

October 15, 1998

Dear Wetlands Council Participant,

The next Montana Wetlands Council meeting is scheduled for **November 17** in Helena. In addition to the regularly scheduled agency and organization updates and implementation activities, we have two special programs.

At the August Council meeting, participants were interested in hearing from agricultural landowners and organizations regarding what financial and technical assistance and incentive programs would be helpful to encourage additional wetland conservation or restoration on private agriculture lands in Montana. We've invited some farmers, ranchers and agricultural organizations to give us their input on this Council goal and have scheduled time for Council discussion on how to proceed.

The other program involves computer demonstrations on some exciting new and newly developing wetland and riparian data and information tools available to help us better coordinate and manage wetlands.

Please see the attached meeting agenda for details. Enclosed is the meeting summary and list of participants from the last Montana Wetlands Council meeting held in August. Please call Lynda Saul at 444-6652 if you would like additional information. Hope to see you on the 17th.

Sincerely,

Lynda Saul  
Wetlands Coordinator

## AGENDA

### MONTANA WETLANDS COUNCIL MEETING

November 17, 1998

9:30 am - 3:00 pm

DEQ Directors Conference Room, Helena

1520 East 6th Avenue

- 9:30 Welcome and Introductions.
- 9:45 Wetland Data and Information Tools  
Montana View - Velda Welsh, NRIS/Water Information System  
Riparian and Wetland Research Program Interactive Web Data Base - RWRP  
Meta Data - Kris Larson, NRIS/Geographic Information System  
Wetland Clearinghouse and NWI - Velda Welsh, NRIS/Water Info System  
Discussion on information needs and integration.
- 11:00 Wetland Updates and Coordination Reports.  
State agencies: NRIS, MNHP, DNRC, DFWP, MDT.  
Federal agencies: USFWS, NRCS, BLM, USFS, EPA, COE, BOR.  
Others: MT Watercourse, Flathead Lake Biostation, Montana Riparian  
and Wetland Association, others.
- Noon Lunch (on your own)
- 1:00 Private Land Wetland Conservation: Technical and Financial Assistance and Incentives  
Jason Campbell, Montana Stock Growers Association  
Lorna Karn, Montana Farm Bureau  
Private agricultural landowners invited
- 2:30 Action Item Implementation Activities - Lynda Saul, DEQ.  
Proposals Received for Wetland Protection Grant program.  
National Wetland Inventory proposal.
- 2:45 Other announcements.  
Set next meeting date for February 24, 1999.  
Discuss potential agenda items.
- 3:00 Adjourn.

Summary  
Montana Wetland Council Meeting  
August 11, 1998

The meeting opened with welcome and introductions. DEQ briefed Council participants on the status of the draft Conservation Strategy and recommendations from the Wetland Situation Assessment. As recommended, DEQ will not work to finalize the draft Strategy. Instead, they will continue to implement the priority recommendations that received wide-spread support in the Situation Assessment. One of those recommendations is to complete the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) for Montana. The Wetlands Council Data Work Group along with DEQ submitted a grant proposal to the State of Montana's Reclamation and Development Grants Program for funds to complete a large portion of the NWI in Montana. DEQ will be soliciting potential funders and agencies that are willing to match or provide additional funding for this project. DEQ also discussed the solicitation for wetland protection grants proposals for EPA 104(b)3 funds that DEQ administers. DEQ and the Grant Review Team are targeting proposals to implement portions of the Situation Assessment recommendations. This includes wetland information and education, working with landowners on technical assistance and incentive programs, projects which further the NWI and the state-wide data base, and funding for local governments, conservation districts and local watershed groups.

