

OUR MISSION

We will provide an open forum in which all interested parties may work in a collaborative effort to sustain our rural quality of life and protect and enhance our natural resources. We are committed to research and educating our Valley residents and the public about our Watershed and the steps we can take to preserve and maintain the integrity of the river, the land and the beauty of our Valley. We will endeavor to bring together public, private and government resources, funding and grants to achieve our goals.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Noel Keogh, V. Chairman
Theo Yanzick, Secretary
Judy Bostedt, Secretary
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JO Hash
Tom Kircher
Mike Lorash
Sandra Peck
Doug Robinette
Tim Schaff
Olaf Sherwood

Lindsey Clark,
SVWC Coordinator

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Stillwater Valley Watershed Council



Message from the Coordinator, Lindsey Clark

For this installment of our Winter 2012 Newsletter we are going to switch things up a bit. Our Chairman, Bill, is dealing with a few broken fingers and is hopped up on pain meds at the moment so he is in no shape to complete a sentence much less write a coherent Chairman's Report. I will give it a shot.....

These past six months have been very busy and productive for the SVWC, as you will read throughout the newsletter. Although the time has flown by we have been very successful at setting goals and accomplishing those goals.

educational afternoon held back in June was a great hit. The Small Landowner Spray Project took place the end of July and went off without a hitch, for the most part. Our Annual BBQ and Auction Fundraiser was held the middle of August and for those of you who could not attend, missed out on some great roast pig, camaraderie and one of a kind auction items.

As far as fundraising goes, a couple grants were completed in 2011 that focused on noxious weed control within the Watershed. Four new grants were recently applied for and now we are playing the "wait and see" game. We also have a few grants coming down the pike in 2012 that will focus more on water qual-

ity and riverbank restoration.

2012 is starting out with a bang for the SVWC. Don't miss out on our Annual Meeting and Potluck held on January 18th, the agenda is enclosed. In addition to a great lineup, we will be electing a few new board members. If you are interested please fill out the form and return it to me. The Annual Meeting will also be a great time to renew your membership!

On February 8th we are hosting a Water Policy Seminar in Absarokee. This is a topic that affects many of us, whether you may realize it or not. More information is enclosed.

Hope to see you at some of our events. Happy New Year!

Lindsey

The
Water-
shed,
Mine tour
a n d
DON'T FORGET—SVWC's
ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK JANUARY 18TH!

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 18th—NRCS Corral Relocation Informational Meeting

January 18th—Annual Meeting & Potluck at the Fishtail Community Center

3:00 pm Board of Director Meeting

5:00 pm Council Meeting

February 8th — Water Policy Seminar at The Cobblestone, Absarokee

1:30—5:00 pm, Agenda Enclosed

Spring 2012—Private Pesticide Applicator Training, Absarokee

Stillwater Valley Watershed Council

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How the SVWC got its start.....

Since 2006, the Derby Fire impact zone has gained attention by landowners, agency personnel and concerned sportspersons and thus became the catalyst for the development of the Stillwater Valley Watershed Council (SVWC). This council was established when volunteers and other concerned citizens realized that the impacts of the Derby Fire reached beyond the burn zone and included adjacent ranch and public lands.

The SVWC has expanded from the original goals of noxious weed control to looking at the entire watershed and taking a comprehensive approach to the cause and effect of land changes. This has resulted in increased participation by government agencies, organizations and private land owners (both large



and small lot owners) along the Stillwater River and its tributaries as well as the formation of numerous committees within the Watershed.

Thus far our focus has been:

- Noxious weed control
- Improving the quality and supply of water
- Mitigating fire by improving the health of our forest

2011, A Year in Review

As 2011 progressed, the Watershed Council set some lofty goals to accomplish by the end of the year. Among them were to:

- ◆ Host a Watershed tour and educational day in conjunction with an above ground tour of Stillwater Mining Company.
- ◆ Utilize funds from a grant received through the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for noxious weed control projects.
- ◆ Continue the Small Landowner Weed Control Project, originally started up-river with the Stillwater River Weed Management Area, and focus on weed control along the Stillwater River from Nye to Beehive.
- ◆ Team with the NRCS to host a corral relocation tour, addressing ways to solve livestock runoff from handling facilities.
- ◆ Host a fundraising auction and pig roast to raise money for the continuation of SVWC's projects and goals.



