal legislators on conservation issues and programs
- Participate in site visits for stream permits in supervisor's area

Qualifications:

- An interest and background in conserving renewable natural resources
- Good communication skills

Benefits:

- Satisfaction in seeing conservation practices applied
- Interaction with others interested in natural resource conservation
- Input into local, state and federal conservation programs

Time required:

Attendance and participation in 12 scheduled board meetings, usually during the day, as well as any committee meetings, special meetings and events for an average of about 30 days per year. Mileage and expenses are reimbursable with the State rates.

Interested applicants may send a letter of intention to chris@lewisandclarkcd.org or to LCCD, 790 Colleen Street, Helena MT 59601.

Upcoming CD Events

Rain barrel Workshop- June 11th. This event will be at the Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds in the Rustic Shelters. The cost will be \$50/barrel and you may SAVE YOUR SEAT by paying in advance by going to the website where there is a link at <https://lewisandclarkcd.org/rain-barrel-workshop/>.

Summer Walk Series

STREAM STUDIES- Water in Action: <https://www.register-ed.com/events/view/178990>

Join Lewis and Clark Conservation District to explore the way water moves across and interacts with the landscape. We will be using an interactive tool called the Rolling Rivers Trailer, which is similar to a sandbox with moving water to demonstrate the mechanics of rivers like flooding and erosion. We will then compare the model against an actual stream to identify distinct parts of a river, how they are formed, and how they change over time. If time permits we will identify plant species which are commonly seen along streams.

For questions on this specific walk contact Jessica: jramirezbswc@gmail.com.

Meeting on: Thursday, June 23, 2022, 6:00pm - 7:00pm

Registration opens June 9, 2022

Located at: Ten Mile Creek Park, 1505 Williams Street, Helena, MT 59602

Wonders of Wetlands: <https://www.register-ed.com/events/view/178991>

Join Lewis and Clark Conservation District to discuss the importance of wetlands and the ecosystem services that they provide. We will be walking around the wetland and take a deeper look at wetland plants, wildlife, and ecological processes that occur here. Then we can discuss

ways to protect and conserve these resources. We will meet at the green gate by the bird blind and information sign. This walk is for students 3rd grade and up and will include uneven terrain, tall vegetation, and wet areas.

For questions about this specific walk contact Jessica: jramirezbswc@gmail.com

Meeting on: Thursday, July 21, 2022 6:00pm - 7:00pm

Registration opens July 7

Located at: Lake Helena, Helena, MT 59602

This is the link to the summer walk series webpage: <https://www.register-ed.com/programs/montana/241-summer-walk-series>

Lake Helena Willow Project-Part 1

Connor Mertz, LCCD Resource Technician

On the morning of March 5th, 20 volunteers met out in the northwest valley, braving the 20-degree weather and snow flurries to help harvest willow for the Lewis & Clark Conservation District's Lake Helena bank restoration project. Loppers in hand, these volunteers and LCCD staff gathered nearly 6000 willow stakes for this project. Slated to break ground this Spring, it will restore 700 ft of eroding bankline on the north shore of Lake Helena using a bioengineering technique known as a willow soil lift. This method uses vegetative root mass to reduce bank erosion caused annually by ice heaving and wave action. In contrast to rock stabilization methods (riprap), using willow for bank stabilization creates wildlife habitat and can help improve water quality. It's a win-win for everyone involved – landowners, wildlife, and fish.



The "after" of the 2021 project on Lake Helena

The technique has been gaining momentum on the north shore of Lake Helena, where landowners have reported losing multiple feet of shoreline to the lake each year. Last Spring, LCCD was involved with a similar project several properties to the west. The willow for this

project is establishing quickly and has gained the attention of other landowners in the area eager for solutions to protect their water front. Bank erosion is not only costly to landowners and their pocketbooks, but also to local water quality. Erosion along the lake shore and tributary streams that feed the lake is a major source of sediment pollution to Lake Helena and the greater upper Missouri River watershed, negatively impacting water quality for aquatic habitat, recreation, and irrigation. Reintroducing and protecting the riparian vegetation surrounding these water bodies is an effective way to protect water quality in the future.



Carroll College Students learning about the process from CD Chair, Jeff Ryan

A key to the success of these willow projects is community involvement. With the help of volunteers to harvest willow, the willow soil lift technique can be very cost-effective for landowners, especially in comparison to projects using rock riprap. In addition to the volunteer cutting day March 5th, an ecology class from Carroll College and a local church youth group also reached out to help harvest as well. In total over 60 volunteers got involved with the project, providing LCCD

with the opportunity to educate the community about our ongoing conservation work and to harvest the 14,000 willow cuttings required for the project. LCCD would like to give a big thanks to everyone involved! Also, thank you to Montana Conservation Corps for donating loppers for our volunteers and the Bagel Co in Helena for bagel and coffee donations.

Water Test Cost Share Program

The CD will reimburse landowners in Lewis and Clark County up to \$25 when they get their well water tested. Your first call should be to the Lewis and Clark County Water Quality Protection District at 406-457-8584 for recommendations on what tests would be best to run. They should also have test kits available from the Well-Educated program from MSU. Once you've gotten your results back, email a copy to us at chris@lewisandclarkcd.org or mail to LCCD, 790 Colleen Street, Helena MT 59601.

