

The Montana Wetland Council and Montana Watershed Stewardship Council are pleased to announce 2011 Wetland and Watershed Stewardship Award Winners.

Please help us acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of these Award Winners at our Award Ceremony to be held May 26, 2011 in Helena.

May 26, 2011 Wetland and Watershed Stewardship Award Ceremony

- 9:00 am. Award winners describe their work. Scott Hart Auditorium (Livestock Bldg).
- 11:00 am. Formal Award Ceremony. State Capitol - Old Supreme Court Chambers.
- 12:15 pm. Complementary celebratory luncheon. Capitol Rotunda.
- 1:15 pm. Innovative wetland and watershed approaches. Scott Hart Auditorium.

Congratulations!

Gordon Cattle Company - 2011 Wetland Stewardship Award Winner

Henry Gordon and his daughter, Trisha of the Gordon Cattle Company in northern Blaine County exemplify ranchers practicing solid land stewardship and a deep commitment to conservation. Twenty years ago, they began restoring shallow wetland habitats resulting in about 100 acres of wetland creation or restoration. They placed a conservation easement on 15,000 acres of deeded lands that consists predominately of native grassland, shrub land, and wetland habitat in spite of increasing pressures to convert native range to cropland. In addition, they instituted a rest-rotation grazing system and developed alternative water resources on about 40,000 acres of rangeland to help minimize impacts on wetland/ riparian areas and improve nesting cover for upland birds and waterfowl. The Gordon Cattle Company's commitment has ensured that a large contiguous block of grasslands with important wetland habitat will remain for future generations. Their conservation accomplishments are of landscape proportions.

Flathead River to Lake Initiative - 2011 Wetland Stewardship Award Winner

The Flathead River to Lake Initiative is recognized for outstanding achievement in building a diverse partnership and working with private landowners to protect and restore critical wetlands and riparian habitat along the Flathead River and at the North Shore of Flathead Lake. Since 2000, the partnership has protected over 5,000 acres of critical lands, including 1,200 wetland acres, and restored over 5,000 feet of river banks. One recent highlight is the Loudon family conservation project. Eight family members voluntarily conserved 1,088 acres on seven parcels that stretch along 3.7 miles of the Flathead River, including Church Slough, an important oxbow lake. R2L partners Marilyn Wood, Executive Director, Flathead Land Trust, and Gael Bissell, wildlife biologist, MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks were key to the success of this project. R2L partners bring various strengths, skills, and resources to the initiative to achieve common goals, including protecting clean water, fish and wildlife habitat, productive farm lands, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty.

Watershed Award Winners

Wetland and Watershed Stewardship Awards – Joint Award Ceremony

Every two years, the Montana Wetland Council and the Montana Watershed Coordination Council jointly honor stewardship award recipients. The Montana Watershed Stewardship Award recognizes innovative, locally led approaches to restoring and enhancing Montana's watersheds. The Montana Wetland Stewardship Award Program recognizes individuals and teams who exemplify excellence, innovation and extraordinary commitment in wetlands protection, restoration, and conservation. The 2011 Wetland Award Committee included: Tom Hinz, DFWP Wetlands Legacy; Gary Sullivan, USFWS; Carrie Mosley, NRCS; Vicki Sullivan, COE; Constanza von der Pahlen, Flathead Lakers, Mary Clare Weatherwax, Blackfeet Tribe; Brent Truskowski, EPA; Lynda Saul DEQ Wetland Program. The 2011 Wetland Award Committee agreed to nominate Tim Swanson, The Nature Conservancy, for a National Wetland Award for his career accomplishments in Southwestern Montana.

The Montana Wetland Council

The Montana Wetland Council is an active network of diverse interests that works cooperatively to conserve and restore Montana's wetlands and riparian ecosystems. Montana's wetland goal is "No overall net loss of the state's remaining wetland resource base and an overall increase in the quality and quantity of wetlands in Montana." Council participants actively work to achieve our state goal by implementing Montana's Wetland Strategic Framework. The Council meets three times each year to learn, exchange information, and work toward solutions on complex wetland and riparian issues. All are welcome and encouraged to participate. For more information, contact Lynda Saul at (406) 444-6652 or lsaul@mt.gov or visit our website: <http://deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/Wetlands/>

The Montana Watershed Coordination Council

The Montana Watershed coordination Council (MWCC) is a statewide information and support network organized to advance voluntary local watershed work and to help build the capacity to get it done. The Coordination Council serves as a forum that establishes a link with local watershed groups needing assistance to help enhance, conserve, and protect natural resources and to sustain the high quality of life in Montana for present and future generations. It also serves as a statewide coordination network for Montana's natural resource agencies and private organizations to share resources, identify and capitalize on opportunities for collaboration, and avoid duplication of effort. The Council encourages local people to take a hands-on, collaborative approach to address natural resource issues and concerns. For more information, visit the MWCC website at <http://mtwatersheds.org> or contact MWCC Co-chairs, Ann Schwend (406) 444-1806 or Nicole McClain (406) 223-5702.