The helicopter on its way to take care of noxious weeds, cost-share provided by RMEF.



JOIN TODAY AND YOU TOO CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CAMARADERIE OFFERED THROUGH THE SVWC !!



Spray crews gather for the Small Landowner Spray Project



2011 in Review: The positive impacts of cost-share on weeds in our Watershed

ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK FOUNDATION:

In 2010 grant funds totaling \$50,000 were secured and to be used to treat noxious weeds throughout the Watershed's boundaries, with a focus on the Derby Fire area. Much of the problems with noxious weeds erupted due to the aftermath of the 2006 Derby Fire (original grant area identified on page 7).

At the completion of this grant in July of 2011 over 2,100 acres of prime elk habitat have been treated for noxious weeds (spotted knapweed, leafy spurge, houndstongue, dalmatian toadflax, sulfur cinquefoil, Canada thistle) within the Stillwater Valley's Watershed boundaries by both chemical and biological means. One of the main goals of this project was to treat remote infestations of weeds along the Derby Fire's fire line and attending trail system.

This goal was accomplished in September 2010 when 18 acres of noxious weeds were treated by four Watershed landowners putting in over 100 hours of labor and covering trails and bulldozed fire breaks on nearly 75



miles. The daunting task was to identify and treat these smaller infestations before they spread to adjacent private and U.S. Forest Service lands.

This particular area had been relatively weed free up to this time, but weed seeds brought in by the many fire crews from a variety of different states around the nation established seed sources along the entire road and fire break system.

Below is a breakdown of the projects completed in part because of cost-share funding received through the RMEF:

- ◆ 17 landowners signed up for aerial herbicide application (890 acres treated).
- ◆ 21 landowners received cost-share for commercial herbicide application (334 acres treated)
- ◆ 43 landowners purchased 187 bug releases at a 55% discount. Estimated treatment acres was over 900.

Another grant application has been submitted to the RMEF focusing on the Fishtail Basin area. Notification of this grant award will occur later this spring. Contact Lindsey for more information.

NOXIOUS WEED TRUST FUND GRANT:

MIDNIGHT CANYON/TROUT CREEK WEED MANAGEMENT AREA

This fall marked the end of the grant cycle for the Midnight Canyon/TROUT Creek area. A lot was accomplished over the last two years. Within the weed management area were eight landowner participants which encompassed 31,500 acres. In the initial grant application written in 2009, it was estimated that infestations of noxious weeds such as leafy spurge, spotted knapweed, Canada thistle, houndstongue covered over 960 acres.

Below are the accomplishments of the last two years:

- ◆ 1541 acres treated
 - 1120 acres sprayed with the helicopter
 - 296 acres treated via commercial ground application
 - 125 acres sprayed by private landowner application
- ◆ 27 releases of flea beetles for control of leafy spurge were dispersed

In addition to the cost share for chemical and on ground application, multiple educational events and mailings were made possible by the funds received through this Trust Fund Grant. Overall, the total project cost-share totaled \$20,869.45.



Stillwater Valley Watershed Council

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2011 in Review: The impacts of cost-share on weeds in our Watershed – Continued

SMALL LANDOWNER WEED CONTROL PROJECT:



In 2007, the Stillwater River Weed Management Area (SRWMA) initiated a two year project to control spotted knapweed and other noxious weeds along the headwaters of the Stillwater River. This project was the first organized weed management effort along our critical river system. A "top-to-bottom" approach to manage the area was established by starting at the Woodbine Trailhead and working further downriver Nye being the end point goal.

The SVWC, with financial assistance from both the Nye and Absarokee Community Foundations, continued this weed control effort in July 2011.



A knapweed patch found on an island in the Stillwater River.

The SVWC and volunteer members coordinated four commercial herbicide applicators to treat noxious weeds for the 42 landowners who signed up to participate in the spray program. Forty five acres were treated for noxious weeds such as: spotted knapweed, leafy spurge, Canada thistle and houndstongue. The area treated had a direct impact on well over 300 acres. The indirect impacts of this project are difficult to quantify, many downstream properties would be at risk for contamination by these upstream infestations if this project had not taken place.