District Report

Chris Evans, District Administrator

In the first quart of 2022, the stream permitting workload has been a bit sluggish with only 7 new applications so far this year. Landowners are reminded that any work that affects

the bed or banks of a perennial stream in Montana is required to be permitted by the local Conservation District.

Jessica Ramirez, our Big Sky Watershed Corps member started her term in early January and has been busy working on our social media platforms, and other work for us, as well as working on projects for the Sun River Watershed Group.

The CD Board finalized their [strategic plan](#) for 2022-2026 early in 2022, as well as creating a separate Operations Plan for the District for 2022. The first quarter has largely been a lot of planning for spring and summer activities, many mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter.

LCCD and NRCS Field Office staff met with a number of key irrigators in the County in early February to discuss needed work on systems in the county, with the hope of helping them find funding sources for the projects. Any feedback from county landowners on any resource needs can be communicated to the Conservation District by calling or emailing Chris Evans, at 406-389-3884, or chris@lewisandclarkcd.org. We also have a new Resource Concern Survey on our website, or you can go [directly to the survey](#).

Connor Mertz and Jessica Ramirez both participated at the Helena Community Garden's Seed Swap at the Lewis and Clark Library in March. CD Administrator, Chris Evans, presented a webinar on Soils with the Lewis and Clark County Library in March. We are currently working with landowners to deliver free pollinator seed on a limited basis. We plan to apply for another grant later in 2022 to continue this program in future years. If you are interested in obtaining seed, contact Connor Mertz by email at connor@lewisandclarkcd.org.

PARTNER NEWS



(406) 389-3876.

NRCS

The Helena NRCS office would like to invite you to come see what some of our wildfire fuel reduction practices look like before, during, and after implementation. Join us Friday April 22nd at 1pm. Meeting location is at the junction of Highway 434 and Little Wolf Creek Rd (see map).

Please RSVP by Friday April 15th by email or phone to Rebecka Ayre, rebecka.ayre@usda.gov

Call FSA to Arrange to Report Crop Acres Including Grazing

Agricultural producers should make an appointment (after spring planting if applicable) to ensure acreage is reported before required deadlines. Farm Service Agency staff can provide assistance over the phone, by email, by scheduled office visits and through other digital tools.

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers, including livestock producers, must file an accurate crop acreage report by the applicable deadline for the crop. FSA staff is available to assist producers in completing acreage reports and providing maps.

The upcoming deadline for acreage certification is July 15, 2022, for crops such as **perennial forage (unless covered by NAP, which is due by April 15), annually spring seeded crops, Conservation Reserve Program, spring alfalfa seed, and any other crop not required to be reported by a previous deadline.** Crops not certified by the announced deadline for the crop may be subject to late-filing fees and verification.

To file a crop acreage report, you will need to provide:

- Crop and crop type or variety.
- Intended use of the crop.
- Number of acres of the crop.
- Map with approximate boundaries for the crop.
- Planting date(s).
- Producer shares.
- Irrigation practice(s).
- Acreage prevented from planting, when applicable.
- Other information as required.

Producers should also report crop acreage that has failed due to natural disaster, or they intended to plant, but were unable to plant due to natural disaster. Failed acreage must be reported before reseeding or destruction of the crop. Prevented planting acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA's Risk Management Agency. These reports are filed on FSA-576, Notice of Loss.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP-covered grazing crops is the earlier of April 15, 2022, or 15 calendar days before grazing. NAP-covered hay/forage crops must be reported the earlier of July 15, 2022, or 15 calendar days before harvesting of the crop begins.

Acreage Reporting Exceptions

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.

- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

More Information For questions, please contact the Lewis & Clark County FSA office at (406) 449-5000.



The Sun River Watershed Group has several fun events coming up this spring and summer. Please visit our website www.sunriverwatershed.org/events or contact tracy@sunriverwatershed.org for more information. We look forward to providing Lewis & Clark Conservation District partners with a project update later this year.

Gibson Weed Spray Day-June 1
Elk Creek Spray Day-June 8
Ford Creek Spray Day-June 9
Sun Canyon Spray Day-June 23

Lewis and Clark County Weed District

In the interest of landowners, subdivisions, and other groups with the cost of purchasing herbicides and insects to control noxious weeds, the Lewis and Clark Weed District is offering a Cost Share Program in which **(50%)** of the chemical and insect costs will be reimbursed (Landowners with 24.99 acres and below may be reimbursed up to **\$250.00**, landowners with at least 25.00 acres or more may be reimbursed up to **\$500.00**) by the Lewis and Clark County Weed District, as long as there is funding in the budget. For more information, contact the Lewis & Clark County Weed District at 406-447-8372.

*Check out our website at www.lewisandclarkcd.org. We're also on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).
If you prefer to get this newsletter via email, sign up at www.lewisandclarkcd.org or give us a call at 406-449-5000 x5.*



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To update your mailing address, contact Chris Evans at 406-389-3884 or email chris@lewisandclarkcd.org. If you would rather receive this via email, let me know!