

# Lewis & Clark Conservation District

## 2022 Annual Report



LOCALLY-LED  
CONSERVATION  
2022 BY  
THE  
NUMBERS

**964 PEOPLE REACHED**

Through 17 education events hosted or attended by the Lewis & Clark Conservation District



~1 ACRE

Pollinator habitat planted through wildflower seed program



**\$102,600**

In grants sponsored to directly support Conservation District programs or partner projects



64 VOLUNTEERS

Involved in community restoration efforts



**28 PERMITS**



Administered under the Montana Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act, known as the 310 Law

**620 FT RIPARIAN HABITAT**



Improved along the north shore of Lake Helena



**75 YEARS**

Common Sense, Locally-Led  
Conservation

### Education & Outreach

It was a busy year on the Education & Outreach side of the Conservation District Activities, thanks in large part to our Big Sky Watershed Corps Member, Jessica Ramirez and our Resource Technician, Connor Mertz. The CD hosted a Helena area Rain Barrel Workshop in June involving over 30 community members,



We also participated in the Summer Education Walk Series led by the Helena C.O.R.E. group this year, with two walks focusing on Stream Health, and Wetlands.

The CD sent 3 teams to the state Envirothon in Great Falls, and conducted a project tour for legislators on the Water Policy Interim Committee to look at a couple of bank restoration projects that we've done in the past few years.

The CD participated in the Ag Day, with the Rolling Rivers Trailer, presented on Soil Health for the Lewis and Clark Library, and provided a Watershed Education Day with the Rolling Rivers Trailer at the Lincoln School.

The district maintains an extensive [website](#) with resources for large and small acreage landowners, with topics ranging from stream permitting, to pollinators and more. We also are active on [Facebook](#).

Our district collaborates with the rest of the districts in MACD's Area 6 to provide free pollinator

seed with technical support, to landowners in Lewis and Clark Conservation District. To date this program has engaged over 150 residents in the County, and in 2022, about 1 full acre of seed was distributed. We will continue participating in that program in 2023 and beyond.

The district participated in the Helena Community Gardens Seed Swap as well as seed swaps in Lincoln and Augusta. We also were at the Gold Country Master Gardener Symposium. We have done plant materials consultations, stream consultations and have a new [Resource Concern Survey](#) live on our website, receiving over 50 responses this year.



### **Projects & Programs**

Bashin' Trash 22, the annual Missouri River cleanup, was hosted collaboratively with the Lake Helena Watershed Group, Sun River Watershed Group and Cascade Conservation District. Teams broke up sections of the Missouri River from Canyon Ferry through Great Falls for a one-day community driven trash cleanup. LCCD and the Lake Helena Watershed Group had 3 clean-up sites.

The Selma Held Community Garden completed their Pollinator project with our sponsored grant and assistance. They had a presentation with the State Entomologist and designated a section of the garden permanent pollinator habitat with a wildflower plot and pollinator-friendly native shrubs.

LCCD continued its Lake Helena Willow Soil lift work in 2022 by assisting 2 landowners on the north shore improve 620 ft of riparian habitat through bank restoration projects. In addition, the Spokane Creek restoration project was completed to address continued streambank erosion on that section of the stream following severe flooding in 2018.



Lake Helena project 2022, Before and After



Spokane Creek Project, Before and After



In 2022, the CD gave out 2 Cost Share Program awards to assist the restoration efforts on Lake Helena's shoreline. We continued our well water test cost share program with around 20 tests in 2022. The CD hosted 4 local work group meetings with NRCS, to assess whether changes to our plans should be made. At one of the sessions, the Elk/Smith Collaborative Fuels Reduction Project was floated by the USFS in the Augusta area. That project will be ongoing in 2023, in collaboration with the NRCS, the USFS and DNRC and to address forest fuel issues within the Forest Service boundary and on adjacent private land. This collaborative effort with help federal, state and private funds directed for fuels mitigation have a greater impact.

### **Stream Permitting & Riparian Health**

Conservation Districts are responsible for enforcing the "310 Law", the Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act of 1975. In Lewis and Clark CD, we try to use site inspections as a "value added" feature, to improve communication with landowners/applicants and provide a better understanding for the rationale behind the law. In 2022, the district reviewed 28 applications, 2 emergencies and 10 complaints. In 2021, the district started requiring verification of completed projects and we've continued that in 2022. The applicant is asked to submit a signed verification that they project was completed, with photos, so that the district can follow up with applicants as needed and document successful projects.

The district continues to participate in the Montana Joint Stream Restoration Committee, working with other organizations to address road blocks that hinder otherwise sound restoration projects. The floodplain permit is front and center in these concerns and in 2022 the district brought a resolution to the MACD convention to request their assistance in getting the state DNRC floodplain division to work with us, as well as taking our resolution to the National Association of Conservation Districts. Time will tell what that will accomplish.

Another group that we work with is the Living on the Bank group, comprised of the Missouri River CD Council and a number of different Conservation Districts. This group has created a website, [livingonthebank.com](http://livingonthebank.com), to provide state residents with information about maintaining and improving the quality of their property, especially related to living near streams and rivers.

### **Capacity Building**

In 2022, the CD gained a new supervisor, Skyler Van Dyken from the Dearborn area. Skyler is the grandson of long-time supervisor Gary Murphy, and we're excited to have him onboard. We co-hosted a Big Sky Watershed Corps member with the Sun River Watershed Group, Jessica Ramirez, who was a great addition to the CD team! She created valuable content and educational resources that we can utilize for years to come on our social media platforms and on our website.

In the summer of 2022, we started exploring the possibility of creating a Conservation Education Center in the northern part of the valley. We are currently in negotiations with the landowner of the property the center may be located at some point. This is an exciting time for us!

### **2023**

Going into 2023, we will be revising some of our strategic plan items and our operations plan for 2023. Our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as a Conservation District takes place in 2023, so we will be having a number of special events in person and online that will highlight our history and hopes for the future. We are hosting a new Big Sky Watershed Corps member for 2023, and she will be a large part of those plans.

One of our planned events for 2023 is a Day on the Range, either in Lincoln or Augusta, to look at a broad range of resource concerns, including soil health, weeds, water quality and pollinator habitat.

**LCCD Supervisors**

Chairman, Jeff Ryan  
Vice Chair, Karl Christians  
Treasurer, Jeanette Nordahl  
John Baucus  
Stan Frasier  
Skyler Van Dyken  
Sarah Howe-Cobb

**Associate Supervisors**

David Martin

**LCCD Staff**

Administrator, Chris Evans  
Resource Tech, Connor Mertz  
Big Sky Watershed Corps, Jessica Ramirez

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Evans  
District Administrator  
Lewis & Clark Conservation District

**Current CD Sponsors**

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**If your organization would like to sponsor our programs, please give us a call at 406-389-3884**