This project, established as a two year program, will continue in the summer of 2012. If you have not yet signed up its not too late. The initial cost is \$100 or \$50 for each year of the program. This will get you the first hour of application at a significant rate reduction. Any additional time spent on application will cost \$75/hour.

2011 in Review: Lets talk fun and education!

CORRAL TOUR, BBQ & AUCTION:

COMING SOON.....
**ARE YOU INTERESTED
IN REBUILDING YOUR
CORRALS AND GET-
TING MONEY & EX-
PERTISE TO DO IT?**

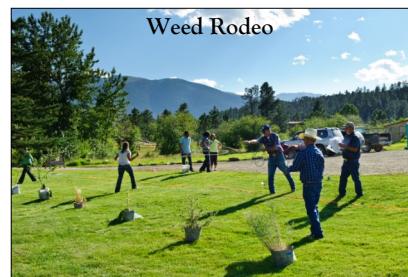
**ATTEND THE CORRAL
RELOCATION MEET-
ING ON JANUARY
18TH!**

WHERE?
COLUMBUS FIREHALL
WHEN?
10:00 am to 2:00 pm
QUESTIONS?
322-5359, ext 109

**LUNCH SPONSORED
BY THE BEARTOOTH
STOCK ASSOCIATION!**

This past August the SVWC hosted the annual Fundraising Auction and BBQ. In addition to the BBQ, we were also able to coordinate with the Stillwater County NRCS to host a tour of local Fishtail area ranchers who participated in a cost-share program to assist in moving livestock handling facilities away from tributaries and riparian areas to prevent livestock waste contamination. There was a great turnout and beautiful afternoon for the tour.

Thank you the Keller Family, and the Abbotts and Youngs of the Fishtail Basin Ranch for taking the time out of their day to show folks around and answer questions. Additionally, thank you to Phil Sandoval and Ted Nelson from the NRCS as well as Gene Surber from Gene Surber & Associates Inc for lending their expertise for the afternoon. If you are interested in relocating your corral away from riparian



areas and would like more information about projects like these please contact Ted Nelson at the local NRCS office: 322-5359, ext 109.

The auction and BBQ was also a huge success thanks to the volunteers that helped the event go off without a hitch. Numerous people do-

nated food, auction items and good ol' elbow grease. The 4K Ranch hosted the event at their beautiful property located just off Fiddler Creek Road. We had over 100 people turn out for the Weed Rodeo, pig roast (donated by Mike and Bobbi Lorash) and live and silent auction. Thanks to Brian Young for providing the outstanding auctioneering! Door prizes were provided by Tractor Supply and Heliworks Flight Services. The auction and t-shirt sales raised over \$4,200 with funds going toward the SVWC's future projects.

What's in store for 2012?

Numerous grants geared toward revitalizing the Watershed surrounding the Stillwater River have been or will be applied for. A few of them focus on weeds while the others will contribute to the water quality/quantity portion of SVWC's goal segment. Below are a list of the grant applications submitted in 2011 and awaiting approval by the various grant committees. Also listed below will be grants submitted in 2012. If you would like to assist with any of these projects PLEASE don't hesitate to call!

AWARDED

RAC (Rural Advisory Committee): \$30,000 was awarded for noxious weed control in the Benbow area and land adjacent to Forest Service property within Stillwater County. These funds will be allocated for use in 2012 and 2013.

2011 GRANT APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED

Noxious Weed Trust Fund: The following three applications were submitted on behalf of the Stillwater County Weed District for treatment within the weed management areas throughout the Watershed.

Beaver Creek/Jackstone Creek: \$54,388 requested, 20 landowners, 30,000 total acres (2,500 treatable)

Midnight Canyon/Trout Creek: \$21,938 requested, 8 landowners, 31,500 total acres (900 treatable)

Fishtail Basin: \$74,183 requested, 16 landowners, 35,600 total acres (3,900 treatable)

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation: A grant for \$30,000 was submitted for noxious weed control in the Fishtail Basin drainage.

Nye Community Foundation: An application for \$4,000 was submitted to assist with cost-share for the Small Landowner Spray Project to control noxious weeds along the Stillwater River.