Representatives from State, Federal and other participating groups provided wetlands updates and coordination reports. The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) discussed the Stillwater, Swan and Flathead area project, north of Polson. The Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) shared recent additions to the Montana Wetlands Information Clearinghouse (MWIC) located at <http://nrisclearinghouse.state.mt.us/wis> and following the path to wetlands. The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) reported on several issues. One such issue was the request for articles to be submitted in the fall edition of the Riparian Wetland Review Newsletter. DNRC also discussed the Small Acreage Management workshops, the Joint Permit Program, Monitoring for Success workshops, and the Watershed Planning Assistance Program through the Conservation Districts. The Montana Department of Transportation provided an update on transportation mitigation sites.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service reported that the agency is working nationally on the delisting of 39 species, including the Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon in Montana. Several species may be newly listed in Montana, including the Bull Trout. The Natural Resources and Conservation Service distributed and discussed a new brochure outlining many ongoing programs aimed at landowner assistance. The Wetland Reserve Program has had 54 applicants and approximately 23,000 acres enrolled in the program. The long-range high priorities on wildlife habitat for restoration includes prairies, fens and riparian areas. In 1999, NRCS and COE will co-sponsor training for wetland determination and delineation. The Bureau of Land Management Challenge Cost Share Program received nearly 75 proposals, 1/3 of which related to wetland and riparian areas.

BLM reported that the two million dollar Intermountain West Joint Venture proposal for

Southwest Montana was funded for acquisition of 2,300 acres in the Beaverhead. The NAWCA grant allows 5 years to do additional match easements. The Forest Service reported that there is a new regional forester in Montana, from Utah. They also reported that the Proper Functioning Condition Training is continuing throughout late summer and fall. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported that for the Regional Grants Program Montana received almost half the funding for the entire 6 state region. The Clean Water Action Plan estimates that, nationally, annual losses of wetland acres is now roughly 100,000 acres per year. The Clean Water Action Plan has a goal to restore 100,000 acres of wetlands per year by the year 2005. The US Army Corps of Engineers reported that the Notice for Nationwide Permit 26 Replacement has been issued, and there will be a public meeting in Helena on August 27.

The Montana Watercourse is planning on rebroadcasting the popular Governor's Public Service Announcement supporting wetlands. MT Watercourse handed out potential new PSA ideas for Council input. The Montana Riparian and Wetland Research Program discussed projects in Montana and other regions. They will be working with BLM to revise and improve the Classification system for other states. The Montana Association of Conservation Districts is holding their annual meeting in Kalispell on November 11-13.

A short discussion on private land wetland conservation incentives was held. Council participants requested that we invite landowners and agricultural organizations to provide input on types of incentive programs that would be useful. There was a short discussion on federal legislation, introduced by Senator Dashle, giving a tax credit for wetland restoration. The Council will be kept updated on any progress. The next meeting was scheduled for November 17.

**MONTANA WETLAND COUNCIL PARTICIPANTS**  
**August 11, 1998 Council Meeting**

<b><u>NAME</u></b>	<b><u>REPRESENTING</u></b>
ROB HAZLEWOOD	USFWS
GANT MASSEY	RWRP, UNIVERSITY OF MT
LORNA KARN	MFBF
RANDY APFELBECK	DEQ
CARL FOURSTAR	FT PECK TRIBES
JEAN RAMER	COE
STEVE POTTS	EPA
LAWRENCE URBAN	MDT
VELDA WELCH	NRIS
DAN TEIGEN	NPRC
BOB HABURCHAK	BLM
KRISTA LEE-CAMPBELL	DNRC
JASON CAMPBELL	MSG/PLC
ELOISE KENDY	USGS
JANET ELLIS	MT AUDUBON
DAVE HEILIG	USDA-NRCS
JUDY REESE	DEQ-RD
MARY MANNING	USFS
JACK GREENLEE	MTNHP
PAT HETTINGER	WATER QUAL. PROTECT. DISTRICT
DON ALLEN	WETA
MIKE MURPHY	MWRA
MICHAEL REDSTONE	FT PECK TRIBES
JESSE ABER	DNRC WRD
MARY ELLEN WOLFE	MT WATERCOURSE
JUDY MCCARTHY	MT WATERCOURSE
LYNDA SAUL	DEQ