2012 GRANT APPLICATIONS PLANNED

Absarokee Community Foundation: Assist with cost-share for the Small Landowner Spray Project to control noxious weeds along the Stillwater River.

Five-Star Restoration: Assist with cost-share for the Small Landowner Spray Project to control noxious weeds along the Stillwater River and expand down-river beyond Beehive, to include small acreage landowners from Nye to the Cliff Swallow fishing access.

319 Grant: Due to the heavy flooding that took place in the spring of 2011 along the Stillwater River and its tributaries, dramatic erosion and re-direction of the river's channel resulted. The SVWC would like to assist with restoring some of these areas to pre-flood condition.

Take a look at the map on page 7 to see the watershed boundaries as well as past, present and future grant areas.

SVWC's ANNUAL MEETING AND POTLUCK—January 18th, 2012

WHEN: Wednesday, January 18th

WHERE: Fishtail Community Center

TIME: Board of Director Meeting @ 3:00 pm
Council Meeting & Potluck Dinner @ 5:00 pm

AGENDA

- ◆ Grant Updates and Summaries
- ◆ Water Policy/Rights Topics
- ◆ Riverbank and Stream Channel Restoration
- ◆ Board Member Elections

Are you needing to do some restoration work on your streambank? Are you confused about the policies and steps that need to be taken? The SVWC is in the process of contacting agencies to make this process more streamlined. Contact the SVWC for more info, or attend our annual meeting!

A NECESSARY COMPONENT OF ANY COMMUNITY IS INVOLVEMENT—

***COME FOR THE FOOD, FRIENDSHIP AND MAYBE YOU'LL LEARN A LITTLE MORE
THAN YOU DID YESTERDAY....***

Stillwater Valley Watershed Council

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WATER POLICY SEMINAR - Water Rights, Understanding the History and the Future

FEBRUARY 8TH, 2012

AGENDA

1:00 pm	Welcome and Introductions
1:15-2:15 pm	Kim Overcast, DNRC – “The ABC’s of Montana Water Law and how it affects YOU as a land stakeholder”
2:15-3:15 pm	Judge Lobel, Montana Water Court – “Current issues in Montana’s Water Court and current adjudication processes as it relates to 43C jurisdiction”
3:15-3:30 pm	Break
3:30-4:30 pm	John Youngberg, Montana Farm Bureau – “Current legislative issues and the process to follow for legislative change”
4:30-5:00 pm	Wrap up and further questions

These issues impact all of us, especially if you are a:
small or large tract landowner, realtor, developer, or recreationalist!

Pesticide Applicator Training, Spring 2012

As private applicators scramble to gain pesticide applicator points before the spray season, the Extension office is busy planning a pesticide applicator training day for Spring 2012. Although the schedule isn't finalized yet, you can guarantee the following topics will be covered:

- ◆ Three hours of pesticide related information focusing on topics relevant to the dry land and irrigated weed and rodent control in Stillwater County.
- ◆ Three hours covering integrated pest management, calibration and pesticide safety.

This training will be good for **six private applicator training points**. Remember you will need to gather six points in order to be recertified for the next four years.

MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW!

AN OUNCE OF
PREVENTION
IS WORTH A
POUND OF
CURE.....

MONTANA WEED CONTROL ASSOCIATION'S FIGHT FIVE CAMPAIGN

Fight 5 is a new weed awareness program developed by MWCA. It is unique in that it takes the overwhelming task of fighting noxious weeds and brings it down to a manageable level for everyone.

It is 5 simple steps:

1. Pick an activity that is important to you.
2. Review the noxious weeds that have the potential to impact your activity.
3. Pick just 5 weeds that could impact you.
4. Learn how to identify your five weeds, and how they are spread.
5. Learn what to do if you find one of your weeds.

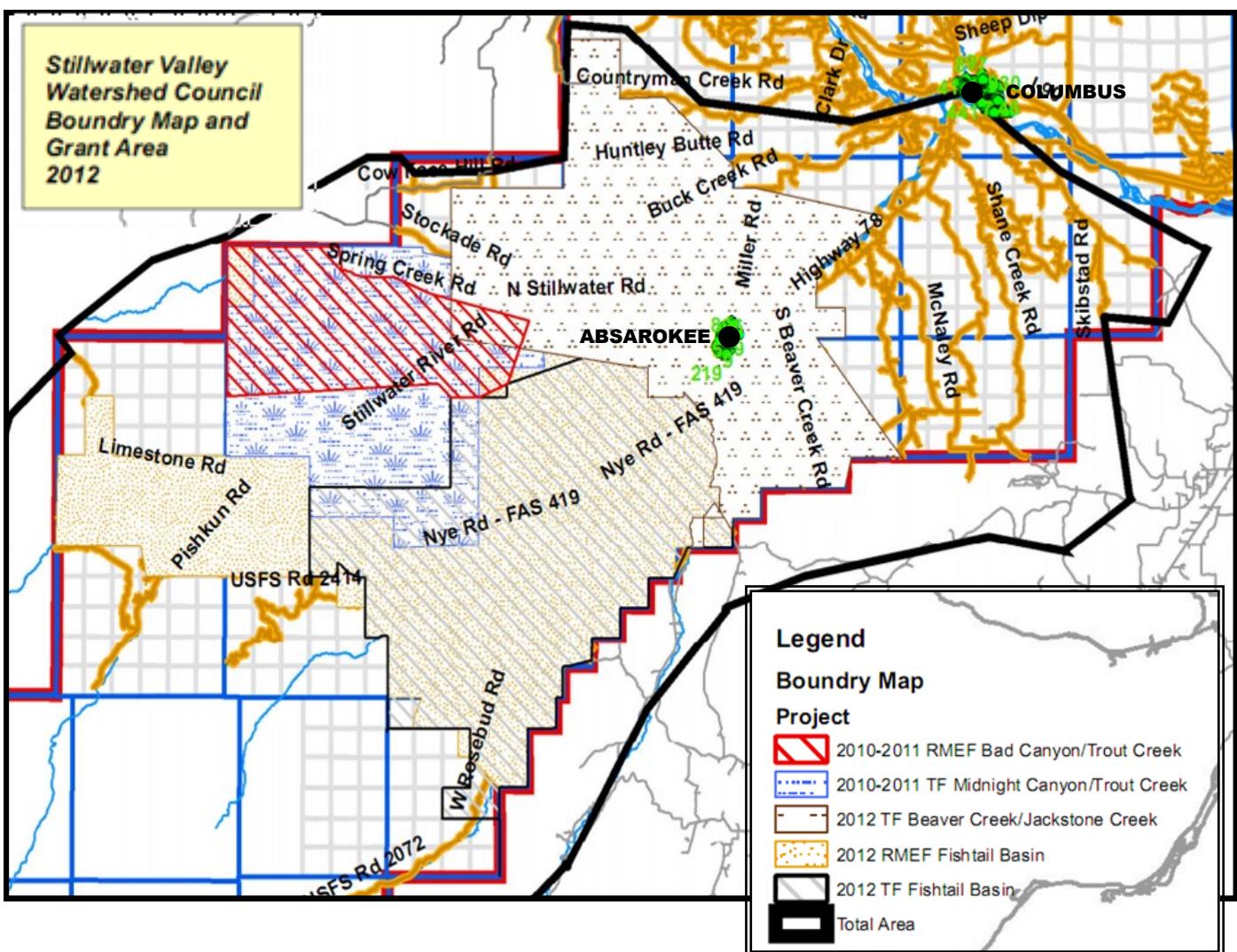
I've picked my five, have you?



Stillwater Valley Watershed Council

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SVWC Map



Above is a boundary map of the SVWC (minus the very southern portion which encompasses Forest Service lands). The past and present granting areas are identified in the legend.

The grant areas are:

- 2010-2011 Bad Canyon/Trout Creek (RMEF)—20.1 sq miles
- 2010-2012 Midnight Canyon/Trout Creek (Trust Fund)—63.6 sq miles
- 2012 Beaver Creek/Jackstone Creek (Trust Fund)—123.6 sq miles
- 2012 Fishtail Basin (RMEF)—245.7 sq miles
- 2012 Fishtail Basin (Trust Fund)—128.9 sq miles

The total area of the Watershed encompasses approximately 614,511 acres and 960.2 sq miles.



Stillwater Valley Watershed Council

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For more information, please
visit: www.ranchwise.com
You can contact us by calling
855-5694 or emailing:
ranchwise01@yahoo.com!

Local Business Spotlight—Ranch Wise

Ranch Wise is a full service agriculture and natural resource company owned and operated by Todd and Tanya Daniels. Whether you are new to the country or have spent a lifetime working the land, they have services to assist in sustaining and expanding your dreams. From assistance in shaping up your newly purchased ranch or farm, to helping you maximize productivity for your large cattle herd, to assisting you in age, they have expertise elsewhere.

Todd and Tanya have the resources you have, but if you are looking to your sheep, cattle, or horses, they can sample your hay or pasture and make recommendations for your livestock supplements based on those results. Ranch Wise can develop and implement a customized grazing plan that fits the needs of you and your ranch, as well as address the complex problems associated with noxious weeds. Following is a list of some of their services:



managing your small acreage

pertise you will find no-

can help with all those questions you don't know who to ask. If

maximize performance of

make recommendations for

address the complex problems

associated with noxious weeds.

Livestock Management

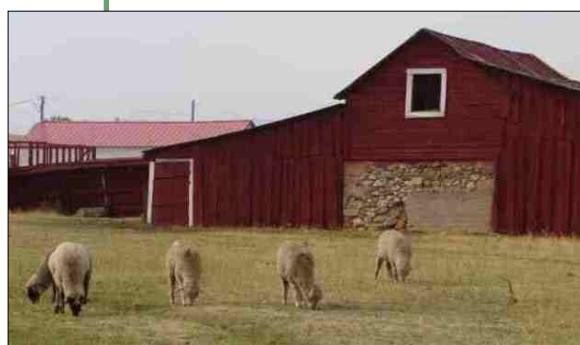
- Nutrition Consulting & Feed Recommendations
- Fecal Sampling and NIR Interpretation
- Grazing Plans
- Hay & Forage Analysis & Interpretation
- Health & Care of Livestock
- Facility Design
- Livestock Purchases & Herd Development, Livestock Care, and Marketing

Natural Resources

- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) with the NRCS - planning, monitoring, and reporting
- Weed Control - Certified Commercial Applicator with an Integrated Pest Management Approach (using chemical control and other long term weed management options)
- Range Management and Land Enhancement
- Wildlife Management

Other Services

- Cooperate with other agencies on your behalf - Farm Services Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation District, & others
- Negotiate Leases
- Employee Hire
- Ranch Management Plans
- Test & Interpret Water Analysis
- Neighbor Relations



SVWC Member Spotlight

Recently, Fish, Wildlife & Parks established a six year plan to increase participation with private and public organizations in order to become more involved with the control of noxious weeds in and around State Parks and Fishing Access Sites. As the Fishing Access Program Manager in Stillwater County, I have the responsibility of managing the noxious weeds in each of the sites along the Stillwater and Yellowstone Rivers. We are in the process of expanding the current weed control program to include working with groups such as the Stillwater Valley Watershed

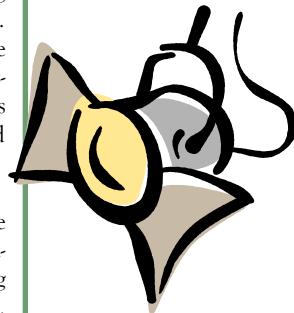


**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

Fishing access sites are extensively utilized by the public and so they also provide an excellent opportunity to educate the recreationalists and visitors to these areas. FWP, in cooperation with the SVWC, are planning to place signage at

Council. It is important that as a public agency, we are willing participate and provide as much support, both monetary and hands, on as possible. these sites to help with educating the public about noxious weeds. This opportunity to publicize the important of identifying and realizing the negative effects of noxious weeds will go hand in hand with the County's plan to tie into the Montana Weed Control Association's Fight Five campaign. The goal of this campaign is for you, rather knowing the 32 state listed noxious weeds, to focus on the five weeds that affect you the most.

*Cleve Schuster,
FWP Fishing Access
Program Manager*



Stillwater County is a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family. We hope this program will help enhance the quality of your life. Respect your neighbors' livelihood and property, and be aware that your actions impact your neighbors, human and otherwise.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2012 DUES?

The Stillwater Valley Watershed Council relies on people like you to match project funds and provide essential operating support. In order for you to benefit from SVWC's programs you are encouraged to become a member. Annual dues are \$25.00.

Please consider donating to our non-profit, tax deductible organization.

Send membership or support to SVWC, PO Box 112, Absarokee, MT 59001.

WE ARE TRULY THANKFUL TO THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN OR ARE CONSIDERING A GIFT!

THANK YOU for your generous donations and membership contributions!

2012 Memberships to Date

- * 4K Ranch * Franny & Franny Abbott, Fishtail Basin Ranch * Charles Barker & Pam Young* John & Laurie Beers * Bill & Sandra Coverley* Jerry & Sandy Crawford, Cathedral Mountain Ranch * Julie Dickinson * Torian Donohoe * Paul & Cathy Donohoe, Lodgepole Ranch LLC * Kyle & Anna Donohoe, Lodgepole Ranch LLC * Conrad & Judy Haynes * Clark Holton * Ken & Peg Joki * David & Sandra Joys * Patrick & Charlotte Karnos * Vern & Averil Keller, Keller Ranch * Greg & Terline Keller, Keller Ranch * Mike & Bobbi Lorash * Ruben & Pamela Oliver* David & Nancy Rummel * Phil Sandoval * Charles & Lana Sangmeister * Shirley Sherman * Clyde & Sonja Windecker *

Donations

- David & Sandra Joys and Family
- Fishtail Basin Ranch
- Julie Dickinson
- Clark Holton

Memorial Donations

- † IN MEMORY OF LYNNE JENSEN,
DALE & GLEN MCKINSEY, OLEAFA
KIRCH†*

Torian Donohoe

Join today and receive a
complimentary window decal!



Stillwater Valley Watershed Council

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SVWC Board of Director Position Openings

Four positions are open for the Stillwater Valley Watershed Council's Board of Directors, due to term expiration. If you are interested in applying for a three-year Board Member position please return this form to the address below by January 15th. The Council (that means you) will make the final decision on

Name: _____

Home Phone: _____

Address: _____

State: _____

City: _____

Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Business/Occupation: _____

Why do you wish to serve on this Board?



Signature _____

Date _____

Return application to: Stillwater Valley Watershed Council
PO Box 112
Absarokee, MT 59001

**Stillwater Valley Watershed Council
Landowner Cost-Share Commitment & Membership Form**

Landowner Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Local Telephone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Stillwater County Property Location: (section/township/range, subdivision)

Approximate # of acres in the project: _____

Please check all that apply, sign and return.

I am interested in participating SVWC's project.

The project I am interested in receiving assistance for is [i.e. corral relocation, weed spraying (identify targeted weed species), bug releases, etc]:

I do not wish to participate in the SVWC project but in doing so, recognize that I am required to comply with the existing Montana Noxious Weed Law.

Yes, I want to join the Stillwater Valley Watershed Council. Enclosed is my \$25.00 annual membership fee.

I am already a member of the Stillwater Valley Watershed Council.

Please indicate your contact information and property location even if you do not wish to participate in the program. This will let us know if we have made contact with all landowners.

Signature

Date

Please return to:

Stillwater Valley Watershed Council
PO Box 112
Absarokee MT 59001

406-321-3355



**STILLWATER VALLEY
WATERSHED COUNCIL**

SVWC
PO Box 112
Absarokee, MT 59001

Office: 406.322.1106
Cell: 406.321.3355
E-mail: SVWC2010@hotmail.com

DON'T FORGET—SVWC's
ANNUAL MEETING &
POTLUCK JANUARY
18TH!

We are a volunteer group of local residents and interested representatives who are working together to enhance the quality of our rural Montana lifestyle by protecting, restoring and conserving our abundant natural resources, through good stewardship and community involvement for this and future generations.

Check us out on the WEB!
www.stillwatervalleywatershed.com

Stillwater Valley Watershed Council

Stillwater Valley Watershed Council

ABSAROKEE



FISHTAIL



DEAN



NYE

